

THE FAILURE OF SOCIALISM TO CATER FOR FREEDOM: A
PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF KWAME NKRUMAH.

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS:.....	ii
DECLARATION:.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE. <u>INTRODUCTION:</u>	1
CHAPTER TWO. <u>NKRUMAH'S EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND HIS INTELLECTUAL INDEBTEDNESS:</u>	18
CHAPTER THREE <u>NKRUMAH'S REACTION AGAINST COLONIALISM: THE CASE OF FREEDOM:</u>	47
CHAPTER FOUR <u>PHILOSOPHY AND IDEOLOGY FOR THE LIBERATION OF AFRICA:</u>	73
CHAPTER FIVE <u>NKRUMAH ON SOCIALISM FOR SOCIAL FREEDOM:..</u>	96
CHAPTER SIX <u>NKRUMAH'S JUSTIFICATION OF SOCIALISM:</u>	127
CONCLUSION.....	159
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	161

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signed




BYARHANGA RUKOKO ARCHANGEL

Date:

10-5-1991

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

Signed



DR. GERALD WANJOHI

Date:

10-5-91

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my late parents, Applinari Rukooko, Martha
Tindyeita, and living brothers, Fr. Paschale Betunga and
Francis Kwomarakutunga.

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I wish to register gratitude to my academic supervisor, Dr. G. Wanjohi, for his criticism and advice. I am thankful to Prof. Odera Oduka for accepting to read some of my work and offering advice. I also appreciate the advice extended to me by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Prof. Joseph Nyasani. I am also deeply indebted to Mr. Ernest Beyanaaza of Kenyatta University and to Prof. A. Dalfovo of Makerere University for their fatherly advice.

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A B S T R A C T

This thesis is a philosophical study of Kwame Nkrumah's Social-political theory. The study examines Nkrumah's opinion that socialism could retrieve African freedom which had been taken away by colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The study opens with the Introductory Chapter which includes the background to the study, the statement of the problem of study, hypothesis, reasons for the study, literature review and the methodology used.

Chapter Two, is devoted to the exposition of Nkrumah's life background as well as his dependence on Marx and his followers and other personalities for the development of his own social-political theory.

In Chapter Three, I examine Nkrumah's opinion that colonialism eroded African peoples' freedom. To a great extent, I agree with Nkrumah that colonialism eroded the freedom of the African, colonial people.

According to Nkrumah, a philosophy and an ideology would serve as a means of regaining the freedom which was lost through colonialism. In Chapter Four, therefore, I examine this opinion. The conclusion reached is that whereas philosophy and ideology are good instruments of freedom, they could as well hinder the attainment of freedom.

Nkrumah believed that freedom would be realised only when socialism had been established. In order to discuss this view adequately, Chapter Five involves the analysis of the assumptions as given by Margaret Cole, vis - a - vis the freedom of Africa. The conclusion reached is that socialism, too, cannot guarantee freedom.

Nkrumah justified his choice of socialism for Africa by two main arguments. In the first argument, Nkrumah deduced historical materialism from a metaphysical approach to the universe. In other words, for Nkrumah, dialectical materialism implies socialism. In the second argument, Nkrumah contended that post-independent Africa should adopt socialism as a social-political system because traditional Africa was communitarian. In Chapter Six, we examine these two arguments and the conclusion reached is that both are unsound.

Finally, the general conclusion is that socialism *cannot* guarantee freedom in the world in general and Africa in particular.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of this Study.

For over a century, Africa was among the European colonised parts of the world. While some Africans were indifferent to the conditions that prevailed during colonialism, others were deeply offended and felt a change was due. The European colonialists claimed they colonised Africa for humanitarian reasons, i.e to civilise and develop Africa. Some Africans objected to this argument stressing that, instead, the European colonialists were interested in the domination and exploitation of Africa. Apparently, the African view has been borne out by the later events and should have been expected in the circumstances that followed the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. Raw materials were needed for European domestic industries as well as markets for the manufactured goods. Hence the need for colonisation of Africa and other parts of the world by European nations.

Consequences of colonisation

Under colonialism, Africans suffered in various ways. Their suffering can be seen briefly from the view points of sociology, politics, economics and culture.

Political Impact of Colonialism.

Politically, Africans were oppressed in various ways.

Colonial African subjects were hardly allowed to make any decisions affecting their political life. Their leaders were forcefully imposed on them. Consequently, leaders so imposed became loyal only to their colonial masters. That is to say, leaders who were forcefully imposed served the interests of their masters while the interests of the subjects were ignored. The systems of government for colonies and the laws accompanying them were formulated in the metropolitan countries. Societies were forcefully divided into entities that did not reflect their cultural heritage.

Economic Impact of Colonialism.

Generally, analysts of colonialism lay a lot of emphasis on the economics as the most motivating force behind colonisation. (This is because Africans were economically exploited). The colonies provided most of the raw materials at cheap prices while the colonisers sold back the finished goods at a high profit. Africans' commercial opportunities were thwarted, Africans lost their land to Europeans through spurious agreements and legal enactments or even through land seizure as is reported with the Belgians and the French¹.

In Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe), Congo (present-day Zaire), Kenya and many other former colonies, large pieces of land were forcefully secured for European agriculture.

Social Impact of Colonialism.

This is probably the sharpest and the most repercursive aspect of colonialism. It should be seen as such because of its long lasting racialist and psychological effects on the colonial subjects. Colonialists considered Africans as an inferior race and some Africans came to believe it. Africans were kept away from European residential urban quarters.

In some colonies, the indigenous population was forced to live in certain areas. European children studied in special schools different from schools for the native children. Labour conditions were repressive and humiliating. Such repression in labour relations is attested to by the story told by a Belgian Congo labourer and quoted by Nkrumah². This kind of situation led K.Kaunda to say the following:

In fact colonialism, for all its benefits, devalued man. It created elite societies in which man's worth was determined by an irrelevant biological detail - skin pigmentation. And even more serious, the colonialists set out to destroy our self-confidence. They dinned into the African mind the idea that we were primitive, backward and degraded and but for their presence amongst us, would be living like animals³.

Cultural Impact of Colonialism

The colonialists considered African culture as inferior. African religions, traditions and customs were condemned as abominable. African religion was, in the view of colonialists, superstitious and useless. Subsequently, new religions were introduced to the Africans. African technological advance was thwarted and specific education was introduced to change Africans into "Black Europeans".

Against such a background some Africans felt deeply offended by what they considered oppressive conditions of colonialism. They stressed that colonialism had taken away their freedom. Yet freedom is one of the most important endowment of a human being. It is this freedom that African intellectuals, Pan-Africanists, and nationalists demanded. They condemned and pledged to fight and resist colonialism in all its different manifestations. One such a person was Kwame Nkrumah, the first prime minister and president of Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

Perusing through Kwame Nkrumah's works, one notices that Nkrumah was studying and interpreting conditions which prevailed during colonialism. According to Nkrumah, colonialism is an unjust system; it involves domination, oppression and exploitation. He therefore suggests that colonialism should be resisted using, among others, a philosophy and an ideology. In Towards Colonial Freedom

(1962), Nkrumah examined the relationship between the colonial masters and the colonial subjects. His view was that the sole purpose of colonialism was domination and exploitation. He therefore condemned it and argued for an uncompromising opposition to everything it stood for. The first five chapters of Africa Must Unite (1963), show the negative development, and the oppressive character of colonialism. Chapter eighteen of the same book was devoted to examining the new type of colonialism - neo-colonialism, which is covert in its exploitative policies. In Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism⁴ (1965), Nkrumah tried to reveal the monopolistic tendencies of capitalism and the meaninglessness of political freedom without economic independence, and to demonstrate the urgent need for unification of Africa and the socialist transformation of African society. In his Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare (1969), Class Struggle in Africa (1969), and Voice From Conakry (1967), the emphasis was placed on the prevalence of class struggles in Africa and the necessity of armed confrontation against neo-colonialist - imperialist forces in order to liberate Africa. In Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation⁵, the most philosophical of Nkrumah's books, he tried to postulate a philosophy or a system of thought, and an accompanying ideology for liberation and independence of Africa.

In general, therefore, it can be asserted that Nkrumah was concerned with: a, the problem of colonialism

and neo-colonialism; b, the means and ways of liberating Africa from colonialism and neo-colonialism as well as retaining the retrieved freedom; c, the explanation and justification of the means and ways he proposed.

With regard to the problem of colonialism and neo-colonialism, Nkrumah contended that it had robbed Africans of their freedom. The view that colonialism and neo-colonialism eroded the freedom of Africans is very prevalent in Nkrumah's works. In this dissertation, I propose to examine Nkrumah's view of freedom and how colonialism and neo-colonialism deprived Africans of this nature - given gift. In order to regain the lost freedom (taken away by colonialism), Nkrumah conceived a philosophy and an ideology as means of fighting and resistance. In fact, it is with the view to founding a philosophy and an ideology for liberating Africa that he wrote Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation (already referred to). Both the philosophy and the ideology were expected to arouse the consciousness of the colonial people of Africa that is to say, to inspire Africans to understand, resist and overthrow colonialism in its various forms. Whereas Nkrumah called his philosophy "philosophical consciencism", as "that philosophical standpoint which, taking its start from the present content of African conscience, indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in that conscience"⁴, he defined the ideology as "the guiding light of the emerging social order"⁵.

However, these means and ways pose problems.

Firstly, what distinction did Nkrumah make between philosophy and ideology? Secondly, do the functions of the two (philosophy and ideology) differ? Thirdly, Nkrumah seems to have taken for granted the view that philosophy and ideology must, of necessity, retrieve Africa's freedom. In view of the above problems, I propose to examine Nkrumah's view of philosophy and ideology if only in connection with Africans' freedom.

In the opinion of Nkrumah, the ideology and the philosophy adopted would be socialist in form and content². Why Nkrumah chose socialism is a subject of discussion in this dissertation. Nkrumah advanced two major arguments for his choice of socialism. I propose to call the first argument "metaphysical" (although it could also be called epistemological). I call it such because it is based on the abstract study of the universe, i.e. what is ultimately real, be it mind or matter. In Nkrumah's case, matter is real. I call the second argument sociological because it is based on the study of traditional African societies. These arguments are advanced in Nkrumah's *Consciencism* and they can be summarized as follows:

Argument one: If materialism is the correct interpretation of the universe, then socialism should be adopted. Materialism is the correct interpretation of the universe. Therefore, socialism should be adopted.

Argument two: If traditional Africa enjoyed

communalism, then socialism should be introduced to independent Africa. Traditional Africa enjoyed communalism. Therefore socialism should be introduced to Africa.

With regard to the metaphysical argument, as we have already seen, Nkrumah contended that reality consists primarily of matter and not of mind⁹. At the end of chapter one of consciencism he wrote: "Our universe is a natural universe. And its basis is matter with its objective laws".¹⁰ After Nkrumah asserted that our universe can be explained in terms of matter, he then added a key statement to his theoretical debate: "In the same way, there are two philosophical alternatives. These alternatives coincide with idealism and materialism ... idealism favours an oligarchy, materialism favours an egalitarianism".¹¹ In other words, Nkrumah wished to be understood as saying that materialism implies egalitarianism and idealism oligarchy. However, this argument raises three main problems. Firstly, how correct is Nkrumah's view that the world is basically matter? Secondly, even if Nkrumah's interpretation of the universe were true, it is difficult to see how Nkrumah could, at the same time, claim to be a christian¹². Thirdly, it is difficult to see how egalitarianism can be derived from materialism and oligarchy from idealism. In this connection, I shall examine Nkrumah's metaphysical argument in view the above mentioned questions.

With regard to the sociological argument, Nkrumah contended that traditional Africans lived communally; that African societies had no social classes and class struggles that emerge from the oppositions between these classes. Like Nyerere, Senghor and other African leaders, Nkrumah contended that since traditional Africa enjoyed a communalist way of life, socialism would be easily introduced to Africa. The view that socialism should be introduced to Africa because of Africa's communalist past, presents its own difficulties.

Firstly, was traditional Africa really communal in its social - political set up? After all, Nkrumah himself later denied the view that Africa was traditionally communalist. Referring to the traditional African society, he said, "I am afraid the realities of African society were somewhat more sordid"¹³. In other words, Nkrumah denied the African romantic past he had earlier postulated. Secondly, when Nkrumah later denied the claim that socialism should be introduced to Africa because Africa had a communalism past, he did not offer an alternative reason for the choice of socialism apart from the metaphysical assumption already referred to above. In other words, what other reason did Nkrumah have for the introduction of socialism to Africa? Thirdly, even if communalism worked well in traditional African societies which were organisationally small, it is difficult to see how socialism would necessarily work in more complex independent African states. In view of these problems,

the (sociological) argument is examined in this dissertation.

In the foregoing discussion, our attention was focussed on Nkrumah's major arguments (the metaphysical and the sociological) for socialism. However, these arguments did not explore the internal structure of socialism, i.e., what constitutes socialism? Put differently, what are the assumptions or tenets of socialism? According to Margaret Cole,¹⁴ they include critique of the existing societies, egalitarianism (equality), democracy, revolution and internationalism (unity). Unfortunately, whenever Nkrumah talked of any of these tenets, it was as if they are ends in-themselves. In other words, for Nkrumah, they had to be achieved at whatever cost. For instance, talking about a revolution, he said that:

If the independent African states cannot come together peacefully into such a union, then armed force must be used to achieve our socialist revolutionary objectives. It must be directed against those states and elites which still resist the process of the African Revolution¹⁵.

When Nkrumah said that there should be "establishment of democracy in which sovereignty is vested in the broadmasses"¹⁶, he was implying that democracy is an end in-itself. Further, when he, said that "restitution of

Africa's humanist and egalitarian principle requires socialism"¹⁷, he implied that egalitarianism was an end in-itself.

It is in connection with internationalism that I want to raise the issue of African Unity. The idea of incorporating all the people in a socialist revolution is found in Marx's writings. For example, Marx's opening sentence of the Communist Manifesto calls on all workers to unite. Nkrumah also made a similar statement at the end of "The Declaration" which was adopted by the Fifth Pan-African Congress. He wrote: "Colonial and subject peoples of the world unite!"¹⁸ The fundamental issues here are two. Firstly, there is emphasis on unity by both Marx and Nkrumah in relation to socialism. Secondly, the manner in which they referred to unity was as if unity was an end in-itself. Hence, if the above tenets are taken as the main constituents of socialism, our problem will be whether a socialist state is necessarily a free state.

So far, it is worthy of note that there is close similarity between Nkrumah's themes and Marx's themes with regard to socialism. The foregoing discussion and the last quotation indicate Nkrumah's attraction to Marx's views. In this light, I shall examine Nkrumah's intellectual background.

In conclusion, therefore, the problem of study of this thesis will be to *examine* Nkrumah's view that the

freedom of Africa which had been taken away by colonialism could be realised through socialism.

HYPOTHESIS

Nkrumah contended that socialism could liberate Africa as well as safeguard its freedom.

REASONS FOR THE STUDY

Nkrumah adopted a philosophical stance when he presented his proposals for fighting colonialism and neo-colonialism. For instance, the critical analysis in Nkrumah's Consciencism is characteristic of philosophy. In this connection, it is important to examine Nkrumah's views so that we can understand, assess and appreciate his contribution to the field of philosophy. Secondly, Nkrumah tried to solve some of the problems relating to the African situation. Unfortunately, some of the problems like neo-colonialism are still with us today. Studying his ideas may help us to grapple with these problems. In other words, we may learn something from him. Thirdly, it appears that most of the commentators on Nkrumah's philosophy have not emphasised the concept of freedom¹⁹. It may be that Nkrumah's philosophy raises several theoretical problems, but in my view the concept of freedom predominates. Any philosophical work on Nkrumah that does not address itself to the concept of freedom, I feel, omits the essence and root of his philosophy. Fourthly, Nkrumah's case is interesting because he tried to put in practice what he propounded. He was both a political "theorizer" and a political

"practitioner". In such a case, ceteris paribus, one expects practice to be effectively derived from the theory. Put differently, the ideals formulated in the theory should be achieved because the "theorizer" and the "practitioner" is one and the same.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Odera Oruka has identified the two assumptions that Nkrumah presented for his choice of socialism²⁰. These assumptions, as we have already seen, constitute the metaphysical and sociological arguments respectively. Apart from the identification of these two assumptions, Oruka makes no further discussion about Nkrumah's philosophy. E.A. Ruch, in his article "Return to Communalism: The New Social Harmony"²¹, has also identified the two assumptions talked about above. Although Ruch discussed the two assumptions, he made no attempt to see them in the perspective of freedom. Further, Ruch did not explain Nkrumah's deduction of historical materialism from dialectical materialism.

P.J Hountondji went to a great length in the analysis of Nkrumah's philosophy²². In my opinion, however, he omitted two major issues. First, he did not discuss Nkrumah's categorial conversion which was a major tool that Nkrumah used to arrive at socialism. secondly, Hountondji hardly discussed the notion of freedom or liberation which is the reason why Nkrumah wrote his Consciencism. Instead, Hountondji devoted his analysis to showing that Nkrumah's philosophy was an example of

for Nkrumah's choice of socialism sound? It is these issues that will form the subject of our discussion.

METHODOLOGY

The research method will include library research and logical and critical analysis. Under library research, all Nkrumah's known works, which will form the basic sources, will be analysed within the frame work of the hypothesis. Since we have already indicated a close affinity between Marxist thought and that of Nkrumah, Marx's work bearing on the topic will also be studied. The literature on Nkrumah and his works as well as African socialism in general, will form another important source of my research. Under logical analysis, logical principles of induction and deduction will be employed to examine the validity of Nkrumah's arguments and the truth of his statements on the one hand and those of his students on the other.

Footnotes

- ¹ K. Nkrumah, Challenge of the Congo (London: Panaf, 1967), p.7.
- ² ibid.
- ³ K. Kaunda, A Humanist in Africa (New York: Nashville, 1966), p.21.
- ⁴ Henceforth, this book will be referred to as "Neo-Colonialism".
- ⁵ I shall henceforth refer to the above book as 'Consciencism'.
- ⁶ Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.79.
- ⁷ Ibid., p.57.
- ⁸ See Nkrumah, Consciencism, pp. 77, 79, 95 and 105.
- ⁹ The whole of chapter one of Consciencism is intended to show the primacy of matter over mind.
- ¹⁰ Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 28.
- ¹¹ ibid., p. 75.
- ¹² See Panaf Great Lives , Kwame Nkrumah (London: Panaf, 1974), p.19.
- ¹³ Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path (London: Panaf, 1973), p.440.
- ¹⁴ M. Cole, "Socialism" in Encyclopedia of Philosophy (New York: Macmillan, Vol.7, 1972), p.339.
- ¹⁵ Panaf Great Lives, Kwame Nkrumah, p. 14
- ¹⁶ ibid.
- ¹⁷ Nkrumah, Consciencism, 78.

- ¹⁸ Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 44.
- ¹⁹ As far as I know the only student of Nkrumah's philosophy who has highlighted the problem of freedom adequately is D.A. Masolo in his article, "Kwame Nkrumah: Socialism for Liberation" in Praxis International, Vol. 6, No.2, pp. 175 - 188.
- ²⁰ Odera Oruka, "Trends in Contemporary African philosophy" (Manuscript), University of Nairobi, 1984.
- ²¹ Ruch in his chapter "Return to Communalism: The New Social Harmony" in African Philosophy (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1984), pp. 324-350.
- ²² P.J. Hountondji, African Philosophy: Myth and Reality, Translated by Henri Evans (London: Hutchinson, 1983), pp. 131 - 155.
- ²³ Hountondji, op. cit., p. 155.
- ²⁴ Masolo, op. cit., pp. 175 - 188.
- ²⁵ A.M. Candia, "The Evolution of Kwame Nkrumah's Political thought; the Themes of Violence and African Unity" (unpublished), University of London, 1985.
- ²⁶ O. Hirmmer, Marx - Money - Christ (Harare: Mambo Press, 1982), pp. 82-83.

CHAPTER TWO

NKRUMAH'S EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND HIS

INTELLECTUAL INDEBTEDNESS

In this Chapter I shall address myself to two issues: Firstly, I will examine Nkrumah's life and educational background by use of a historical analysis; Secondly, I will discuss his indebtedness by use of a comparative analysis. That is to say, I will argue that Marxism had the greatest weight on the trend of Nkrumah's philosophy and then show how other personalities could have influenced him.

A) Life and Educational Background

Nkrumah was born on 18th September, 1909 in the village of Nkroful, in Gold coast, the present-day Ghana. At the time, Gold Coast was under the British colonial rule who considered it a model colony because it was suitable for exploitation.' This means that Nkrumah was born during the colonial era. In fact, he grew up when colonialism was flourishing. It is, therefore, not surprising that his philosophy is a reaction to colonialism.

Nkrumah was the only child of his mother and lived alone with her until he was three years old when they left Nkroful for Half-Assini where Nkrumah's father lived and worked as a blacksmith. Nkrumah went to a school where all

grades were taught in a single room. The fees were three pence a month, and although it sounds a modest sum, it was a lot of money for his parents to earn in those days. Nkrumah was, therefore, for a time forced to rear some chicken which he sold to help with the payment of the fees. After his elementary school days, he became a pupil teacher at Half-Assini where the Principal of the Government Training College in Accra found him teaching. The principal was impressed by Nkrumah's teaching and he recommended Nkrumah to go to the government college and train as a teacher. In 1927, Nkrumah enrolled as a college student.

At the college, Nkrumah was impressed by the then Assistant Vice-Principal and the first African member of staff, Dr. Aggrey Kwegyir. According to Nkrumah, Kwegyir was a teacher of exceptional skill and personality. More important, however, Nkrumah was impressed by Kwegyir's efforts and charisma in awakening nationalist fervor among Africans and exhorting them to realise their heritage and be worthy of it. Referring to Kwegyir, Nkrumah said, 'he seemed the most remarkable man that I had ever met and I had the deepest affection for him.'² Seen in this light, it seems that Nkrumah's nationalist fervor was first aroused by Kwegyir. After graduating from the Training College in 1930, Nkrumah taught at a Catholic Junior School at Elmina. A year later, he was promoted to the position of Headmaster in another Roman Catholic Junior School at Axim

where he spent two years before he applied to, and was admitted into Lincoln University in the U.S.A.

Between 1935 and 1945, Nkrumah studied at the Universities of Lincoln and Pennsylvania. At Lincoln University, he was awarded a scholarship, and with his personal income from various arduous jobs, he was able to pay his fees. His field of study ranged from philosophy, sociology, economics, to theology and other related subjects. While at the Teacher Training College in Ghana, Nkrumah had trained in debating and speech making, and when he took part in an oratorical contest at Lincoln, he won a gold medal. In 1939, Nkrumah graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Lincoln University with a major in Economics and Sociology. He was then offered an Assistant Lectureship which he accepted. During this time, Nkrumah read every book on philosophy he could find,³ including the works of Marx and Engels. According to Nkrumah, these works had 'a great deal in their thought that could assist'⁴ in the fight against colonialism.

Nkrumah applied to and was admitted into Lincoln Theological Seminary. In 1942, he was awarded a Bachelor of Theology Degree from the same Seminary. He was also awarded a Masters of Science Degree in Education by the University of Pennsylvania. In 1943, he obtained a Master's Degree in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania. During that time Nkrumah wrote several papers such as "Primitive Education in West Africa", "Labour Problems in Africa", "The significance of African

Art." The topic which he hoped to study for a Ph.D in philosophy read: "The Philosophy of Imperialism with special Reference to Africa." It appears that it is this topic that resulted in Nkrumah's first book, Towards Colonial Freedom. From the content of this book, one learns that before leaving the U.S.A., Nkrumah had already been convinced of the liberational strength of the Marxist thought.⁵ It is equally reasonable to suppose that Nkrumah developed his unionist (Pan-Africanism) tendencies while he was still in the U.S.A. For instance, while at the University of Pennsylvania, he helped set up an African Studies Section, organised the African Students' Association of America and Canada, and founded a newspaper for the association called The African Interpreter. The purpose of the association was to link up the national liberation movements of Africa with the struggles of the people of African descent living in the U.S.A. In this light, it can be contended that Nkrumah was already concerned about the need for freedom of African people. In his view, the freedom and equality with whites was possible only when Africans united against white supremacy and foreign domination.⁶ While still in America, Nkrumah came in contact with the work of the Council on African Affairs, the Committee on Africa, the Committee on African Students, the Special research Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, and the Urban League. Nkrumah also read the works of Marcus Garvey.⁷

In May 1945, Nkrumah left the U.S.A. for Britain with his draft of the Towards Colonial Freedom whose content, indicates that Nkrumah was already anti-colonialist. Nkrumah wasted no time in his efforts to fight colonialism. He quickly joined George Padmore, a West Indian, and Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois in the preparations for the Fifth Pan-African Congress. In the opinion of Nkrumah, the Fifth Pan-African Congress was significant in two ways. Firstly, whereas the four earlier Pan-African Congresses had been attended by the intellectual bourgeoisie, and expressed bourgeois interests, the Fifth Pan-African Congress was attended by a greater number of workers and students from Africa. Secondly, Nkrumah was impressed by the fact that the Fifth Pan-African Congress adopted socialism as its political philosophy. It is perhaps important to note also that of the two "declarations" which were made at the end of the Fifth Pan-African Congress one was Nkrumah's; and the last sentence of his declaration ended with a sentence that echoed Marx's last sentence in his Communist Manifesto (see p. 33 below). In view of this, Nkrumah seems to have been already inclined to scientific socialism (Marx's socialism) and political union of Africa as a way of obtaining freedom for Africa. Further, the "Circle" which he formed soon after he reached Britain was intended to be a nucleus of the Union of African Socialist Republics. Moreover, Nkrumah met several British communist leaders including Emil Burns,

Palme Dutt, Harry Polit and many others who may have influenced his thinking.

Nkrumah returned to Africa at the end of 1947 at the invitation of the U.G.C.C. (United Gold Coast Convention). He was anxious to work to bring about national independence for Gold Coast as soon as possible but, in his view, U.G.C.C. was not properly organised and its composition was inadequate; it was led by professionals and businessmen. It had no youth and mass support. Nkrumah therefore, broke away from U.G.C.C., formed the C.P.P. and sought to bring about national freedom for the Gold Coast. During this period of struggle for national independence, Nkrumah did not declare himself a Marxist and, in fact, denied being a communist. In my opinion, Nkrumah was justified to deny being a communist because, it is very difficult to see how the British who are capitalists could hand over independence to a communist-led government. It seems tactical for Nkrumah to have denied being a socialist and embark on socialist reconstruction soon after independence.

When the Gold Coast became independent, it was renamed Ghana. Nkrumah then embarked on his socialist programme. He pursued the liberation of Africa and the creation of the Union of Socialist Republics of Africa. During the early days of Ghanaian independence, Nkrumah's commitment to socialism seemed to waver. I have pointed out that by the time Nkrumah left Britain for Africa he was already convinced of scientific socialism; but when he

wrote his first edition of Consciencism in 1964, he contended that scientific socialism was not appropriate for Africa. The reason he gave was that Africa had no social classes like Europe. The view that Africa had no social classes and therefore should not adopt scientific socialism was shared by some of Nkrumah's contemporary nationalist leaders like Nyerere, Senghor, and others. In my opinion, Nkrumah held such a view because he wanted to be in line with his contemporaries. In fact, by the time he was overthrown in 1966, he had realised that he had erred. After this date, he advocated scientific socialism and unity of Africa as the only effective means of achieving African freedom. Nkrumah maintained this view until his death in 1972.

Intellectual Indebtedness

Marxism is an ambivalent word. It either refers to 'ideas of Marx as reconstructed by a historian who seeks to understand them in relation to the man and his times'¹⁸ or to 'the ideas of Marx as interpreted by various "Marxist" schools in relation to their own times, their own problems, their own goals'¹⁹ or, to 'the social movement, the parties in opposition, and the parties in power that claim to be acting or governing in accordance with Marxist ideas.'²⁰ The first two meanings can be said to constitute Marxist philosophy, while the third meaning refers to the application of this type of philosophy. Probably, there is no philosophy in the modern world that has had more reception than Marxism. It is probably for

the same reason that it has received differing interpretations. These varied interpretations have led to polemics among students and followers of seemingly the same Marxist school. Similarly, the application of Marxism has been so varied that there are so many different systems of government in the world all claiming to rest on Marxist principles. It would, however, be beyond the scope of this thesis to try and discuss the ramifications of Marxism. Before we can trace the influence of Marxism on Nkrumah, or rather consider what specific Marxist principles Nkrumah adopted, we need to explain what constitutes Marxist principles.

Marxist principles can be understood more clearly when seen under their theoretical compasses of metaphysics, logic, and epistemology which constitute dialectical materialism, and Ethics, Politics and Philosophy of History which constitute historical materialism. It is my conviction that Nkrumah's philosophy is basically influenced by Marxist metaphysics, Ethics, and Philosophy of history. It is these three, then, that require our attention in relation to Nkrumah.

a) Nkrumah and the Marxist Metaphysics

Marxist metaphysics is founded on Marx's dialectic which he adopted from Hegel. But while the Hegelian dialectic was based on mind or the Absolute, Marx's dialectic was based on physical or material forces in operation. It is for this reason that Marx is said to have "stood *Hegel on his* head". The materialists before

Marx believed that everything in the world was reducible to mechanical interaction of bodies. Instead, Marx asserted that the universe was not only material but also a dynamic one. That is to say, it evolves according to a dialectical process. Each epoch of the world contains intrinsic material contradictions out of which a new world (synthesis) is produced. Out of this synthesis which now becomes a new thesis, an antithesis develops ready for another synthesis. Hence, this movement in nature involving these contradictions constitutes a process nearing a final goal of a completely organised nature. F. Engels, a long time collaborator of Marx, in his Anti-Duhring elaborated on Marx's dialectical laws. These laws consist of the law of contradictions in nature, the law of change of quality from quantity, the law of interpenetration of opposites, and the law of negation of the negation. Generally, Marxist metaphysics rejected Hegelian idealistic tendencies, but retained the developmental tendencies (the dialectical process). Outstanding Marxists have adopted this view.

How then did Nkrumah exploit this metaphysics? Chapter one and four of Nkrumah's Consciencism, as well as chapter six of this dissertation, have endeavoured to exhibit the link between Marxist and "Nkrumahist" metaphysics. Nkrumah's universe was similarly explained in terms of both materialism and dialectical evolutions. One can give many examples to confirm what we are saying: 'Dialectical materialism recognises differences between

mind and brain, between energy and mass.¹¹ He also writes that 'matter, however, is also a plenum of forces which are in antithesis to one another. The philosophical point of saying this is that matter is endowed with powers of self-motion.'¹² Probably, Nkrumah's last two sentences of the last paragraph of chapter one of Consciencism summarise it all¹³ (already quoted above, p.8). Hence Nkrumah recognised dialectical materialism as the most reasonable interpretation of the Universe.¹⁴ It can be seen that Nkrumah did not only adopt Marx's metaphysics but also a more elaborate form of it from Engels. While Marx never discussed ontological issues deeply, Engels did, and so did Nkrumah, as shown above.

Nkrumah tried to fit the Marxist dialectical laws in the scheme of his philosophical consciencism. Thus when he attributed the idea of cosmic strife of opposites to Heraclitus's theory of permanent change, he had in mind the law of interpenetration of opposites as well as the law of the negation of negation.¹⁵

Nkrumah seems to have adopted the laws of change of quality from quantity and contradictions in nature, unequivocally. For example, he said: 'According to philosophical consciencism, qualities are generated by matter. Behind any qualitative appearance, there stands a quantitative disposition of matter.'¹⁶ And he also says: 'And matter, in being a plenum of forces in tension, already contains the incipient change in disposition which is necessary to bring about a change in quality or

property'.¹⁷ Against such a background, I can safely assert that there is similarity between Marxist metaphysics and Nkrumah's metaphysics.

We have already said Marxists generally reject idealism as a view of the world. Nkrumah, in trying to reject idealism, in fact, invoked Marx's words in the following statement: 'idealism suffers from what I might call the God-complex; it is what Marx called 'intoxicated speculation'.¹⁸ Here one may ask, what does it matter whether Marx called "idealism" intoxicated speculation, or not? In other words, what is wrong with idealism being related to the idea of God? After all, Marx did not prove that God was non-existent. It appears that Nkrumah considered Marx's analysis as already proven correct or at least, took it for granted.

Having rejected idealism, Nkrumah proceeded to lend Marx a hand in criticising religion when he said: "People who are most aggressively religious are the poorer people; in accordance with the Marxist analysis, religion is social, and contemporary religious forms and practices have their main root in the social depression of workers."¹⁹

In chapter four, we shall show that Nkrumah looked at philosophy as having a social contention, and chapter two of Nkrumah's Consciencism was intended to demonstrate this claim. On close examination, however, one notices that Nkrumah was all the time trying to denigrate philosophies which he thought implied capitalism and extolled

philosophies which he thought implied socialism. Those philosophies which he took to fit into a Marxist ideological framework would be acknowledged. For example, Thales's philosophy implied monism, fundamental identity, materialism and hence, socialism. Heraclitus's permanent changeableness of the universe implied Engels's dialectical laws and therefore, a revolution. Thus one sees Nkrumah endeavouring to fit his arguments into the Marxist framework. Although much of his metaphysics is derived from Marxism, he intended it for the theoretical and practical solution to the African problems of colonialism and neo-colonialism as well as the surging capitalism. Nkrumah chose Marxism because he thought it was the most effective theoretical thrust that could support his socialist ideology.

b) Nkrumah and the Marxist Social-Political-Economic Theory (Philosophy of History)

The Marxian dialectical change was not restricted to metaphysics alone. It was also extended to the economic, social, and political order. In his Das Kapital, Marx asserted that capitalists are always motivated by the desire to maximise profits. In order for capitalists to achieve this objective, they always try to invent tools and find ways of improving their means of production. Through these means, the quantity of goods produced increases. Subsequently, human labour is substituted by machinery. Meanwhile, as capitalists become richer as the costs of production are lowered, the labourers increase

and begin to compete for the few jobs available even though their wages are only for subsistence. Marx used the "labour theory of value" to invent what he called "surplus value". Since the worker has no commodity value to exchange with the capitalists, he offers himself in form of labour and he is given a wage less than his labour. The wage he receives, as said above is only for sustaining himself and his family (if he has any). The difference between the value of goods that a worker produces and the wage he receives, is what Marx called the "surplus value". The surplus value is taken by the employer which he uses for further improvement of his productive capacity.

Accordingly, in such conditions, Marx observed, there is always a tendency for the fewer people to become wealthier while the majority become poorer. The intermediate class is meanwhile absorbed into either side. So to say, the society is divided into two classes. As the process continues, the poor labourers begin to nurture a resentment against their state in society or to use Marx's own words, they become "class conscious". In the end the poor labourers (proletariat) will rise, overthrow and expropriate the capitalists. Thereafter, a new society without classes will be created, i.e. a socialist state ruled by the proletariat. Marx was convinced that the capitalists would never be removed from power peacefully. This is because the capitalist have the state (the army, the police, the law, etc.) which will always

protect them. Therefore, force and coercion must be resorted to if the capitalists are to be done away with.

This, I should say, is a brief account of the Philosophy of history of Marx. It is the same theory that has been adopted by later Marxists albeit with more ample elaboration and modifications, both in theory and practice. Hence our question, 'How much of this theory did Nkrumah adopt for his own social-economic political theory?'

Nkrumah's social-economic-political theory must not be seen as one which was propounded and worked out in a single moment. His theory changed as time went by. In his first analysis of colonial economic policies in his Towards Colonial Freedom (1962), Nkrumah more or less restated Marx's position on capitalism. He however, lightly touched on the social classes resulting from the capitalist system. In fact in his Consciencism (1964), he asserted that there were no social classes in Africa. In Towards Colonial Freedom, Nkrumah avoided speaking of the rising of the proletariat against the capitalists. Instead, his conclusion was that the colonialists went for acquisition of colonies. Later, however, Nkrumah went ahead and exposed the cruel nature of capitalism in the manner reminiscent of other Marxists. Thus if we compare the Marxist and Nkrumahist positions on capitalism, except for the emphasis on class struggles and colonial exploitation, Marxist influence is prevalent in Nkrumah.

Shortly before his downfall, Nkrumah published Neo-

colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism (1965). This title echoes so well Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916), that one may not readily distinguish the two. Even the subject of discussion as well as the manner of writing is similar. For Lenin, capitalism had reached its final monopolistic stage and was ripe for overthrow. However, this would not be possible because of the uneven development of capitalism in different countries. So, socialism would not be successful in all or in most countries as Marx had predicted. On his part, Nkrumah conceded that capitalism had reached its monopolistic stage on a world scale. Africa was now part of the world order of exploitative, imperialist capitalism and if it got political freedom without economic independence, such freedom would be meaningless. Nkrumah therefore urgently called for unification and socialist transformation of Africa in order to weed out imperialist forces.

The style in which Nkrumah's later books are written appears to have close affinity with some of Marx's books. Nkrumah's Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare (1969), could be compared with Marx's Communist Manifesto (1848), and with the Circular Letter of The Central Committee to The Communist League (1850). All these books call for the violent overthrow of capitalists and the establishment of a socialist order. The last statement of Nkrumah's Towards colonial Freedom was: 'Peoples of all the colonies, unite'.²⁰ The last statement of "Declaration to

the colonial peoples of the world" at the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945, also read as: Colonial and Peoples of the World-United.²¹ The temptation to believe that these statements were adopted from Marx's Manifesto of The Communist Party, is great, the conclusion of which also read as follows; 'Working Men of All countries Unite.'²²

Nkrumah's Class Struggle in Africa (1970), seems to have done for Africa what Marx's Das Kapital did for Europe. We see in this work of Nkrumah, efforts to assert that social classes which he had earlier denied in his first version of Consciencism (1964), exist and as a way of eliminating these class struggles, he calls for a socialist revolution. Marx had contended that social classes were an inevitable consequence of capitalism. But while Marx traced the development of social classes from capitalism only, Nkrumah traced it from both neo-colonialist and capitalist systems. Nonetheless, when Nkrumah talked about classes, he was specifically referring to the Marxian classes. As he says, 'In this social situation, it was impossible for classes of Marxian kind to arise. By a Marxian kind of class, I mean one which has a place in a horizontal social stratification... In traditional African society, no sectional interests could be regarded as supreme... The welfare of the people

was supreme. But colonialism came and changed all this'.²³

Another thing that helps us to establish affinity between Marx and Nkrumah is the concept of revolution. Both Nkrumah and Marx asserted that a violent revolution would eradicate capitalism. Earlier, however, Nkrumah had said that the revolution was not necessary; instead some reforms were needed to change the African society into a socialist one.²⁴ Later, he recognised the existence of social classes in Africa and advocated for their abolition by use of force. Common to all Marxists is the desire to change the existing societies, that is, to "revolutionise" the current societies. Nkrumah, too, laid emphasis on revolution. His later books, especially Revolutionary Path (1973), show how much convinced he was about the importance of the revolution. It should also be pointed out that later in life (after the Ghana coup of 1966), he stressed the need for revolution as well as scientific socialism.

On the role of philosophy, Nkrumah wrote a whole chapter to prove that philosophy had always been concerned with society, i.e. it had always had a social contention. Nkrumah saw philosophy as significant for African freedom and social development. In fact, when Nkrumah wrote his Consciencism, he meant to produce a philosophy as well as an ideology for decolonisation and development. Marx on his part, regarded philosophy, especially speculative philosophy and ideology, as instruments of exploitation

and oppression. Marx specifically resented speculative philosophy, but this does not mean that he rejected philosophy as a whole.²⁵ It may be that Nkrumah and Marx held opposite views in regard to the importance of philosophy, but it cannot be denied that some themes of Nkrumah's philosophy are similar to those of Marx. After all, later Marxists recognised a species of philosophy, so called now, Marxism-Leninism or dialectical materialism.²⁶ In other words, what Marx thought was not philosophy, forms part of what is called Marxist philosophy today.

Nkrumah and the Marxist Ethics

Marx never at all thought of himself as a moralist. He considered himself a neutral, dispassionate scientist, objectively analysing a certain epoch in human history. He therefore never propounded a systematic theory of ethics. I think Marx refused to consciously involve himself in moral judgement because he feared it might lead him to metaphysical speculation which he was opposed to. He therefore refused to accept himself as an ethical teacher. His ethics, therefore, if he has any, is only implicit.

But whether Marx thought of himself as a moralist or not, there is much evidence attesting to his moral judgement. For example, Marx's analysis of capitalism reveals a society he disapproves of i.e. an immoral or unjust society.

According to Marx, a capitalist society is pervaded by competition and continuous striving for profits without

apportioning any value to man, the labourer. In the process of this profit seeking, more and more people are made destitute by the capitalists. The results of capitalists' improved technology are normally successful but with an immediate backlash of alienating labourers. Thus referring to this technology Marx said:

...contrary, machinery gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The fangled sources of wealth, by strange weird spell are turned to sources of want. The victories of art seem brought by loss of character. At the same pace, that mankind masters nature, man seems enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the background of ignorance.²⁷

From this passage alone, Marx is deprecating what a capitalist does to people i.e., exploiting them. A capitalist society worships its products at the expense of "alienating" its own people. Such a society, Marx says, 'is doomed to self-alienation'. The tendency of chasing after profits constitutes the source of immorality of capitalism. Therefore, in order to be free from this form of immorality, a capitalist society should be abolished. Why did Marx condemn a capitalist society? In my opinion

Marx saw such a society as unjust. He even went ahead and suggested a society which he thought was just.

Therefore, Marx had a strong moral motive. It can, in fact, be asserted, that Marx's scientific and sociological endeavours were motivated by the existence of an immoral society- a society that alienates its people. He felt sympathetic towards the suffering labourers and was determined to secure them freedom even if it meant the use of violent means. It is much of this view that can be said to constitute Marxist ethics.

How then did this covert ethics influence Nkrumah? We have said above that although Marx did not think he was a moralist, his work was heavily motivated by morality. For example he says of morality, 'it is a network of principles and rules for the guidance and appraisal of conduct. And upon these rules and principles we constantly fall back'.²⁸ Nkrumah compares morality with ideology. ²⁹ He, it can be said, tried to formulate an ethical theory. He asserted that: 'According to philosophical consciencism, ethical rules are not permanent but depend on the stage reached in the historical evolution of a society, so however that cardinal principles of egalitarianism are conserved'.³⁰ Later, Nkrumah said; 'The cardinal ethical principle of philosophical consciencism is to treat each man as an end in himself and not merely as a means. This is fundamental to all socialist or humanist conceptions of man'.³¹ Thus his ethical theory is expressed within the socialist framework as well as traditional African values. Later we shall show (in chapter four of this dissertation) how he

tried to demonstrate a social contention in philosophical systems. Any philosophy that could be likened to egalitarianism was extolled, and any philosophy that was interpreted as capitalistic was denigrated.

Although we could say that Nkrumah's concern about morality was original to him, it was basically intended to rationalise socialism of a Marxist genre. In fact, he allowed for coercion which is characteristic of Marxists as a means of a society to achieve and preserve unity as he says "coercion could unfortunately be rather painful, but it is signally effective in ensuring that individual behavior does not become dangerously irresponsible".³²

Otherwise, the moral problems of both Marx and Nkrumah are the same - their concern with the oppression and exploitation of the populace and the means to achieve freedom. But while Marx traced these problems to the cruelty of the capitalist system, Nkrumah traced them first to colonialism and neo-colonialism, and secondly, to capitalism. Although Nkrumah did not emphasise the concept of alienation, implicitly, he was concerned with the same problem. The theoretical problem underlying their analyses is one: the concept of freedom. They sympathised with the suffering lot, and prayed the obstacles to their freedom removed. Both Nkrumah and Marx had espoused a concept of negative freedom, i.e. freedom from exploitation and oppression. Nkrumah, however, had evolved also the concept of positive freedom, that is, freedom to. As for negative freedom, Nkrumah was

primarily claiming political freedom, i.e. "complete and absolute independence from the control of any government; democratic freedom, i.e. freedom from political tyranny".³³ With respect to positive freedom, Nkrumah wanted power established in masses as well as improvement of social and economic conditions.³⁴

In the light of the foregoing, we can safely classify Nkrumah as a Marxist. Nkrumah is not the only one who was fascinated by the Marxist theory. Many others have been influenced by it and others will be so in future: Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Sartre, etc., the list is long. This probably shows the relevance and the liberational power of Marxism. However, when Marx wrote, his message was intended for Western European capitalists. Nkrumah chose Marxism for a peasant Africa had a divided ideological background resulting due to differing colonial policies and, to some extent, to ethnicity.

Other External Influences

Recently, Professor Ivan Karp of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., hinted to me that Nkrumah's work was basically influenced by Marcus Garvey.³⁵ Ali Mazrui made the same observation in his article, "A reply to critics".³⁶ Nkrumah himself also admitted this observation when he says, "I read Hegel, Karl Marx, Lenin and Mazzini. The writings of these men did much to influence me in my revolutionary ideas and activities, and Karl Marx and Lenin particularly impressed me as I felt sure that their philosophy was capable of solving these

problems. But I think that of all the literature that I studied, the book that did more than any other to fire my enthusiasm was Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey (1923)."³⁷

However, Marcus Garvey's influence is not so obvious. For example, Marcus Garvey had advocated Negro emancipation and black purity and power in America and insisted on the return of blacks to Africa. He did not specifically condemn the white race but wanted glorification of the black people. In consequence, his views were mistaken as racism. In fact, this brought him into conflict with Dr. Du Bois, a coloured, who advocated Pan-Africanism as a weapon against colonialism. What probably puts Garvey at variance with Nkrumah is that the former condemned socialism and communism, while the latter, as we have seen above, advocated both.

Nkrumah, I should say, was basically concerned with the fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism, not with blackness as a colour. The title and content of the first of his books, Towards Colonial Freedom (1962), illustrates the point we are making here. As a matter of fact, most of his literature was intended to expose, resist or fight colonialism and neo-colonialism rather than to glorify the black race. Further, he said of Garveyism when he compared it with Pan-Africanism: ".... instead of a rather nebulous movement concerned with black nationalism, the Pan-Africanism movement had become an

expression of African nationalism".³⁹ This implies that Nkrumah disagreed with Garvey with respect to black nationalism. One, however, is astounded to read such a statement as:

The African revolutionary struggle is not an isolated one ... but must be seen in the context of the Black Revolution as a whole. In the U.S.A., the Caribbean, and wherever Africans are oppressed ... in these areas, the black man is in a condition of domestic colonialism, and suffers both on the grounds of class and of colour. The core of the Black Revolution is in Africa, and until Africa is united under a socialist government, the Black man throughout the world lacks a national home 39.

He had also expressed the same sentiment in Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare. In that book he wrote, 'The black power movement in the U.S.A and the struggle of peoples of African descent in the Caribbean, South America and elsewhere, form an integral part of the African politico-military revolutionary struggle'⁴⁰ The two articles, "The spectre of black power"⁴¹ and the "Message" to the black people of Britain,"⁴² illustrate further that Nkrumah had to some extent come to accept the ideas of Marcus Garvey or that he himself changed his views.

Instead, Dr. W.E.B Du Bois of mixed race in America, would claim more influence on Nkrumah than Garvey. While,

for example, Garvey was campaigning for blackness as a colour, Du Bois was busy expounding the Pan-Africanist philosophy. For Du Bois, national self-determination, individual liberty and democratic socialism constituted the essential elements of Pan-Africanism. It is worth of note that Du Bois was responsible for the organisation of all the Pan-African congresses. At the first Pan-African congress in Paris, Du Bois made it known that the movement was for the promotion of national self-determination among Africans under African leadership, and for the benefit of Africans. In the later congresses, he emphasised socialism. Against this background, Du Bois seems to have had more influence on Nkrumah than Garvey. This is most evident in later life when Nkrumah strongly advocated for a socialist transformation and a political union of Africa.

Nkrumah's anti-colonial stance had many sources. We have already referred to Dr. Aggrey Kwegyir, George Padmore who worked with him for the Fifth Pan-African Congress, C.L.R. James and his anti-colonial journalism. All of these had some influence on Nkrumah.

Nonetheless, although we can trace Nkrumah's thought from different sources, Marxism remains outstandingly influential. Moreover, people like Du Bois and C.L.R. James had themselves been influenced by the Marxist ideology. Nkrumah chose the Marxist philosophy as a solution to the problems of African decolonisation and development. Therefore, I propose that when judging

Nkrumah's indebtedness to other philosophers, attention and emphasis should be placed on the applicability of the borrowed principles.

In conclusion therefore, the following can be asserted: Firstly, Nkrumah's intellectual development was ~~influenced~~ primarily by the social circumstances of his time. He was born and grew up during the colonial era and made his debut in the arena of politics during the awakening of African nationalism. Nkrumah's philosophy can therefore be described as liberational. Secondly, Nkrumah's philosophy is clearly Marxist in form and content; it is almost a re-statement of Marxism-Leninism. Thirdly, Nkrumah's choice of Marxism was the product of his personal study and rationalisation.

Footnotes

- 1 See Panaf Great Lives, Kwame Nkrumah (London: Panaf, 1974), p. 17.
- 2 Nkrumah, Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (London: Panaf, 1973, p.12. Henceforth, I shall refer to this book as "Autobiography".
- 3 See Nkrumah, Autobiography, p.26.
- 4 Nkrumah, Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation (London: Panaf, 1970), p.5.
- 5 See Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path (London: Panaf, 1962) p.23-24.
- 6 See Nkrumah, Autobiography, p.36.
- 7 He was a Black American who tried to awaken black consciousness. We shall see more about him in the comparison analysis.
- 8 A. Raymond, "The Impact of Marxism in Twentieth Century" in Marxism in the Modern World (New York: Standford University Press, 1973), p.1.
- 9 ibid.
- 10 ibid.
- 11 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.93.
- 12 ibid. see above. p.
- 13 Already quoted on p.8 above.
- 14 See Consciencism, p. 93.
- 15 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 37.

- 16 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 87.
- 17 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 89.
- 18 ibid., p. 19.
- 19 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 13.
- 20 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 41.
- 21 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p.41.
- 22 Marxism-Leninism on Proletarian Internationalism
(Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 37.
- 23 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 69, see also pp. 71 and 72.
- 24 See Chapter Five of this dissertation.
- 25 J. Hoffman, Marxism and the Theory of Praxis (New
York: International Publishers, 1970.
pp. 29-44.
- 26 M. Cornforth, Dialectical Materialism, Vol. 1
(London: Lawrence Wishart, 1960). p. 7.
- 27 Stroll and Popkin, op. cit. p. 237.
- 28 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 58.
- 29 ibid., pp.56-59.
- 30 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 95.
- 31 ibid.
- 32 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.62.
- 33 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 41.
- 34 ibid.
- 35 Marcus, Garvey was the leader of American Blacks after
the 1st World War.
- 36 Transition, Vol. 32, 1964, p.48.
- 37 Nkrumah, Autobiography, p. 37.

- 37 Nkrumah, Class Struggle in Africa, pp. 87-88.
- 38 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 446.
- 41 ibid., pp. 421-428.
- 42 ibid., pp.429-431.

CHAPTER THREENKRUMAH'S REACTION AGAINST COLONIALISM: THE CASE OF FREEDOM

1. Introduction

I have already expressed my conviction that Nkrumah's major preoccupation lay with freedom which colonialism and neo-colonialism had taken away from Africans.¹ This is not, however, to assert that this was his only concern. Other themes can be detected in Nkrumah's confrontation with colonialism. For instance, materialism, violence, injustice, alienation can be detected as well. Our attention in this chapter however, shall be focussed on the concept of freedom in as far as it is central to Nkrumah's views about colonialism and neo-colonialism. We shall proceed by defining the concept of freedom, and then juxtapose different kinds of freedom with the corresponding aspects of life² of the colonial subjects with a view to determining the presence or absence of freedom among them.

2. FREEDOM

a) In the history of social-political thought, the term "freedom" has been employed to refer to circumstances that arise in man-to-man relationships or to specific conditions of life. Like other normative concepts in philosophy, freedom cannot be defined quite precisely. However, in the history of Western philosophy, it refers to a condition characterized by the absence of coercion or

constraint imposed by another person. Thus, a person is said to be free if he, or she:

can choose his own goals or course of conduct, can choose between alternatives available to him, and is not compelled to act as he would not himself choose to act, or prevented from acting as he would otherwise choose to act, by the will of another man, of the state or of any other authority³.

This form of freedom as defined in terms of absence of coercion or constraints is often referred to as negative freedom (or freedom from). On the other hand, positive freedom refers to that situation for which freedom is claimed (or freedom for).

However, some writers, such as P.H. Partridge, have argued that the condition of absence or presence of coercion alone is not a sufficient standard measure of freedom. Natural conditions which may be considered as limiting factors, have a direct bearing on the extent to which one can be said to be free. According to Partridge, the growth of knowledge that may increase our capacity to achieve given goals increases one's freedom. Partridge further asserts that in addition to the above conditions, the possession of the means or the power to achieve the objectives of one's own volition is an important condition for freedom. Therefore, if the above three conditions were made available, freedom would necessarily be guaranteed.

However, each of the above conditions seems to have its own problems. For instance, what is meant by coercion or how is coercion to be determined? Coercion could be explicit or implicit. In a situation where the government subtly and skillfully molds the minds of the people such that they desire what their rulers want them to desire without ever realising that there are alternatives to what they are accustomed to, or that their freedom to choose has been determined. Citizens in this case, would not be aware of any constraints and if each one of them was asked, whether they are free or not, it is likely they would claim to be free. Nonetheless, the citizen is not free by the fact that his freedom has already been determined by way of manipulation by his rulers. Coercion then is present albeit implicitly.

Freedom has been said to exist in *a* situation characterized by the absence of coercion or constraints. It has also been said to be social because it is used in a societal context. This situation implies a conflict i.e., the individual versus the society. For the society to function properly, it needs to regulate itself. It is the need of imposition of regulations to the individuals that explains the presence of the individual-society conflict. Individuals in the society may perform actions that threaten the existence of the society. And when the society represented by the state, intervenes to protect itself by imposing of restraints, some individuals may be harmed unjustifiably. Yet, if the society condoned

harmful actions for fear of infringing on the individual freedom, then, the society would most likely perish. Thus on behalf of the general good, the society represented by the state may inevitably infringe on individual liberties. In consequence, the following problems have to be appreciated. Firstly, the individual has to live with constraints, because the individual freedom also implies freedom for others. Secondly, for the society to exist or to function properly, it has to impose constraints. Thirdly, for greater possibility of freedom, the society should impose constraints that are adequate, reasonable and legitimate. Fourthly, freedom as defined above (p.48) is not possible in practice, i.e total absence of constraints.

It has already been said that the absence of natural conditions that may prevent one from achieving a chosen objective enhances the freedom of a person. For instance, a wise man may achieve a better objective than a fool would or, a strong man may choose to punish an aggressor. On the other hand, a weak man is likely to keep quiet or retreat when maltreated. This condition for freedom gives rise to a serious problem, namely, how would the freedom of an individual or even of a society that is naturally unfree be achieved later on safeguarded? In my opinion, it is not possible. This is not to suggest that natural conditions don't increase the freedom of an individual. It is my contention that in such a case only the

availability of the other two conditions may increase the freedom of an individual.

The condition that for freedom to be realised one should have the means or the power, has its own shortcomings. If having the power to do "y" is part of being free to do "y", what are the implications? When one asserts that he is free to become either a Catholic or a Protestant and another one asserts that he is free to go to the moon, the concept of freedom seems to change. In the first statement, the meaning is that one is allowed to become either a Catholic or Protestant. In the second statement, however, two issues are involved; one, that he is allowed to fly to the moon, and secondly, that he has the means to fly to the moon. Hence, the possession of the means or of the power as a condition for freedom conceals the exact nature of freedom and could easily mislead. Bertrand de Jouvenel points out that if we say that to be free to achieve chosen ends requires the possession of the power and social means necessary for their achievement, then the problem of freedom becomes confused with the problem of how satisfactions are to be maximised.⁴ For instance, while it may be true to say that a peasant is free to spend his christmas holidays in the Nairobi Hilton Hotel, it may be true also to say that he cannot afford to do so. For Jouvenel, the two statements refer to two distinct state of affairs and they shouldn't be amalgamated.

b) Metaphysical freedom

Freedom is a basic characteristic of man as a rational being. It is a perfection of the will and as such, it is neither a substance nor a faculty but a quality of certain acts of the will. It is a strong orientation or desire of man to realise his nature, to be self-possessed and fulfilled outside any dependance and alienation. It is an end in-itself. It coincides with the other values like love, beauty, truth, etc., which together form a progressive search for the totality of perfection of man. As such, anything that reduces the freedom of man negatively affects his perfection. Therefore, anything that adversely affects the freedom of man should be seen as an evil. For Nkrumah, this evil was colonialism in all its manifestations.

3 Freedom Versus colonialism

Various attempts to subdivide freedom into particular subgroups have been made, but for our purposes, I propose to follow Johari's subgrouping.⁴ Johari divides freedom into three broad categories: natural freedom, social freedom and moral freedom. According to Johari, natural freedom is the freedom to do what one wills, i.e, total absence of restraints. Moral freedom refers to man's capacity to act as per his rational self so as to have the best possible development of his personality. Of the three, social freedom is our major concern. Social freedom is a much wider concept. "It relates to man's freedom in his life as member of the social organisation.

As such, it refers to a man's right to do what he wills in compliance of the restraints imposed on him in the general interest". Johari further subdivides this into the following subcategories: economic freedom, political freedom, national freedom, international freedom, personal freedom and domestic freedom. Since Nkrumah put much emphasis on the colonial economics, let us examine first, whether economic freedom was existent or not.

A) Economic Freedom During Colonialism

Economic freedom is related to an individual with a capacity of a producer or a worker, whether mental or manual, engaged in gainful occupation. According to Johari,⁹ five tenets constitute economic freedom: namely, the freedom to have some gainful employment, freedom from want, right to produce and distribute goods, workers' right to participate in the management of industry and industrial democracy. If these tenets are taken to comprise economic freedom, how then were they violated or adhered to during colonialism as described by Nkrumah? Much of Nkrumah's analysis of colonial economics was done in Towards Colonial Freedom (1962) and Africa must unite (1963). His Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism (1965), The Class struggle in Africa (1970) and the Challenge of the Congo (1969) cover much of his neo-colonial economics.

In Towards Colonial Freedom, Nkrumah attempted to analyse the colonial policies, the colonial system of production and distribution of imports and exports. He

also tried to expose the inherent contradictions of labour and capital investments in the colonies. Throughout, Nkrumah contended that colonialism was intended for Economic Domination and for other form of exploitation. In Africa Must Unite, Nkrumah emphasised the view that Africa was potentially rich and could avoid domination and exploitation by the foreign capitalists if it were united. In Neo-Colonialism, Nkrumah demonstrated how the multi-national companies had connived with their Western governments to dominate or control the economies of African countries. In the Challenge of the Congo, Nkrumah contended that the Belgian-Congo crisis of 1965 was a demonstration of the struggle of the foreign capitalists to control African economies through the United Nations. In The Class Struggle in Africa, Nkrumah tried to show that social classes which had been assumed to be non-existent in traditional Africa, emerged subsequent to the introduction of colonial and neo-colonial domination.

In general, Nkrumah's emphasis in regard to colonial economics was that the colonialists motive was exploitation of the colonial people. But for the colonialists to succeed in their exploitation they had to dominate or control the colonies. It is, therefore, important that Nkrumah should have exposed the methods of colonial domination so as to be able to devise means of overcoming this foreign domination which clearly suggested the negation of the economic freedom of the colonial peoples.

1) The Freedom to have Some Gainful Employment.

This means that one should not only be able to find employment, but should be paid reasonably. Nkrumah was both implicit and explicit in his deprecation of the infringement upon this freedom. Implicit because of his invocation of the Marxist analysis of the nature, development and alienating effect on the workers. Nkrumah thought that the Marxist analysis was relevant to Africa. Nkrumah notes that workers were forced to work harder as their wages were reduced. As capitalism developed, less and less workers were required. In consequence, more and more people became unemployed. In the light of this analysis, one has to note two things. First, the colonial people were paid little money. Consequently, the colonial people were denied the freedom of gainful employment. Nkrumah was explicit when he states that:

the wages of the colonial people were too little to allow them to build up capital for beginning an enterprise and worse than this, whether as a wage earner or as peasant, he was always in debt due to the fact that when he buys manufactured goods, he loses and when he sells his produce, he loses and the colonial government sees that he remains in perpetual debt by further taxing him. The colonial subject is thus economically strangled by his

very "trustees" who are supposed to prepare him for self-government.¹⁰

In other words, they (colonial people) were always paid too little for their labour, and their capacity to start enterprises was deliberately thwarted. Additionally, Nkrumah observed that the colonial monopolists forced the peasant-farmers to accept low fixed prices for their produce and raw materials and low wages for their labour. Yet, the peasant-farmers had to buy expensive imported goods. This practice, of course, left the peasant-farmers in a poor state. In consequence, one can assert that Nkrumah's observations confirm that colonial people were denied freedom of gainful employment.

ii) Freedom from want

This kind of freedom means absence of poverty. One should be in a position to buy what he or she feels is necessary. Above, it was noted that apart from lacking employment, the colonial subjects were paid inadequate wages. In such a case, it is implied that the colonial subjects were not free from want. However, Nkrumah was much clearer when he said the following: "It has always been said that Africa is poor, What nonsense. It is not Africa that is poor, it is the Africans who are impoverished by centuries of exploitation and domination".¹¹ Nkrumah further asserted that the colonialists "were all rapacious. They subserved the needs of the subject lands to the needs of their own demands."¹² In reference to neo-colonialism, he observed

that it increases the gap between the rich and the poor countries.¹³ What Nkrumah seems to be asserting is that the poverty of the colonial and neo-colonial subjects was a direct consequence of the colonial and neo-colonial domination and exploitation. Consequently, the colonial subjects became poor and had no freedom from want. They were forced into a "position of want".

iii) Freedom to Produce and Distribute Goods

This type of freedom implies that the possibilities of one taking part in the production and exchange of goods should be greater and greater. For Nkrumah, it was one of the freedoms that was infringed upon. It does not matter whether it was done overtly or covertly. Nkrumah gave several cases that support this claim. For instance he wrote:

The purpose of founding colonies was mainly to secure raw materials. To secure such raw materials, the following policies were indirectly put into action: (i) to make colonies non-manufacturing dependencies; (ii) to prevent the colonial subjects from acquiring the knowledge of modern means and techniques for developing their own industries, to make colonial subjects simple producers of raw materials through cheap labour; (iii) to prohibit the colonies from trading with other nations except through the mother country.¹⁴

Nkrumah further observed that the colonialists imposed constraints on the trading activities of the colonial peoples. These constraints include heavy taxes, customs duties, quotas and tariffs. Such constraints were imposed on goods imported from countries other than the "mother countries." In other words, the colonialists created an economic policy by which, the right of the colonial subjects to choose their trading partners was violated. The colonial people were neither allowed to engage in business nor to choose their trading partners. In the opinion of Nkrumah, this was an economic segregation *and* oppression. Therefore, this part of the economic freedom of the colonial people was absent.

iv) Workers Right to Participate in the Management of an Industry

This freedom means that the workers should be part of the management of the productive sectors of industries. It has already been pointed out that the possibilities of the colonial people having gainful employment were reduced and the system of the economy was directed towards eliminating local entrepreneurs. In such a case, the colonial subjects could not own industries. As well, I suppose, the colonial people did not have sufficient formal education to enable them to participate in the management of the industries. Implicitly, therefore, this form of economic freedom was not accessible to colonial subjects.

v) Right of Industrial Democracy.

This form of freedom implies that all workers should be allowed to express their opinions and their opinions should be considered. In case their opinions are not considered, the workers may go on strike or take any appropriate action. They should also be allowed to elect their leaders.

According to Nkrumah, this freedom was violated. Mention has already been made of the capitalist treatment of workers (see pp.56-58). It has also been pointed that the colonial people were neither allowed to own industries nor to participate in the management of industries. A fortiori, industrial democracy could not be easily instituted. The Belgian Congolese labourer we quoted above (P.2) is a relevant example.

B NATIONAL FREEDOM

This freedom consists of two parts: freedom from colonial subjection and freedom to exercise patriotism.

Freedom from Colonial Subjection

This was probably the most important freedom to Nkrumah as his slogan "give ye the political kingdom first and all others shall be added unto" ¹⁵suggests. At the end of his Towards Colonial Freedom, of the three freedoms he demanded for African colonies "political freedom" was number one. In fact, all other freedoms were secondary to it. For him, this freedom includes defeating neo-colonialism. The following statement may summarise his view in regard to this freedom: "Dedicated to the complete

destruction of colonialism in all its forms, I can hold no brief for any colonial government whatever its pattern"¹⁶. It is not necessary to emphasise absence of national freedom in this case. By its very nature colonialism negated national freedom.

ii) Freedom to Exercise Patriotism

In regard to the freedom to exercise patriotism, Nkrumah was not openly, and for a good reason clear. His Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare (1967), was an invitation to people to fight for their own respective countries and for Africa as a whole. But of course, if a freedom fighter was found out by the colonialists, he would either be killed or be punished severely. Since Nkrumah knew about this, he must have also known about the restrictions on the patriotic freedom in the colonial and neo-colonial time.

C. POLITICAL FREEDOM

It refers to the power to be active in the affairs of one's state. It is integrally connected with the life of man as a citizen. It means that one can engage in or relate to any public business. It implies that one can face only general barriers such as age, physical fitness, education etc., in his way to positions of authority and can freely express his opinions. Political education and free supply of news should be encouraged. It is this freedom that Nkrumah referred to as democratic freedom.¹⁷ According to Johari,¹⁸ the pre-requisites for political freedom are: freedom to take part in the affairs of the state, freedom

to exercise franchise, access to free supply of news, right to contest free and fair elections, rights to send petitions to government and, lauding or denouncing governmental policies and actions. Let us relate these conditions to Nkrumah's analysis of colonialism.

i) Freedom to Take Part in the Affairs of the State

Nkrumah was of the view that this freedom was absent during colonialism. In his analysis of colonialism, he observed that colonial masters formulated policies that were intended to exclude the participation of the colonial people. For instance, the laws for the colonies were formulated in the "mother countries." Other laws were formulated under strict surveillance of the Governor (head of the colony), who was always appointed by the Secretary for the colonies. The governor was responsible to the government of the "mother country." Even when the representative assemblies were introduced, the governor's appointees were in the majority.. By the nature of such law enactment and representation, the colonial subjects were kept away from the political life of the colonies.

It may be well to point out that the British ruled through the indigenous leaders who acted as agents of colonialists and had no power. Hence, there was no political freedom. About this state of affairs Nkrumah said that "such administrative systems are not only the embodiment of colonial chaos and political confusion but definitely nullify the ideas of true democracy".¹⁹

ii) The Right to Exercise Franchise

In the colonies, this freedom was not granted anywhere. Referring to Morocco, Nkrumah said that the French had never allowed national election nor any form of democratic assembly.²⁰ It means that all the leaders were either appointees of colonialists or were allies to them. Whether one disapproved this type of leadership or not, it was impossible to vote the "government" out of office.²¹

iii) The Right of Free and Full Supply of News.

In the Western countries, this is an important prerequisite for freedom. The citizens should be given news freely and in full. If people are expected to judge government actions or policies then all the information should be available to them. Lack of freedom of the press may result in distortion of facts and this may result in acting on the basis of assumptions. A Western scholar was so emphatic on the necessity of the freedom that he even disapproved of any censorship of news during the war times because the executive would freely "commit all the natural follies of dictatorship."²² It will assume the semi-divine character of its acts. It will deprive the people of the information upon which it can be judged"²³. Yet Nkrumah observed that in Mozambique, the press, national movements were suppressed.²⁴ In Morocco, "there was no freedom of the press".²⁵

iv) The Right to Contest Free and Fair Elections.

It has already been pointed out that by its very nature colonialism did not allow elections in the colonies

and a fortiori, there was no contesting of any elections. Clearly, this freedom was non-existent. This is one of the freedoms that comprised Nkrumah's democratic freedom whose restoration he therefore demanded.

v) **The Right to send Petitions to the Government.**

This form of freedom was virtually absent and was probably unknown. For this freedom to be enjoyed, it seems one should have political education. Unfortunately, most of the colonial subjects lacked it. Nkrumah did not specifically refer to this freedom but, but by his demand of democratic freedom, it is reasonable to assume that he knew of the absence of the right to send petitions to, and lauding or denouncing the government. When he said that "there were no civil rights and neither black nor white could vote",²⁶ in the Belgian-Congo, he most probably was thinking of this freedom.

In the light of what we have seen above, it is reasonable to assert that Nkrumah's opinion about the status of political freedom (which he called democratic freedom) in the colonies was negative. There was no political freedom for the colonial subjects during colonialism.

d) **PERSONAL FREEDOM**

This freedom refers to "the opportunity of an individual to exercise freedom of choice in those areas of life where the results of his efforts mainly affect him in that isolation by which, at least he is always surrounded".²⁷ It includes freedom of choice in strictly

private matters, security of health and honour, freedom of thought, expression and faith, freedom of movement and enjoyment of private property.²⁸ In general, Nkrumah seems not to have emphasised this type of freedom enough. Let us see to what extent he raised it vis-a-vis colonialism.

i) Freedom of Choice in Strictly Private Matters.

As said above, Nkrumah did not specifically pinpoint the absence of this freedom. However, he often lamented the absence of civil freedom.²⁹ Since this is part of civil freedom one could corroboratively infer that Nkrumah affirmed its absence. In another sense, Nkrumah as a person, occasionally enjoyed privacy as he wrote in his Autobiography: "My happiest hours were spent alone."³⁰ It seems, therefore, he respected private life of others.

ii) Security of Health and Honour

Nkrumah was evidently more concerned about this freedom than any other in this category. For instance, when referring to the freedom for social reconstruction, he said that the colonial subject peoples should be given freedom "to find better means of achieving livelihood and asserting their right to human life and happiness."³¹ And referring to the honour of subject peoples, he said that "the social effects of colonialism are more insidious than the political and economic ones. This is because they go deep into the minds of the people. Many of our people came to accept the view that we were an inferior people"³². Further, that Africans should fight to "be free and rise once more to the level of men and women who walk

with their heads held high."³³ Thus according to Nkrumah, this freedom was absent, and its absence was due to colonialist domination.

iii) Freedom of Thought, Expression and Faith

This relates to intellectual freedom, right to speak, right to print out opinions or seek in concert with others, choice of dress, religion, profession and other private choices. In Nkrumah's view, this freedom was also to some extent suppressed. When he proposed "positive action" he says he was condemned to three year imprisonment "for publishing a so-called seditious article in the Cape Coast Daily Mail."³³ According to him, he had the right to publish such an article as his words "so called" seem to suggest.

iv) Freedom of Movement

This freedom was mainly infringed upon in areas where racial segregation was practiced, especially in urban quarters. Signs like "NO AFRICAN ALLOWED" or "FOR WHITES ONLY" were common in urban areas. By the colonial laws, the Africans were not allowed free movement in the urban areas³⁴ His Rhodesia File (1974) emphasises among others, the suppression of this freedom.

v) Freedom to Use and Enjoy Private Property

Nkrumah condemned the colonialists for exploiting the colonial subjects. By exploitation Nkrumah did not only refer to making the best use of colonial resources, he referred to making the best use of human labour and their produce. As already seen, Nkrumah believed that

colonialists had stripped colonial subjects of this freedom. As he put it: they took our lands, our resources and our dignity.³⁵

E. DOMESTIC FREEDOM

This freedom relates to family life. It includes giving due respect to the wife and children, entering marriage, and the responsibility of the parents for the moral and mental development of children. This set of freedoms does not specifically appear in Nkrumah's writings. However since he contended that colonialism had taken away civil freedom from the colonial subjects, and this is part of the civil freedom, one can only say that he affirmed its absence.

F. INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM

This freedom pertains to the world as a whole. It includes the renunciation of war, abandonment of use of force, pacific settlement of disputes among nations and, limitation on armaments. In general, this freedom involves reduction of violence and the promotion of peace on the world scene.

Nkrumah's concern for this freedom was not confined to Ghana alone. It stretched to Africa as a whole and even beyond. His struggle for freedom widened especially when he became convinced that the dominative neo-colonialist forces had become entrenched in Africa. Yet for Nkrumah, the neo-colonial domination of Africa was part of the world-wide neo-colonial domination.³⁶ Thus his Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare is a wacry for a

violent struggle against neo-colonial domination of Africa. In this case, Nkrumah did not present a picture of a man who was interested in international freedom. This is because a pursuer of international freedom aims at employing peaceful means or, at least, strives to reduce violence. On the other hand, when Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup, he had gone on a peace-making-mission for Vietnam.³⁷ It is therefore plausible to assert that Nkrumah had a sense of, or, at least, believed in international freedom. Since our objective in this chapter is to emphasise freedom in Nkrumah's analysis of colonialism, his violent or non-violent methods against colonialist don't negate his concern about freedom. The idea of freedom remained prominently thrustful in his mind.

At the beginning of this chapter, and in the immediately above paragraph, it was mentioned that our intention was to show that the major pre-occupation of Nkrumah's analysis of colonialism in its various forms was freedom. In the light of our discussion, thus far, this view can be re-asserted. It may be that Nkrumah was implicit or explicit about freedom. However, freedom is the philosophical underpinning of his analysis of colonialism. He conceived of freedom both negatively and positively. In the negative sense, colonial domination was a "baggage" of constraints which Nkrumah wished to shake off from the African scene. In the positive sense,

he wanted Africans to initiate the reconstruction of the African social, economic, and political life.

Earlier, we observed that in the Western conception, freedom as the absence of coercion or constraints, absence of natural conditions that may make it possible to infringe on the freedom of others, and having means to achieve what one wants, is not possible in theoretical terms. And a fortiori, it is not possible in practice. However, the availability of some of these conditions may increase freedom. It would, therefore, be inappropriate to agree with Nkrumah that the absence of freedom of African people was entirely due to colonialism; other causes could be found. In other words, even if colonialism was eradicated, freedom would not necessarily be guaranteed. However, Nkrumah's contention was that colonialism had narrowed down the range of the freedom of colonial subjects. I concur with Nkrumah on this score. It is this freedom that he sought to retrieve. In his view, an ideology and a philosophy would be instrumental in fighting colonialism and restoring the lost freedom.

Footnotes

- ¹ In this chapter, the word "freedom" is used synonymously with "liberty."
- ² By "aspects of life" we are referring to the life man leads as a member of a social organisation or society. These aspects include economic life, political life, national life, domestic life, personal life and international life.
- ³ P.H. Patridge, "Freedom" in Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan and Free Press), p.222.
- ⁴ See Patridge, op. cit., p.222.
- ⁵ J.C. Johari, Contemporary Political Theory (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1979), p. 67. Note also that the view that socialism is synonymous with freedom is the subject of discussion in Chapter Six of this thesis.
- ⁶ Johari, op.cit., p.65.
- ⁷ Johari, op.cit., p.61.

⁸ ibid., p.65.

⁹ See Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path (London: Panaf, 1973),
p. 23.

¹⁰ Nkrumah, Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism
(London: Thomas Nelson, 1965).

¹¹ Nkrumah, Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah (London: Panaf,
Fighters Edition, 1965), pp. 1-2.

¹² Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite (London: Heinemann, 1963),
p.xiii.

¹³ Nkrumah, Neo-Colonialism, p. x.

¹⁴ Nkrumah Revolutionary Path, p.22.

¹⁵ It should be borne in mind that wherever Nkrumah referred to political freedom, he meant Johari's national freedom and when he referred to democratic freedom, he meant Johari's political freedom. In this case, political kingdom refers to national freedom. See also Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p.41.

¹⁶ Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, p. 19.

¹⁷ See Nkrumah Towards Colonial Freedom (London:
Heinemann, 1962), p.41.

- 18 Jahari, op. cit., p. 65.
- 19 Nkrumah Towards Colonial Freedom, p.25.
- 20 Nkrumah Africa must Unite,. p. 10.
- 21 Nkrumah Revolutionary Path, p 31.
- 22 H.J.Laski, A Grammar of Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951), p. 142.
- 23 Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, p. 11.
- 24 ibid.
- 25 ibid.
- 26 Johari, op. cit., p. 62.
- 27 ibid.
- 28 See Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, p. 11.
- 29 Panaf Great Lives, Kwame Nkrumah
(London: Panaf, 1974), p.17.

30 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 41. See also p.396.

31 Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, p. 32.

32 ibid., p. xiii.

33 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 90.

34 Nkrumah, Rhodesia File (London: Panaf, 1976), p. 38.

35 Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, p. xiii.

36 Panaf Great Lives, Kwame Nkrumah, p.12.

37 ibid., p. 208.

CHAPTER FOURPHILOSOPHY AND IDEOLOGY FOR THE LIBERATION OF AFRICAIntroduction.

In the last chapter, we examined Nkrumah's contention that colonialism and neo-colonialism negated the freedom of the subject peoples, especially that of Africans. Our task was to investigate whether, in fact, colonialism in its various manifestations eroded the freedom of African people. To a great extent, Nkrumah's contention seems justified. In order to retrieve the lost freedom, Nkrumah contended that theoretical means in the form of an ideology and philosophy were necessary in the fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism. In fact, it is in view of this supposition that he wrote his Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation. In view of this, our task in this chapter, will be to examine the possibility of philosophy and ideology as means for achieving freedom for the colonial African subjects. I shall proceed by defining and explaining what philosophy and ideology are, followed by Nkrumah's view of their role in fighting for freedom, and then make an assessment.

a) Philosophy

In my view, philosophy can be better understood if seen from two main standpoints: philosophy as a discipline or as an intellectual activity and philosophy as a system of thought. As an intellectual activity, philosophy is

characterised primarily by critical analysis, discussion and constructive synthesis'. The sort of criticism involved in a philosophical endeavour is objective, deep and often endless. No assumptions are free from criticism. In other words, in philosophy, every opinion is prone to analysis and criticism. Due to its critical role, philosophy has been described as the "ordinator" of sciences (other academic disciplines). This sort of criticism may suggest a particular method specific to philosophy. Put differently, how is the criticism and analysis of philosophy different from the analysis and criticism of other sciences? Plato and Hegel claimed that the method of philosophy is speculation controlled by criticism. However, Bergson thought the philosophical method was intuitive, and Wittgenstein thought that it was uncovering nonsense. For Schlick, it was clarification, while Husserl thought it was phenomenological description.

The critical discussion referred to above, is intended or is aimed at achieving the knowledge of the ultimates. Very often philosophers have talked of ultimate explanation, ultimate causes, ultimate foundations of knowledge. Philosophers like Plato and Louis de Raeymaker insist that the philosophers' principles are higher than the principles of other disciplines. Hence philosophy as an intellectual activity is mainly characterised by critical analysis and discussion. Although other philosophers like J.S. Mill and Sir William Hamilton described philosophy as a scientific study of man, they do

not rule out the primary element of philosophy as a critical discussion.

On the other hand, philosophy as a system of thought could be understood as a set of reasoned ideas linked together to form one body of knowledge. Such knowledge could be specific to an individual or a group of people, for example, the philosophy of Spinoza, the philosophy of Kant and Bantu philosophy. Philosophy as a system could also be understood as a set of principles for guidance in practical life; understood in this sense, philosophy is synonymous with the ideology.

b) Ideology

Since Destutt de Tracy first used the term "ideology" to refer to "the science of ideas" in 1797, the word has had wide and varied meanings. Karl Marx used it to mean a "false consciousness" and said that it was integrally connected with the interests of the ruling class. Karl Mannheim called it a "community bias". Today, however, ideology is understood as "a type of political theory that upholds a certain system and the values and ideals that sustain it"². For David Braybrooke, ideology "embraces any subjectively coherent set of beliefs"³. Yet in the opinion of Johari, an ideology is "a set of ideas ranging from one desiring no change in the prevailing order to another demanding a total transformation of society"⁴. It may also imply the "refutation of one and the justification of another set of ideals"⁵. For Preston King, an ideology should contain guiding principles or a

programme of action. He seems to agree with Frank Thakurdas who says that the test of a political ideology lies in its application. Thakurdas adds that an ideology involves action and commitment; and although it may not be logical, it ought to be political in character.

As a summary, we can say that an ideology is a set of ideas that an individual or a section of the people believe in. These ideas support to offer an explanation or a justification of some claimed truth or a particular conduct, especially of a political manifestation. An ideology is action-oriented and in some cases, it is as binding as religion. As a body of knowledge which is intended to explain and defend a social system, and which is intellectually worked out by scholars, it can also be referred to as a philosophy. For instance, one can refer to Marxism both as an ideology and a philosophy.

c) The Role of Philosophy as a System in Achieving African Social Freedom.

Specifically, Nkrumah's Consciencism was written with the aim of articulating a philosophy for liberation and independence of Africa. Nkrumah chose philosophy as one of the instruments to achieve freedom because he believed that philosophy had a social contention. By "social contention" Nkrumah meant that philosophy is a result of social circumstances and that it can precipitate or dictate certain social circumstances. Put differently, the social milieu conditions the nature of philosophy and philosophy *in turn* conditions the social circumstances.

Nkrumah was aware of the need for the demonstration of this view. This he did in Chapter Two of his Consciencism. According to him, philosophy has "had its living roots in human life and human society".⁶ Using early Greek philosophies, Nkrumah tried to show that philosophy had always been concerned with life. He writes: "At every stage between Thales and modern times, philosophy was firmly geared on to what were for the time being conceived as primary concerns of life"⁷ Taking Thales as the first example, Nkrumah contended that he led two revolutions. In the first revolution, Thales explained "nature in terms of nature."⁸ According to Nkrumah, Thales overthrew the belief that nature was explainable in terms of the supernatural, i.e by way of reference to the gods. In the second revolution, Thales introduced the notion that the unity of nature consisted not in its being but in its materiality—that is, water as material substance. Thus according to Nkrumah, water as a single cosmic stuff implied monism, which also implied the fundamental identity of man. Out of Heraclitus's view that everything is permanently unstable, Nkrumah derived a social implication that society is permanently in revolution and this revolution is indispensable to social growth and progress. Nkrumah treated Anaxagoras's view that diverse things of the universe arising from seeds to imply an egalitarian society. According to Nkrumah, Protagoras's view that man is the measure of all things is absurd because it implies a capitalist society. Nkrumah

described Socrates as an egalitarian because he (Socrates) chose a slave for his discussion. For Nkrumah, Socrates's choice of a slave meant that all men are equal. Nkrumah interpreted Plato's belief in the levels of intelligence as implying oligarchy while Aristotle's view that slaves are born slaves made him anti-egalitarian.

Nkrumah ventured beyond Greek philosophers. According to him, Leibniz's monads which are spirits enjoying different levels of consciousness, imply individualism in social terms while Descartes's view that we fundamentally and equally perceive and appreciate the same truth, implies co-operative socialism. At this stage Nkrumah was content that he had demonstrated that philosophy had always been rooted in social life.

Here, I wish to point out that Nkrumah saw philosophy as a system of thought. Implicit in the demonstration, is the assumption that philosophy could change society; if so, it could change colonial Africa into a free Africa. Thus philosophy could be used to resist social oppression, wars and other social evils. Similarly, philosophy could be used to boost social progress and peace. Therefore, philosophy could be used for the benefit of society⁹. But if philosophy has the ability to change society, how does it do it? In other words, is it possible for philosophy as a system of thought to emancipate Africa from the shackles of colonialism? In my opinion, the answer to question lies in Nkrumah's title of "Consciencism." Nkrumah presupposed that philosophy could boost the

consciousness of African colonial subjects and this would help them to defeat colonialism in all its forms. At this stage, then, the problem amounts to showing how philosophy is to bring about consciousness to the colonised people and whether this consciousness has the ability to fight colonialism.

Consciousness means being aware of something. It means understanding certain realities or events. Odera Oruka identifies four aspects of black consciousness: a, the blackman's awareness or realisation that the world is infested with anti-black social reality; b, the black man's recognition of himself as black and being proud of it; c, the blackman's urge to explain away or annihilate this social reality and; d, his move towards the creation of a new reality, a fair social reality as a condition for universal humanism.¹⁰

Nkrumah himself did not differ from this view of consciousness. Nkrumah wanted to found a philosophy which would make the Africans understand the nature of colonialism and its associated evils. He believed that once Africans had understood the nature of colonialism, they would know how to fight it. They would fight colonialism and establish a better and freer society. According to Nkrumah, this sort of awareness would be supplied by philosophy. Using philosophy as a tool, the colonial subjects could cause social change as he said "a revolution is brought about by men who think as men of action and act as men of thought"¹¹ Therefore, for

Nkrumah, through philosophy, consciousness could help in bringing about freedom of the colonial subjects.

Closely related to the immediate point above, is the view that philosophy could give an "intellectual map" of the struggle for freedom. Nkrumah contended that Africa had been animated by three ideological segments.¹² According to Nkrumah these segments have resulted in a conflict or a crisis in the minds of Africans. Consequently, there is no progress. He therefore proposed that a philosophy which would indicate the way in which progress could be directed, should be searched. For Nkrumah, this philosophy is "philosophical consciencism." He defined this philosophy as "a map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable the African society to digest the Western and the Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality."¹³ Hence, philosophy is presented as a theoretical programme for social change and development. In the context of *Colonial, African* freedom, philosophy would serve as an appropriate guideline or framework for de-colonisation and social development. However, Nkrumah chose philosophy as a system of thought because he believed that it could create African consciousness in a similar way for every African colonial subject.

d) The Role of Philosophy as an Intellectual

Activity in Achieving African Social Freedom.

Nkrumah seems not to have put direct emphasis on the view of philosophy as an activity and its capacity to fight for freedom as much as he did with philosophy as a system. However, he recognised the view of philosophy as a discipline and, therefore, indirectly presented philosophy in this sense as an instrument for achieving freedom. Firstly, Nkrumah called his philosophy "Philosophical Consciencism". This philosophy would be used to "digest" the three segments that animate the present African society¹⁴. Through this digestion, one view or ideological segment which suits the African personality would be forged out. In my view, the word "digest" as used in the context means to analyse critically, re-assess or discuss. If this is granted, then Nkrumah indirectly considers philosophy as an intellectual activity for aiding Africans to arrive at a social-political system different from the one under colonialism. Hence, it would help in the struggle of decolonisation or liberation of the African colonial subjects. Here philosophy is seen as a method and a channel that would be used to obtain freedom for Africans.

Secondly, Nkrumah contended that the statement, elucidation and theoretical defence of an ideology constitutes a philosophy¹⁵. Here the phrase "a philosophy" means a system of thought. However, the words "statement," "elucidation" and "theoretical defence"

evoke the sense of philosophy as an intellectual activity. As an intellectual activity philosophy would serve the ideology chosen.

Thirdly, and related to the immediate point above, Nkrumah asserted that a new ideology was needed. This ideology would solidify into a philosophical statement¹⁴. By philosophical statement Nkrumah meant a thoroughly discussed, reasoned, analysed and systematised body of knowledge. In this sense, then Nkrumah accepted the view of philosophy as an intellectual activity. This body of knowledge would therefore be rational and consequently render the ideology creditable and acceptable. Since the aim of Nkrumah's Consciencism was to help in the process of de-colonisation and development, then philosophy as a discipline had an important role to play in that process.

Fourthly, Nkrumah's style of writing in his Consciencism is reminiscent of philosophy understood as a discipline. For instance, in Chapter One of Consciencism Nkrumah tried to emphasise the materialistic interpretation of the universe. His method was clearly critical and discursive. In Chapter Two of his Consciencism, Nkrumah discussed various philosophies. Earlier I mentioned that for John Passmore, philosophy means the critical discussion of the critical discussion,¹⁵. In my view, it is in Chapter Two of his Consciencism that Nkrumah echoes Passmore's definition of philosophy. Already, the philosophies of various philosophers had been discussed and critically assessed by

other philosophers. However, Nkrumah chose to discuss them further—a verification of Passmore's dictum. Nkrumah therefore recognised the view of philosophy as a discipline and as a means of attaining freedom.

e) Ideology and Social Freedom.

Like philosophy, Nkrumah thought an ideology would help in the attainment of freedom for African colonial subjects. In Chapter Three of his Consciencism, Nkrumah tried to show or demonstrate the possibility of this. Referring to an ideology Nkrumah said it was "a general, positive and organic principle"¹⁹ which gives impetus to the revolution. According to him it gives countenance to society, and in every society, there is one ideology which is dominant; ideologies can compete but cannot co-exist and in communalistic societies, the ideology coincides with the whole society.

In order to emphasise the significance of ideology on society, and in Nkrumah's case, its ability to defeat colonialism, Nkrumah contended that an ideology justifies the new order and rejects the old order.¹⁹ In view of this, Nkrumah wanted an ideology which would reject the colonial order that was prevailing and use it also to justify the post-colonial order. Since Nkrumah's choice of an ideology was socialist, he wanted the ideology to defend a socialist order that he hoped to establish after defeating colonialism. In connection with this, Nkrumah asserted that "an ideology acts as the searchlight, since it

assesses and judges people's lives and the evils of colonialism.

Nkrumah highlighted the practical-social significance of an ideology because he believed that it had the power to control or change society. He said that an ideology has "coercive instruments." These include 'the sermon in the pulpit, the pressures of trade unionism, the opprobrium inflicted by the press, the ridicule of friends, the ostracism of colleagues, the sneer, the snub and other non-statutory devices.'²⁰ By these means, an ideology is capable of controlling or changing society. In the case of Nkrumah, the ideology chosen would employ these means to defeat colonialism as well as to be at the service of the *new society coming* after colonialism.

Further, Nkrumah claimed that ideologies are covert and exist under the guise of political theory, moral theory and social theory, in the class structure, - in history, literature, art and religion. Through these social structures, the ideology extends its impact to society. For example, it has always been said that religion diverts people from secular concerns. This is because some religions preach heavenly reward instead of the immediate secular one. By this type of preaching religion can enjoin its adherents to resist or cause social change. In the opinion of Nkrumah, therefore, ideology was needed in order to carry out a revolution against colonialism. As he said, "Revolutionaries who change society should have a solid ideological basis."²¹

Nkrumah further contended that the ideology appropriate to Africans is socialism because it is based on dialectical materialism and it "translates it into social equality,"²² and because it is similar to the African communalist social-political set up. Therefore, in the view of Nkrumah, a socialist ideology would achieve freedom for the Africans.

f) Assessment

i) Philosophy and the Social Contention.

As we saw earlier, Nkrumah tried to demonstrate that philosophy has always had a social contention. Whereas Nkrumah's view that philosophy has a social contention holds some truth, there are many statements which he made in this connection that are questionable. It is true that water as suggested by Thales is one substance; but how logical was it for Nkrumah to assert that this monism meant fundamentally, the identity of men? It is difficult to believe that Thales chose water because the then dominant merchantile depended on the navy as Nkrumah claimed.

We have seen earlier, that Heraclitus's view of permanent instability of the universe was interpreted by Nkrumah as implying that society was permanently in revolution. If this is the case, Nkrumah should have realised that by the same view, his ideal society (socialist society), would not be permanent. It would change; but to what sort of society different from the socialist one? It would seem that Nkrumah made a fair

interpretation of Heraclitus's view, which, surprisingly corresponds well to the Marxist dialectics.

Nkrumah interpreted the Protagoras's dictum that "man is the measure of all things" as implying capitalism; and this, according to Nkrumah is absurd. However, Nkrumah should have realised that this dictum could bear another interpretation. For instance the dictum could have been interpreted to imply that man is the centre or focus of everything as in humanism.

According to Nkrumah, Socrates's choice of the slave in the Meno made Socrates an egalitarian. Further, I find Nkrumah's view incredible when he said that Aristotle did not believe that each man was able to contribute to the truth and that this was the main reason for his not being in favour of equality of all men. If this is the case, then Nkrumah's view stand in contradiction to what he said earlier that "Aristotle made the truth accessible to all and possible appreciation by all"²³ and that "whoever was capable of observing natural objects was capable of detecting forms"²⁴ After all, Aristotle had asserted that slaves were naturally slaves. At this stage, it becomes evident that Nkrumah's attempt to demonstrate that philosophy is always tied to social circumstances is not successful. However, this is not to assert that his contention that philosophy has a social contention is false. I agree with Hountondji who says that "Nkrumah's major mistake lay in the view that every political stance is ultimately founded on a metaphysical stance and,

conversely, every metaphysical assertion calls for a specific political choice".²⁵ It seems also that what is most controversial about Nkrumah's demonstration is his wish to "put various figures of metaphysical discourse into a one-to-one correspondence with various figures of political discourse. And any such correspondance is implausible generally and in-itself, whatever its concrete specifications"²⁶

In the light of the above analysis, it is difficult to appreciate the arguments in favour of the view that philosophy has always had a social contention. However, this does not mean that Nkrumah's assertion about philosophy as having a social contention is false as such but rather that Nkrumah's justification of this contention was not successful.

ii) Philosophy as an Intellectual Activity

Nonetheless, Nkrumah was convinced that philosophy could achieve freedom for the colonial subjects in Africa. I have pointed out earlier that Nkrumah recognised philosophy both as a form of critical discussion and as tool of struggling for freedom. To a great extent, I agree with Nkrumah in regard to this view. I believe every individual or group of individuals is guided by ideas in their actions. Whether the idea is correct or wrong, relevant or irrelevant, it is the result of thinking. If the ideas are not properly thought out or analysed, the actions based thereon will most likely be wrong. It is at this point that the significance of

philosophy as a critical analysis becomes clear. Further, and in my view, the world in which we live, move, and act is not plainly clear to everyone. However, it needs to be understood. This means that different aspects and ideas about the world have to be properly analysed so as to reach a correct explanation of it and act accordingly; and this is what philosophers have always tried to do. In fact, Nkrumah deserves credit for realising the need for a critical analysis of the pre-and post-colonial African society.

Granted that the motive of writing Consciencism was to demonstrate the possibility of philosophy helping in achieving freedom, Nkrumah was right in his attempt to postulate a philosophy for liberation. For instance, shortly before and after independence, most African leaders started searching for modes of social and political organisation best suited for development. It is here that a philosopher was required to analyse the situation and assess possible alternatives; unless this is done, there is bound to be blind action, which may involve impinging on the freedom of the people. In the view of Wiredu, as the search for social and political organisation appropriate to Africa continues, the philosopher "must let his voice be heard".²⁹ Closely related to the above view, is the fact that after independence, most African leaders called for one or other form of ideology for their countries. However, we have seen that an ideology is subjective. If this view is

correct, then it is wrong for a leader to impose an ideology which he alone considers to be correct. An ideology ought to be thoroughly discussed before it is applied. The different ideological viewpoints should be initially assessed so as to arrive at a rational and justified set of ideas. And, in such a case, the philosopher's role of critical analysis, is indispensable.

Further, any development policy must address itself to the multifacial aspects of man: man as a rational, material and spiritual being. If any development policy suppresses any of these aspects of man, the resulting development, if any, will be lop-sided. In my view, meaningful development policies must encourage individual thinking, open and constructive criticism as well as self-realisation of man as rational beings. In this way, the range of individual freedom would be widened. Therefore Nkrumah's recognition of the need for the critical analysis of issues related to the freedom of African colonial subjects should be appreciated.

In the period before and after independence, some leaders in Africa, tended to be over-nationalistic and almost all of them praised African culture. They referred to it romantically, claiming that it was good in all its aspects. In my view, however, African culture had its own negative aspects. Therefore, there is a need for critical assessment of African cultures so that negative or irrelevant aspects can be excluded such as circumcision of women while the positive aspects retained and encouraged.

As well, what is good in foreign cultures should be identified and adopted while what is negative should be discouraged. In my view, this could be achieved most effectively by the philosopher's role of critical analysis. Thus when Nkrumah calls for the "digestion" of the ideological segments that animate Africa, his assertion is positive with regard to the freedom of the citizens. Therefore, it can be appreciated that philosophy as a critical analysis has a significant role in widening the freedom of individuals. If this is accepted, then Nkrumah's choice of philosophy as a tool of struggling for freedom of the African colonial subjects is commendable.

Nonetheless, philosophy understood as a critical discussion has its own danger in as far as achieving freedom is concerned. The kind of discussion involved in a philosophical discourse tends to be endless. In their search for the ultimate explanation, philosophers always re-examine their positions however conclusive they might be. In this way, philosophers hardly ever reach one permanent view which is acceptable universally. Failure to reach an immediate solution may reduce the freedom of an individual or individuals. It is my belief, however, that this danger alone cannot completely negate the contribution of philosophy in the struggle for freedom of the African or any other people.

g) Ideology.

When ideology is seen as a liberating weapon, several problems emerge. Nkrumah's view of ideology is not different from ordinary man's understanding of it. And as such, an ideology can defend the existing order or reject it. Since an ideology is merely a set of beliefs, it could be a wrong belief. A wrong ideology can uphold a repressive political system. In this way, the freedom of the people which the ideology is meant to defend may be undermined or even destroyed. According to Nkrumah, the people who change society should have a sound ideological basis. If the ideological basis is of repressive character, then the freedom sought may remain a dream.

We have seen that an ideology could be coercive (see p.84 above) and in this way an ideology can be misused. For instance, it can be used to coerce the people to accept a multi-party political system or a single party system. For example, in the socialist countries every citizen has to be taught the socialist ideology, willy-nilly. They emphasize it so much so that the end result is to indoctrinate their citizens. Nkrumah seems to have moved in this direction. According to Wiredu, during early sixties it was considered subversive to express doubt about dialectical materialism in Ghana⁵². In this case freedom is curtailed in three ways. First, the ideology is used to coerce the people to do what they would not otherwise do. Secondly, in socialist countries, no choice of another ideological position or political

system is tolerated. Thirdly, indoctrination involves deliberate suppression of other view—points. It encourages some sort of in-built choices. Consequently, the freedom sought is never realised.

Nkrumah claimed that there was only one ideology which prevailed over the whole of Africa before colonialism and that, this ideology was replaced by three earlier mentioned ideologies (Islamic, Euro-Christian and the Traditional). He therefore proposed that another single ideology (socialism) should be found to replace the three ideologies, restore the lost unity of Africans as well as their consciousness.

However, in my opinion, there are two difficulties that Nkrumah never explained; firstly, there is no evidence that before colonialism Africa was ideologically united. Secondly there was no such a thing as African consciousness. In view of this, Hountondji has accused Nkrumah of 'neglecting the pluralism of pre-colonial African culture, forcing an artificial unity upon what is really irreducibly diverse, and hence impoverished - the classic African tradition.' Further, Nkrumah wanted to create a single ideology for the whole of Africa to replace the above mentioned ideological segments. He, however, did not explain how he was going to effect it without infringing on the freedom of those who adhered to different ideological segments.

Above all, Nkrumah did not give a specific difference between philosophy and ideology. In consequence, the

roles of philosophy (especially when understood as a system of thought), and ideology as weapons for freedom seem to be in conflict.

Nonetheless, if the ideology could unite the people (African colonial subjects), then the ideology would be helpful in fighting colonialism in its various forms - although, of course, as we shall see, unity as such is not an absolute good.

In conclusion, I would like to assert that Nkrumah's anti-colonial theoretical means - the ideology and philosophy could help in the attainment of freedom. But it is wrong to assume that they would guarantee freedom as Nkrumah contended. My contention is that they can like a double-edged sword be employed to achieve freedom, as well as to curtail the acquired freedom. Hence, the need for continuous critical assessment.

Footnotes

- ¹ This view is shared by many philosophers such as K. Wiredu and John Passmore. Referring to philosophy, Wiredu says that "criticism is its very blood, whereas Passmore says that it is the "critical discussion of the critical discussion."
- ² Here "philosophy" is used as a system of thought.
- ³ According to Nkrumah, the present African society has three ideological segments viz., the Islamic, the Euro-christian and the traditional. See his Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation (London: Panaf, 1970), p. 68.
- ⁴ Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.56.
- ⁵ ibid., p.70.
- ⁶ Nkrumah, op. cit., p.5.
- ⁷ Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.30.
- ⁸ ibid., pp.30-31.
- ⁹ Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.56.
- ¹⁰ Odera Oduka, "Trends in African Philosophy" (Manuscript), p. 78.
- ¹¹ Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.33.
- ¹² ibid., p.68.
- ¹³ ibid., p.79.
- ¹⁴ ibid., p.30.
- ¹⁵ ibid., p. 56.

- ¹⁶ ibid., p. 70.
- ¹⁷ See p.74 above.
- ¹⁸ ibid., p.56.
- ¹⁹ ibid., p. 34.
- ²⁰ ibid., pp. 61-62.
- ²¹ ibid., pp. 33-34.
- ²² ibid. ., p.106.
- ²³ Ruch, African Philosophy (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1984), p. 340.
- ²⁴ Ruch, African Philosophy, p.340.
- ²⁵ Hountondji, African Philosophy, Myth and Reality,
Translated by Henri Evans(London:
Hutchinson, 1983), p. 153.
- ²⁶ ibid.
- ²⁷ See Hountondji, op. cit., p. 148.
- ²⁸ ibid., p. 149.
- ²⁹ K. Wiredu, Philosophy and the African Culture (London:
Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 52.
- ³⁰ Wiredu, op. cit., p. 53.
- ³¹ Hountondji, op. cit., p. 153.

CHAPTER FIVE

NKRUMAH AND SOCIALISM FOR SOCIAL FREEDOM.

Introduction

It cannot be over-emphasised that Nkrumah's major problem was freedom for Africa and that according to him this freedom could be realised only when socialism and African unity had been established. However, Nkrumah did not explain what is in socialism and African unity that would guarantee a free post-colonial African society. It is these underlying assumptions that require investigation. Put differently, would a united socialist Africa be necessarily free? Our task in this chapter, therefore, will be to examine the tenets of socialism and African unity and determine their ability to guarantee African freedom.

SOCIALISM

According to Margaret Cole,¹ socialism has four main tenets: the critique of the existing society, creation of a better society characterised by democracy and egalitarianism (or equality), revolution, and internationalism (unity). Chapter Three of this dissertation focussed on the first tenet (critique of the prevailing conditions during colonialism and neo-colonialism). As we saw, Nkrumah was deeply dissatisfied with the existing conditions during colonialism and neo-colonialism. We shall therefore, not discuss it here.

A Creation of a New and Better Society

Having criticised the existing societies as inadequate in their organisation, socialists contend that a new and better society is possible. This new society is characterised by, among others, democracy and equality (egalitarianism), and precisely, this was Nkrumah's view. Let us look at democracy first.

1) Democracy

In the conclusion of his Towards colonial Freedom (1962), Nkrumah demanded, inter alia, democratic freedom. By this, he meant that colonialism had deprived the colonial subjects of their opportunity to exercise democratic rights; and if democratic rights were restricted, African freedom would not be realised.² In other words, if democracy was allowed to operate in independent Africa, freedom would necessarily follow. In the opinion of Nkrumah, therefore, democracy was an absolutely sine qua non for African freedom. Moreover, Nkrumah advocated establishment of socialism in post-colonial Africa if it was to attain freedom and yet he knew democracy to be one of the principles of socialism. Hence, even if Nkrumah did not specifically advocate the restitution of African democratic rights, by his mere advocacy of socialism, he necessarily implied that democracy was one of the factors that could guarantee African freedom. Therefore, from either of the above viewpoints, Nkrumah considered democracy as a guarantee for African freedom. However, my position is that whereas

democracy may widen the range of freedom of an individual or a society, it does not guarantee the freedom of either. In view of this, democracy cannot be taken as an absolutely secure basis for freedom. It is important, then, to examine the extent to which democracy can guarantee freedom. We shall proceed by examining the meaning of democracy from the Western and Marxist viewpoints and show to what extent democracy can or can't guarantee freedom.

Being a normative concept, democracy can hardly be defined precisely. This problem of lack of a precise definition has serious practical consequences. For instance, what one group of people has described as democratic, the other group has described it as dictatorial. Hence, the need for clarification. In order to understand this term, reference to the ancient Greek usage on which the current usage of the term democracy is based, may be helpful.

According to the ancient Greeks, "Demos" meant the poor people (but citizens, not slaves) while "kratia" meant government. Therefore, democracy meant the rule of the poor people. This meaning of "the people" seems to have been retained by those who identify the people with the proletariat, masses, peasants, etc. or generally, the subject masses, to differentiate them from the ruling elite. Within the Greek pattern of democracy, every citizen was free to personally participate in policy decisions, by discussion and voting for or against someone

in a face-to-face situation. Every citizen had an equal opportunity to state a case and influence decisions, even if, in some cases, some citizens had ultimately to accept decisions which they had earlier resisted. This, in short, was the Greek democracy.

a) Western Democracy

Today's Western democracy does not differ significantly from the Greek democracy. According to Stanley Ben, a Western scholar, democracy consists in government by the people or popular self-government.⁴ For instance, if a head of a department or a section consults his members of staff on important issues and accepts decisions which he himself does not subscribe to, then he can be described as being democratic. Democracy involves participation, deliberation and exchange of opinions. Every person's opinion carries weight not according to his status but according to the merit it has in the judgement of others. Ben contends that if there is disagreement on an essential matter, the decision should be reached by a majority vote and if it fails, a lot should be used. Whatever the case, no one should insist that his opinion must prevail because of his special circumstances. This means that a democratic decision is taken consequent upon a fair confrontation of opinions and agreement by the majority.

Unfortunately, direct and full participation of every citizen in the public affairs as well as face-to-face discussion is not possible in a modern state. This

difficulty of direct and full participation of every citizen derives from complex organisation, big sizes and large populations (in comparison with the ancient Greek state), of the modern states. However, this difficulty is overcome by the use of the principle of political representation.

Political representation has a wide implication. It includes democratic as well as undemocratic representation. It means that one or some individuals represent a certain group of people whether the people freely elected him or not. For instance, during colonialism, leaders were appointed to represent some sections of the colonial subjects. This was not democratic representation. Analogous to the colonial representation is today's single-party systems where the party executive invites the electors to endorse the candidate it has already chosen for them. Nonetheless, no matter how zealously such a candidate may watch over and defend his people's interests, he is not a democratic representative precisely because electors had no part in his election. On the other hand, democratic representation presupposes free proposition and free rejection of candidates. This feature of proposition and rejection of candidates is central to democracy. Democratic representation involves watching over interests of all the people in one's constituency, including those who did not vote for the representative. Democratic representation involves the notion of responsibility both

on the part of the elector and on the part of the representative. An elector bears the responsibility for his choice of a candidate, while the representative becomes responsible to the electorate. This is because, in case of re-election, he has to defend his actions and failures during his tenure of office. In the light of what has been said above, Western democracy consists in a greater number of people concurring in essential matters that concern them as well as taking a greater role in the running of a department, an organisation, or a state.

b) Marxist Democracy

Marxist democracy, too, emphasises the role of the people in running the affairs of the state. Marxist democracy differs from the Western democracy in the sense that the former is only possible when capitalism and social classes have been eradicated through a revolution. The basis for this view is that as long as capitalism is functional, the bourgeoisie will always dominate the state power because of their economic power. In consequence, the workers and peasants will never have equal rights in the running of the affairs of the state. In the view of Marxists, democracy is possible only when the people have the same economic power as Kim IL Sung, a Marxist scholar, has contended: 'bourgeois democracy is a sham because equal political rights cannot equalise political power where economic equality and classless society are a necessary condition of it.'²⁹ Therefore Marxist democracy involves eradication of capitalism (often by force), eradication of

economic differences and the encouragement of popular self-government. In the light of this, both Marxist and Western democracies aim at acting on the majority decision and where possible, on all the people's decision.

It cannot be said that Nkrumah rejected the Western conception of democracy completely. He recognised the Western democratic elements but wanted them applied in the Marxist context of democracy as he said, "We in Africa will evolve forms of government rather different from the traditional Western pattern but no less democratic in their protection of the individual and his inalienable rights." Thus whether by Marxist or Western democracy, Nkrumah was convinced that democracy would guarantee freedom in post-colonial Africa. In the light of what has been said above, I now propose to examine our problem i.e., can democracy guarantee African freedom?

Firstly, as defined above, democracy is dependent where possible, on all the people as a guide to government. Yet we know that different people have different capacities and abilities to judge what is best for them and their nation. This means that the decision taken thereof may not necessarily be the best they could have made. This situation might lead to jeopardizing of the freedom. For instance, when people are asked to choose, their choice is often governed more by emotional interests than by reason. Consequently, democratically chosen governments don't imply the best governments nor do democratically taken decisions mean the best decisions.

Democratically, an oppressive government can be elected to power.

Secondly, democracy is based on the majority decisions and, more often, minority decisions are ignored. As a result, majority rule may breed majority dictatorship. (In fact, democracy is inherently dictatorial especially if one can recall Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat". Thus in a state where people are divided on either race or religion or tribe or party or on any other basis, the minority inevitably have to bow to the majority decisions. In view of this weakness of democracy, African freedom would scarcely be achieved because of Africa's divided background. Africa is already divided on ethnic, religious, ideological and racial grounds.

Thirdly, as already said above, Nkrumah wanted to protect Western democratic rights by the Marxist democracy. However, this seems to have been very difficult. As we indicated in Chapter One, for freedom to exist in the Western context, individual initiative to pursue chosen ends should be encouraged. Unfortunately, under the Marxist democracy, any action taken by any individual or group must fall within the Marxist general framework. For instance, it is illegal for an individual or a group of individuals to form a trading company or a political party opposed to the Marxist party. Hence, if we defined freedom as the absence of coercion or constraints, then one has to concede that Marxist

democracy impinges on individual freedom. Yet this is the kind of democracy Nkrumah thought would guarantee African post-colonial freedom. An appropriate example of suppression of individual freedom was by Nkrumah himself. In 1954, he expelled 81 of the 104 national election candidates. The reason he gave was that only party chosen candidates were supposed to stand for elections.

Fifthly, Marxism emphasises the need for ideology and ideological training. As we saw in Chapter Four of this dissertation, ideological training involves indoctrination. Yet we know that indoctrination is a biased education and does not allow free discussion. Dissenting views are not outlawed allowed. Therefore, emphasis on the need for ideological training implies emphasis on narrowing the range of freedom. Yet, Nkrumah wrote his Consciencism with an aim of propounding an ideology for Africa and, he actually built an ideological school. Thus if his scheme of founding an African ideology and ideological training had succeeded, African individual freedom would have been infringed upon.

Perhaps, it is important to note that whereas democracy may have the above mentioned weaknesses, it is equally important bear in mind that the people who take decisions and for whom they are taken, are assumed to take the responsibility of the consequences of such actions. This is because they are supposed to have chosen freely. This implies too, that, inherently, democracy is intended to enhance freedom of citizens. Thus if each citizen was

allowed to take the responsibility of his choice, the freedom would be, to a great extent, a reality. But the Marxist version of democracy seems to narrow the range of individual freedom. And yet this was Nkrumah's choice. In consequence, the following can be asserted: democracy is a goal to be pursued because it may promote freedom of the citizens. At the same time, democracy may narrow the freedom of some citizens. Therefore, it is not an absolutely good basis for freedom and, in this case, African freedom.

ii) EQUALITY (EGALITARIANISM)

Equality too, is a normative concept and, therefore, it is difficult to define it in precise terms. In order to carry out our discussion, however, the concept has to be understood and put in perspective.

a) Western Conception

When one says that propositions A and B are equal, he or she is being descriptive, otherwise, both statements are incomplete because there is no mention of respects in which these two statements are equal. They may be equal in size length but not in height or age. Stanley Benn observes that, "apart from the abstractions of logic and mathematics, no two objects can be said to be equal"¹⁹. Equality is possible only in certain respects but not in all aspects. These analytical distinctions suggest even serious difficulties when equality is seen as social concept. As a social or a moral relation, it means that there is some respect, at least, in which no difference

ought to be made in the treatment or consideration given to all men whatever their qualities and circumstances might be. As a result, some philosophers have defined equality from the standpoint of the prevailing conditions. E. Barker, for instance, says that equality implies "that whatever conditions are guaranteed to me in the form of rights, shall also, and in the same measure be guaranteed to others, and that whatever rights are given to others, shall also be given to me."¹¹ This view does not imply identical or uniform treatment. Instead, it implies some kind of levelling or harmonising system. For H.J. Laski, it means "that the strong and the weak live together. The "weight" of others doesn't suppress me and my "weight" does not suppress others"¹². He adds that "equality surely lies in the fact that the very differences in the nature of men require a mechanism for expression of their wills that give to each its due hearing".¹³ These clarifications also don't imply that men should be treated uniformly. In fact, the last quotation above, clearly states the need for a system or as Laski says, "a mechanism" for controlling the differences that exist in men and, the removal of differences is not implied. For J. Johari, the principle of equality needs "to be adjusted to the values of man's functional capacity. When the primary needs of all men have been met, the other differences that men may encounter should be only those that emerge because of differences in their functional capacities"¹⁴. Put differently, this view emphasises that

other differences can occur as long as primary needs of man have been met. This reminds one of the communist dictum of "each according to his needs".

In the light of what has already been said about equality, the following comments can be made. Firstly, as a social concept, equality is a term whose referent cannot be objectively affirmed. It has a precise meaning only when it is studied as an abstract term. But this meaning is of little social significance and its application is probably futile. Secondly, as a social concept, equality implies recognition of differences among men. This is basically because of the fact that differences exist naturally among men. Men are different in capacity, need and want. In view of these differences, men can't be treated uniformly. Thirdly, equality consists in finding a mechanism or a system that would control or regulate differences found in men. How to determine this mechanism is, of course, a problem. An attempt, however, can be made.

Earlier, it was pointed out that equality is only possible in relevant aspects. On the social level, if any mechanism is to be chosen, it should take into account aspects in which men resemble. The mechanism should operate in such a way that men receive similar treatment in respect of the fundamental traits common to all of them. Such traits may include human dignity, bodily desires like food, shelter, clothing, and sex. It may be noteworthy that even these common traits are not

universally acknowledged. Nonetheless, if it is granted that men are equal because of their common fundamental traits, then it means that there are cases in which men differ. In which case, the mechanism will allow differential treatment. In consequence, it means that equals should be treated equally while unequals should be given unequal treatment.

This contention, however, raises further problems. For instance, how is one to judge that one is equal to the other? How objectively will one regard the differences that may exist between men? In the opinion of Johari, differential or similar treatment should be determined by the relevance of the aspect under consideration. For example if there is a norm that equal work should receive equal pay, then the work in question should render the payment different. Further, the similar treatment given to men in respect of their common fundamental traits does not mean that they are given the same treatment. Instead, it means that adequate opportunity for all of them should be provided. If so, their differences are *not* completely *eradicated*.

In consequence, as a social concept, equality does not mean uniform treatment of men precisely because men differ naturally in their capacities, needs and wants. They should be given adequate opportunity for individual self-development. This is not to say that differences in men should be irrationally emphasised. An appropriate system or mechanism ought to be found in which differences

in men can be rationally expressed. Otherwise uniform treatment would thwart individual spontaneous development of the potentialities of the human personality.

b) Marxist Notion of Equality

The Marxist notion of equality has two aspects: the economic and the humanistic aspects. The economic aspect states that equality is possible only when capitalism has been abolished. Thus the material substratum determines equality in society. After all, Marx's primary aim was to achieve economic equality and then all other ideals like freedom, justice, etc. would follow. For instance, in the field of politics, a poor man may not compete favorably with a rich man because of the latter's material capacity to influence decisions. Humanistic equality, on the other hand, consists in the eradication of social classes and the state (coercive instruments of a nation). The Marxist position, too, has its own problems. How is the economic equality to be achieved? Does the overthrow of capitalism necessarily imply economic equality? Is the humanistic equality possible?

The major step proposed by Marx for achieving economic equality was by the overthrow of capitalism. However, even after the overthrow of capitalism there is work and payment. Since work is different, payment may also be different. After all, people remain with their different capacities, needs and wants. As a result, there is lack of consensus on how economic equality is to be maintained after the overthrow of capitalism. While some

of the socialists have asserted that incomes should be "each according to one's ability," others have said that it should be "each according to his needs" while others have insisted that it should be "each according to his efforts".¹⁵

In socialist countries where socialist classes are said to have been eradicated, new forms of social classes have been created - the workers and the state capitalists. In this case, the social classes remain. Marx had predicted that the "state" would "wither away", but the situation where the "state" is absent is not known anywhere in the socialist countries.

c) Equality and Freedom

Equality as a social or moral concept is intended to preserve the dignity of man; to allow man freedom to achieve what he chooses without unjustified restraints. It is also intended to stop those who would infringe on the freedom of others from doing so. As such, equality has a moral imperative intended to increase the freedom of man. In view of this, Nkrumah's socialist choice as a system that would widen freedom for Africans seems to have been justified.

It has already been pointed out that in view of the Western understanding, equality involves provision of adequate opportunity for all. However, it needs to be noted that "adequate opportunity" is not synonymous with "same opportunity" or "uniform opportunity." This suggests that differences of opinion in the provision of

opportunities remain. If this is the case, then, equality as a social concept has little significance. Further, the retention of differences in the provision of opportunities may result in wide differences in the provision of freedom. It follows from this, that equality does not necessarily guarantee freedom. Besides, even if adequate opportunity is interpreted as uniform opportunity, little is achieved in the name of freedom, since human beings are different in capacity, need and want. If so, men can use the same opportunity to achieve different results. While others may achieve impressively good results, others may achieve few or nothing. Those who obtain impressive achievements, may use them to infringe on the freedom of others as in capitalism. Therefore, going by what has been said above, Nkrumah's choice of socialism did not imply that freedom would be guaranteed for Africans simply because socialism implies equality.

In the view of Marxists, as we have seen above, freedom can be achieved when capitalism has been overthrown and economic equality established. As we saw in Chapter Two of this dissertation, capitalism can only be overthrown by force. If this is the case, then, economic equality is achieved by force. To some extent, this involves infringement upon the freedom of some of the citizens because not all of them will choose to abandon capitalism voluntarily. Secondly, Marx believed that once economic equality was achieved, the rest of the rights including freedom would follow. This view is

questionable. If economic equality was established, it would not be necessarily true that other rights including freedom would automatically follow.

Marx believed that the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat would pave the way for communism, i.e the state would disappear and a stateless and classless society would follow. This position seems to have a lot of problems. In the first place, Marx did not explain adequately how spontaneously the "state" would disappear. Secondly he believed that all citizens would support the rule of the proletariat such that they would facilitate the disappearance of the state. However, I think this was a wrong assumption. Thirdly, given the nature of men, i.e, wanting wealth, power, sex, etc. the state is necessary to regulate the actions of men in a society. Therefore, Marx's prediction is unrealistic it is little consequence in social terms. It is only idealistic.

In the light of what has been said, equality as a social concept may widen the freedom of individual and the community, but it does not guarantee freedom. Specifically, therefore, it could not necessarily guarantee African freedom as Nkrumah assumed.

B) Revolution

"Revolution" is a catch word for Marxists. Nkrumah too, referred to revolution several times. Like other socialists, Nkrumah viewed revolution as a panacea for the social-political-economic problems of post-colonial

Africa. He indicated it as an absolutely good instrument for achieving freedom. For Nkrumah, the revolution must be waged whether people want or not, as he said that force "must be directed against those states and elites which still resist the process of the African Revolution"¹⁴ and that "crises will occur as the African revolutionary struggle continues to *gain momentum*. We must be prepared to deal with them".¹⁵ His two books, the Revolutionary Path (1973) and A Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare (1967), illustrate Nkrumah's conviction about the need for revolution. Our problem however, is to define a revolution and show how it might ensure or curtail freedom for independent Africa.

i) Western Conception of Revolution

The term "revolution" covers not only political, but also social, economic, cultural and other dimensions of human life. A revolution could be religious, scientific, agricultural or even industrial like the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the Western political thought, it has come to denote essentially a sudden fundamental transformation of society or more specifically, "a sudden and violent change in the political system or the government of a state".¹⁶ For Mournier, a revolution is:

A combination of rather "far-reaching" changes intended virtually to erase the real illnesses of a society that has reached an impasse, rapid enough to prevent those terminal

illnesses from spreading their poisonous decay throughout the national body, yet slow enough to allow for the growth of whatever requires time to mature.¹⁷

This definition is, to some extent confusing. For instance, how is one to determine the rate of the revolution? It is also difficult to select objectively the positive elements which should be allowed to mature. Further, any change which may defeat "despotism" and establish "democracy" is also a revolution. For instance that event in which the Americans fought the British in 1776, for independence, is a revolution.

ii) A socialist Revolution

The socialist (Marxist) conception of revolution does not basically differ from the Western one. However, the Marxist revolution emphasises the violent overthrow of capitalism and the subsequent establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It involves militant slogans, violence, bloodshed, barricades in the street and armed warfare. According to the Marxists, the rule by the dictatorship of the proletariat is a transitional stage in the revolution. A permanent revolution is established when the social classes, differences in social relations, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, philosophy, the state, etc., have been abolished. When this stage is reached, then communism would have been achieved; and this is the permanent and final revolution. Any efforts made to challenge or overthrow such a revolution would be

necessarily mean that other freedoms were also availed.

Whereas it may be desirable to change society through a revolution so as to achieve a certain goal, a revolution may result in long, unpleasant, side consequences. Put differently, the little freedom which a country may be enjoying could be lost through staging a revolution. Quite often, many revolutions have bred persistent instability in different states. If independence is to be understood as a revolution, then many African countries have been rendered unstable. And a country which is unstable can't be described as enjoying freedom.

Nkrumah believed that permanent freedom would be realised when socialism and African unity had been established. This reaffirms our earlier view that Nkrumah's revolution was of Marxist genre. If so, then Nkrumah shares the criticism levelled at the Marxist revolutions for infringing on the freedom of the people. For instance, referring to Marxist revolutions, Johari says, "Opposition is suppressed, and the people are forced to change themselves in a particular direction which might not necessarily amount to a change for the better"¹ Nkrumah himself and many African states after independence instituted single parties and banned opposition parties. These measures deprived people, inter-alia, of democratic freedom.

A socialist (Marxist) revolution is supposed to be permanent as has already been said above. This "permanence" is a source of difficulties. The permanence

implies that socialists admit of no further change once a communist revolution is achieved. However, in view of the past experiences men who have claimed to bring freedom to their countrymen have ended impinging on some of the prevailing freedoms. If such a consequence is likely, then the view of a permanent revolution is not viable. Thus, even if some of the freedoms are infringed upon, there is no way another revolution can be staged. In a socialist state, another revolution is a "taboo", yet this is what Nkrumah advocated for Africa. I have already said that Nkrumah's revolution is of Marxist kind and, besides, our discussion of the revolution is based on the fact that a revolution is one of the assumptions of socialism. If so, then Nkrumah's position is weakened further. Marx advocated violence in fighting capitalists. As already seen above (p.96), Nkrumah approved of violence. Yet we know that many times violence breeds further violence or encourages use of further violence. This may cause fear, bloodshed and terror. In such circumstances, freedom can hardly be said to exist.

For a socialist revolution to succeed, an ideology is essential, but as we saw above (p.96), indoctrination might be used to teach the ideology. When this is done, as we also mentioned (p.96), freedom is non-existent. This is precisely what Nkrumah did. He started an ideological school at Winneba to teach an ideology which he called Nkrumahism. He defined this as the study and application of scientific socialism.

Consequently, while a revolution could be used to widen the range of freedom of the people, it may as well result in destroying the little freedom that there is. Nkrumah's claim that a revolution was an absolutely good tool for achieving freedom is, therefore, not viable. A revolution may help to achieve freedom but it could not guarantee freedom for independent Africa.

C Internationalism (Unity)

Internationalism or Unity, is another major aspect of socialism and, most especially Marxist-socialism. Nkrumah, too, emphasised the principle of unity. In fact, throughout Nkrumah's political life, the principle of unity was uppermost in his mind. By 1946, Nkrumah was advocating a Union of African Socialist Republics. In his opinion, Africa could be free only when it was united. He said, "I can see no security for African states unless African leaders like ourselves have realised beyond all doubt that salvation for Africa lies in Unity."

Nkrumah did not only advocate for African unity but also practically pursued it. In point of fact, it is owing mainly to his efforts that the O.A.U. was formed. His Africa Must Unite (1955) was written with the view to demonstrate the need for African unity. At the time of his death 1972, socialism and African unity were his major concern.

The idea of unity in Nkrumah's philosophy can be seen from three other standpoints: the ideological, the philosophical and the metaphysical.

With regard to the ideological, Nkrumah was convinced that one ideology was needed for the de-colonisation and development of Africa.

According to Nkrumah this ideology would be socialist in fashion. In respect of philosophy, Nkrumah believed that one philosophy was needed for the same purpose as the ideology. He called this philosophy philosophical consciencism. It is in view of his belief in one ideology and in one philosophy that Nkrumah wrote Consciencism: The Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation. With respect to metaphysics, Nkrumah reduced reality to one-matter. (The principle of unity is significant not only from the socialist point of view, but also from Nkrumah's philosophy in general). However, in view of the major problem of this study, freedom, I shall restrict myself to showing how the principle of unity can ensure or destroy freedom.

Unity has four meanings. Firstly, unity means the quality of being one, or simply, oneness. This meaning has little significance in social terms. It can only be understood in abstract terms. Secondly, unity means the act of forming a whole from separate parts. This meaning implies strengthening what was previously weaker and, probably, weakening what was previously stronger. In the context of African freedom Nkrumah wanted African states to come together to form one strong united Africa. He wanted African states to combine their resources, i.e. the military, economic, and political. In this way, Africa

could be stronger and, probably strong enough to resist or defeat neo-colonialist forces. In the opinion of Nkrumah, freedom would be realised only when the neo-colonialist forces had been defeated.

Earlier I talked of positive freedom (freedom for). This is the freedom one enjoys when the constraints to do what one wills are removed. In connection with the African situation, many states wish to start or certain projects but because of insufficient resources they never embark on them. However, when the resources of different African nations are combined, the possibility of carrying out different projects becomes greater. In this way, the freedom to do what they would not otherwise do when divided, is improved. Consequently, unity could widen and promote the freedom of African states.

I have mentioned earlier, that coming together may involve making weaker what was previously stronger. When this happens, negative consequences may ensue. For instance, individual people have different ambitions which they pursue with great determination. Often times, such people obtain astonishing results. However, when combined with others some people lose the spirit or individual initiative and as result, their productivity lessens. With regard to freedom, my contention is that to some extent, individual initiative (freedom) could be narrowed on the occasion of unity in certain cases.

Further, putting together what was previously separate can at times be very dangerous. If negative

elements are put together they form a bigger negative. For example, if several criminals are put together they are likely to cause more danger than one or two criminals.

Thirdly, unity means mutual agreement and unity of purpose. In the context of African situation, Nkrumah wanted African individual states to reach an agreement on the union of African states. This implies that border differences and conflict would cease since their interests would be continental instead of national. In fact, because of conflicts between different African states little development has taken place in the affected countries. In such a case, freedom cannot be said to exist because the differences and conflicts are, in a way, constraints to development. Nkrumah seems to have stated the matter correctly when he said:

If we do not formulate plans for unity and take active steps to form a political union we will soon be fighting and warring among ourselves with imperialists and colonialists standing behind the screen and pulling vicious wires, to make us cut each others throats for the sake of their diabolical purposes in Africa.

Therefore, it can be argued that mutual agreement on common strategy suggests faster development in united Africa, in other words, widening freedom of the African people.

We have seen how a mutual agreement can enhance the

freedom of members among the union. However, members of the union can agree on matters that they are ignorant of. An agreement based on ignorance can result in disastrous consequences. In Chapter Three, I mentioned that freedom entails knowledge of what one chooses. Thus, even if the consequences are not disastrous it can't be said that freedom is present. Therefore, unity of African states could not have necessarily guaranteed freedom. However, this is not to say that mutual agreement does not widen freedom. It does, but at times it may shrink its range.

Further, once there is mutual agreement on any issue, and another different individual view emerges later, it cannot be acceptable. As a matter of fact, an agreement binds members. To some extent, limitation of individual freedom is implied. Therefore, it can be asserted that African Unity would to some extent suppress the liberty of individual African nations.

Fourthly, unity may mean uniformity. By emphasising unity, socialists do not mean that members should be the same in colour, height or size in a physical sense. They mean that members should enjoy equal rights by way of a regulating mechanism (Refer to "equality" in this dissertation). In the case of Nkrumah, he wanted African nations to enjoy equal rights. Since he was a Marxist socialist, uniformity can be interpreted to include economic uniformity. If so, it implies that some freedoms in the economic freedom would be infringed upon as we saw earlier (pp.55-61) On the other hand, it means that

capitalists who would exploit the workers could be controlled. Therefore, whereas uniformity could narrow the freedom of African states, in a Marxist sense, uniformity could widen the freedom of the African states.

Going by the analysis carried out above, the following can be concluded about unity: firstly, unity as an abstract term is of little significance with regard to social freedom. Secondly, unity as a social concept is positive. Its practical significance is worth pursuing. Thirdly, however, unity is not an absolutely good means for achieving freedom.

In summary, it can be stated that the socialist tenets are neither wholly negative nor wholly positive. They possess positive aspects for which they could be pursued but care should be taken to control the negative aspects. After all, they derive from a moral imperative to increase the happiness of man. However, it is wrong to assume that they guarantee freedom as Nkrumah did, and as most of the Marxist-socialists do.

Footnotes

- ¹ Margaret Cole, "Socialism" in P. Edwards, Reprint edition, Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (New York: Macmillan, Vol.3 1972), p. 39.
- ² Nkrumah, I speak of Freedom (London: Panaf, 1967), p.175. This view is expressed by Nkrumah on several occasions. See also the same author, Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah (London: Panaf, 1967), pp.100 - 103.
- ³ It is important to look at both views because Nkrumah was neither consistent with the Marxist nor with the Western views.
- ⁴ Stanley Ben, "Democracy" in Paul Edwards, op. cit p.339.
- ⁵ Kim IL Sung, Study of the Juche Idea (Tokyo, Vol. V. No.3, (Oct), 1982, p.32.
- ⁶ Nkrumah, Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah (London, Panaf, 1967), p.103. And, ofcourse, Nkrumah's pattern of thought was Marxist.
- ⁷ Paul Edwards, op. cit., vol.3., p. 39.
- ⁸ E. Barker, Principles of Social and Political Theory (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 151.
- ⁹ H. J. Laski, A Grammar of Politics (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951), p. 153.
- ¹⁰ ibid.

14 J.C. Johari, Contemporary Political Theory (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1977), p. 84.

15 Paul Edwards, op. cit., p.448.

16 Panaf Great Lives, Kwame Nkrumah (London: Panaf, 1974), p. 14.

17 Nkrumah, Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah (London: Panaf, 1967), p. 7.

18 J.C. Johari, op. cit., p. 189.

19 ibid., p. 190.

20 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 86.

21 Johari, op. cit., p. 201.

22 Nkrumah, Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah, p.9.

23 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 440.

CHAPTER SIX

NKRUMAH'S JUSTIFICATION OF SOCIALISM

Introduction

In Chapter Four, I examined Nkrumah's view that an ideology and a philosophy could defeat colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa. According to Nkrumah, the ideology and philosophy would be socialist. In the last chapter, I examined socialism qua socialism, i.e., I examined the assumptions of socialism with regard to the freedom of Africa. Hereunder, I propose to examine the arguments that Nkrumah advanced for his choice of socialism. I said there are two main arguments Nkrumah advanced for his choice of socialism (see p.8, above). I described the first one as metaphysical and the second one as sociological.

A The Metaphysical Argument

(i) Metaphysics

From instance to instance, Nkrumah contended that materialism is primary to mind. He said, "Our universe is a natural universe. And its basis is matter with its objective laws"¹. This statement is metaphysical. This raises another question, namely, "What is metaphysics?" Metaphysics is a subject that is hardly defined without controversy, and a fortiori, there is little surprise that metaphysicians themselves disagree on what precisely it is that they study. It sometimes becomes very difficult to draw a line between metaphysical and non-metaphysical

philosophy². However, three main features characterise the nature of metaphysics. Firstly, metaphysicians have always wanted to determine the real nature of things, that is to say, problems of existence and reality. The interest of metaphysicians with regard to these problems arises from two sources. One of these is the reflection that the appearance of things misrepresents their real nature. The second one is the desire to clarify the ultimately different kinds of things there are in the world. Secondly, metaphysics has always been presented as the most fundamental and the most comprehensive of the inquiries. Its fundamental nature is demonstrated by the questions about what there is or about the ultimate nature of things, underlie all particular inquiries. For instance, if one has to judge the results of mathematical investigations, there is need to determine the ontological status of mathematical objects in question, and this is the task of metaphysicians. On this account, metaphysicians are accused of unnecessarily duplicating work. This is because the above two features concern scientists as well. Thirdly, metaphysics tries to make its propositions impregnable against any intellectual challenge. The "cogito ergo sum" of Descartes was intended as a bulwark against any state of intellectual unchallengeability.

Nkrumah's metaphysics is based on materialism. Therefore, before we can examine Nkrumah's metaphysics, let us see what is meant by materialism.

(ii) Materialism

Generally, materialism refers to "a group of doctrines concerning the nature of the world which gives to matter a primary position and accords to mind or spirit a secondary, dependent reality or even none at all"³. While extreme materialists assert that the real world consists of material things which vary in their states, other materialists only assert the priority of matter over mind in their interpretation of the world. Not only do the metaphysicians dispute what metaphysics is, they also dispute what constitutes a body, what states and relationships a body or a material thing may have. To be able to cater for divergence of opinion, a material thing or a body can be defined as a "being made of parts possessing many physical properties and no other properties"⁴. But what are physical properties? They are instanced as the object's position in space and time, size, duration, mass, velocity, solidity, inertia, electric charge, spin, rigidity, temperature, etc.⁵ In other words, a material thing is composed of properties that are objects of the science of physics. Such things as consciousness, purposiveness, aspiration, desire, are not considered to be properties of matter.

Materialism seems to spring from the contribution of science towards the understanding of the world. Inquiries in the physical science have a materialist approach, i.e. they attempt to explain a class of phenomena by appeal to physical conditions alone. But behind all this, there is

an assumption that every subject matter can be adequately explained materialistically. Contemporary materialism, as dialectical materialism, is associated mainly with Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir Lenin. Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism is the name given to the original Marxist theory which is taught by the Russian, Chinese Communist and other communist parties. It is both a view of the world as a whole, and of the human society and its development in particular. The view of human society is called historical materialism, a name given to it by Friedrich Engels. The view of the world as a whole is called dialectical materialism, a title bestowed upon it by G.V. Plekhanov in 1891. Marxists regard dialectical materialism as a basis of their philosophy, both ontology and epistemology. Historical materialism, on the other hand, embraces their ethics, politics and philosophy of history⁶.

Armed with these explications of materialism and metaphysics, are accepted, we can then appropriately try to answer the questions "What sort of metaphysical theory did Nkrumah postulate?" or more specifically "How did Nkrumah arrive at materialism as the right interpretation of the world?" And "How does this materialism imply socialism?"

iii) Nkrumah's Materialism for Socialism.

I have already mentioned that, in an attempt to found a philosophy and an ideology to fight foreign domination, Nkrumah sought a social contention, i.e. he wanted to

apply them to society (see chapter four). In Consciencism, Nkrumah first approached philosophy from the viewpoint of metaphysics or abstraction, only to use his conclusions as a basis for the justification of the introduction of socialism to Africa.

Nkrumah contended that when philosophy is approached in the light of a series of abstract systems, it can be said to be concerned with two fundamental questions: one, 'what there is' and two, "How 'what there is' may be explained"? As we shall see later, Nkrumah considered the second question to be more important because, as Masolo says, "it is in it that the historical and situational context of every philosophical system or belief is portrayed".⁷ To the first question, Nkrumah says the answer "lays down a minimum number of general ideas under which every item in the world can and must be brought. It does this without naming the items themselves... it brings every object under one of the basic types"⁸. To illustrate this view, Nkrumah gave two examples of philosophers - Thales and Berkeley. While Thales postulated water as the original and basic substance out of which all other things are formed, Berkeley taught that everything in the world is either itself a spirit or some idea possessed by some spirit. Nkrumah observed correctly that these two different philosophers were tracing the origin of things that constitute the universe. Nkrumah further noted that once a "cosmic raw material" in answer to what there is has been affirmed, then a need to account

for this basic material arises. Hence the second question, namely, "How 'what there is' may be explained".

The motivation for attempting this second question springs from the principle of Sufficient Reason of Leibniz that is to say, everything has an explanation as to why it is as it is, and not otherwise. Nkrumah pointed out that *everytime* a cause is proposed, further problems surface. Accordingly, if the basic cosmic raw material is assumed, then any cause is traced from the basic cosmic raw material. Hence the cause is either part of the cosmic raw material or a product of it. Yet, if it (the cause) is part of the cosmic raw material, then the basic raw material is the cause of itself! If the cause is the product, then the "effect is said to cause its own cause!" Further, when the cause is granted to the cosmic stuff, it opens up an infinite regress of *Causes*. Hence the Principle of Sufficient Reason or the view of causation is only applicable to the products of the cosmic raw material and not the cosmic raw material itself. According to Nkrumah this renders the basic raw material to be an exception to the principle of sufficient reason. Thus if one admits a transcendent cause one inevitably takes either a deist or theist position, and if an outside cause is denied completely, one becomes an atheist. Implicitly, Nkrumah then, would be taken as an atheist.

Nkrumah rejected the inference of God from the Thomistic proposition "that nothing exists can be conceived as true" (i.e., if God was non-existent he could

not be conceived as existent), as well as the cyclic existence of the universe. Neither did he accept the infinite nor finite explanation of the universe because he thought it was not logically capable of demonstration. He asserted that no model could be constructed to explain either of the above mentioned universes, because the construction of a model implies a "finish" and the model would still be part of the universe. He proceeded to assert that whether the world was conceived as finite or infinite, it depends on the mode of conceiving the world. Therefore, the contradiction or the opposition is only apparent. It is only dialectical and no cause can be postulated and need not be, Nkrumah contended.¹⁰

For Nkrumah, this dialectic of the "inside" and "outside" causes of the world, has a social significance. Once the "outside" is accepted, then a conversion process is accepted also, which begins "outside" and ends "inside" especially when the conversion is thought to be "reversible". This is articulated in religion especially the Christian religion as propounded in the Bible. In this case, then, Nkrumah contended that a contradiction is created in society resulting from the opposition between interests in the world, and interests outside the world. Nkrumah was of the view that this social condition occurs in several societies and it is the same condition that encouraged Marx to criticise religion. Nkrumah therefore agreed with Marx by contending that while the interests in the "inside" require our attention because it is they that

affect our earthly existence, the "outside" interests do not, and instead, we are advised to "gaze steadfastly fixed upon things "outside" the world"¹¹, because, in so doing, our attention is diverted from recognizing that the workers are being exploited.

Nkrumah conceded that in African societies this "perversion" of concentrating on the "outside" interests was originally forestalled by making the visible world continuous with the invisible world. He said that "then, heaven was not outside the world but inside it. These African societies did not accept transcendentalism... by making them continuous, that is, by abolishing them"¹² (the contradictions between the visible world and the invisible world). Nkrumah further stated that the recognition of this contradiction may help in the process of de-colonisation. Religion must be clearly recognised as a sociological fact but must not be allowed to act as a device for "diverting our energies from secular consensus"¹³.

Religion for Nkrumah, like it was for Marx, was "an instrument of bourgeois social reaction... can exercise a certain fascination on the minds of Africans who begin by being revolutionary, but are bewitched by any passing opportunist chance to use religion to make political gains"¹⁴. Further, that "religion checks the advancing social consciousness of the people"¹⁵. As it is, Marx's undertones of "Religion is the opium of the masses" can be detected here. For Nkrumah, however, the sociological

connection between religious belief and practice on the one hand, and poverty on the other, should be appreciated as a starting point. He said that, in fact, "the people who are aggressively religious are the poorer people; for, in accordance with the Marxist analysis, religion is social, and contemporary religious forms and practices have their main root in the social depression of workers"¹⁶. To illustrate his point, he attributed the poverty, prostitution and starvation of Asia, Africa and Latin America to the religious practices in combination with Western capitalism. These problems in turn reinforce religious sentiments. Thus "fear created the gods and fear preserves them, fear in bygone ages of wars, pestilences, earthquakes and nature gone beserk, fear of 'acts of God', fear today of the equally blind forces of backwardness and rapacious capital"¹⁷. It is interesting to note that once Nkrumah had been satisfied with what he considered to be an adequate answer to 'what there is', he directed his attack on religion.

In order to consolidate his materialist position Nkrumah returned to the original question of "what there is", and asserts that the answer could be idealist or materialist. But first, he set about to reject idealism. According to Nkrumah, idealism is a species of philosophy in which spiritual factors are recognised as primary and matter held to be dependent for its existence on spirit"¹⁸. Nkrumah asserts that idealism comes, from first, solipsism where the individual is identical with

the universe, and second, from some theory of perception where "the idealist holds that we know of external world through perception; and, if matter be held to be constitutive of the external world, then we only know of matter through perception"¹⁹. In other words, for Nkrumah, reality is only what the individual perceives.

In regard to solipsism, Nkrumah observed that since the individual or the self is the only thing that exists, what about the external world in which this self is placed? The self sees and touches its body as much as he touches any other body. In view of this, Nkrumah asserted that "if other bodies are only portions of the individual's experience, then by the same magic, he must disincarnate himself", an act, which destroys the self. He referred to the Cartesian "Coqito, ergo sum" as incipient solipsism and went further to reject it because, in this case, there is a thought without a thinker namely, "we have unattached experience, thinking without an object which thinks"²⁰.

Resolute to reject idealism, Nkrumah referred to the German trained African philosopher, W.Amo. Amo argued that if mind was "in the eyes of idealism" pure active and unextended, yet ideas are constituents of physical objects and incapable of existence outside mind, then mind is extended! Regarding the view of founding idealism on Berkeley's theory of perception, i.e. that matter owes its existence to perception, Nkrumah retorted that once this is accepted, then perception is a function of the mind or

spirit, and matter is dependent on spirit for its existence, which is absurd. He rejected this view saying that if the body being matter wins its existence from perceptual knowledge, it could not at the same time be the means to that knowledge, i.e, it could not itself be the avenue for perception. According to Nkrumah, then, the idea of perception through physical senses becomes incoherent in Berkely's idealism. For these reasons, Nkrumah was convinced that the idealist position is warped. He then announced that idealism suffers from the "God-complex, it is what Marx called "intoxicated speculation", it is what may be called ecstasy of intellectualism"²¹.

Having rejected idealism, Nkrumah proceeded to present his case for materialism. That, matter can exist unperceived, and that it has a continuous independence of mind, should really be axiomatic. Further, he said that, "materialism is a serious objective and almost a descriptive kind of metaphysics. As a minimum, it affirms the existence of matter independent of knowledge and when considered primary, matter would be whatever has mass, perpetually active and in its manifestation matter would be co-extensive with the universe"²².

Nkrumah was clearly aware of the problems arising from the postulation of matter as the sole or primary reality. Nkrumah was clearly aware of the problems arising from the assertion of sole or primary reality of matter; such problems as the emergence of self-

consciousness from that which is not self-conscious, the distinction between qualities and quantities and the distinction between matter and energy. According to him the solution lies in what he called categorial convertibility. By this term Nkrumah meant "the emergence of self-consciousness from that which is not self-conscious; such a thing as the emergence of mind from matter, of quality from quantity".²³ But how does this phenomenon occur? How is it possible? Nkrumah, aware of the above problems, set out to show the possibility of the categorial conversion. He initially cautioned that it is not the task of philosophy but science to trace the details of categorial conversion. However, philosophy can demonstrate the possibility, either by conceptual analysis or by pointing at a model. Nkrumah added that in order to accommodate the problems mentioned above, primary reality of matter should be asserted instead of sole reality of matter. Nkrumah is therefore not a hard core materialist. In this way, other categories can then be shown to arise from matter through the process of categorial conversion and this gives to philosophical materialism a dialectical characteristic.

Categorial convertibility can be demonstrated through logic and science. With regard to logic, what Nkrumah called the conceptual tools of nominalism, constructionism and reductionism are used. With respect to science, Nkrumah said that it has been shown that the inter-reducibility of categories is possible as in chemistry

where "physical quantities give rise to emergent qualities"²⁴. He said further that in "nominalism, construction and materialist reductionism, one holds some category to be primary category of reality and holds other things to become real only in so far as they are ultimately derived from the primary category of reality"²⁵. This derivation is such that "for every proposition about an item which falls under a derivative category, there are provided true propositions about items falling under the primary category, such that the former proposition could not be true unless the latter propositions were true; and further, that the former proposition could not even make sense unless there were items falling under primary category"²⁶. Nkrumah demonstrated his case by reference to an "average man". The average man belongs to the category derivative of living men and women. For any proposition about the average man to be true, it must be true about the propositions referring to men and women. That is to say, propositions about the average man make no sense unless there are actualy men and women.

In the same way, Nkrumah contended that "if one says matter is primary category, then it must, to the extent that it is recognised as a category, be a derivative category"²⁷. Also for "the propositions about the spirit to make sense, there must be matter. At the same time, even if proposition about spirit make sense, in order that they should be true, certain propositions about matter

need to be true"²⁸. Thus, in "constructionism one has a picture how those concepts which are proper to derivative categories might be formed, using as raw material the concepts which are proper to the primary category. In reductionism, one sees how concepts proper to the derivative category can be reduced completely to concepts which are proper to a primary category. In nominalism only concrete existences are held to be primary and real, all other existences are "surrogates of concrete existences on a higher logical plane"²⁹.

Earlier, Nkrumah said that since categories arise from matter through a process, then what he called "philosophical materialism" becomes dialectical³⁰ and, accordingly, mind or conscience is accepted only as a derivative of matter. Thus, according to Nkrumah's philosophical materialism, "mind is a result of a critical organisation of matter. Nervous organisation of matter has to attain a minimum of complexity for the display of the intelligent activity, or the presence of mind. The presence of mind and the attainment of this critical minimum of organisation of matter are one and the same thing"³¹.

Unfortunately, Nkrumah admitted that his logical tools for demonstrating categorial convertibility, namely nominalism, constructionism and reductionism only stop at the logical level. But because matter is dialectical, categorial convertibility is possible in principle. He stated that a dialectical change in matter is one that

allows for the possibility of the evolution of kinds, yet the evolution of a kind involves the loss of the old properties and acquisition of a new set of properties through the dialectical change or movement of matter. Yet to say that mind, quality or energy arises from, or is reducible to matter, neither implies mind has mass nor that quality has mass, nor that energy has mass.

After rejecting the theory of relativity of Einstein and the principle of sensation as constituting serious objections to his materialist position, Nkrumah concluded saying: "Given the basic matter of the universe with its objective laws, the universe is forthwith closed, in the sense that nothing can become present in the universe if it is not entirely anchored in the initial matter"³² and finally, that "our universe is a natural universe. And its basis is matter with its objective laws"³³.

Nkrumah, therefore, was content that what he had set out to do, i.e. showing that the universe can be construed and understood in terms of matter was accomplished. This is what constitutes his metaphysical theory. On a closer examination of this theory, however, a few inconsistencies emerge. We have seen that Nkrumah denied an outside cause to the universe. We have also seen that Nkrumah's universe was a natural one and its basis is matter. Nkrumah equally rejected idealism. How then, can Nkrumah, at the same time, without contradiction, claim later that "philosophical consciencism even though deeply rooted in materialism, is not necessarily atheistic."³⁴ Nkrumah says

his god, is "a very personal God, and can only be reached by direct contact" and that, "to-day I am a non-denominational Christian and a Marxist socialist and I have not found any contradiction between the two."³⁵ Once Nkrumah had rejected idealism and the "outside cause", he should have realised how difficult it is to recognise God let alone to be a Christian. Ruch observes that the major purpose of Nkrumah's introduction of the metaphysical argument was to disparage religion because it is an instrument of bourgeois social reaction."³⁶ However, Nkrumah seemed to recognise the fact of religion, as when he said, "this does not mean that religion ought to be persecuted for religion is a social fact, but the state must be secular."³⁷

Nkrumah claimed that African traditional religion did not recognise the "outside" world's interests as the Western religion does. However, I don't agree with him on this point because firstly, both religions, the African traditional and the Western recognise transcendental beings. Secondly the life of the members of both religions is affected by the belief in the transcendental beings.

Nkrumah also, as we have seen, rejected the Principle of Sufficient Reason with regard to the cosmic stuff. On close examination, it emerges that, inevitably, his denial of the Principle of Sufficient Reason itself involves a self-contradiction. If a being exists it must either account for itself, or it must be accounted for by

something else than itself. When Nkrumah asserted that the Principle of Sufficient Reason does not apply to the cosmic stuff, it would mean that such a being has sufficient reason for existing because it exists, and at the same time, that it does not have such a sufficient reason, since this reason is neither found in itself nor outside itself.

Having seen that his materialistic position presents many problems, like the one of consciousness, Nkrumah asserted that the solution lies in the categorial conversion. His attempt to demonstrate categorial conversion also remained unclear. He neither distinguished between qualitative and chemical changes nor explained whether there is such a thing as purely objective qualities. Ruch wonders whether there is a qualitative difference between red and green lights³⁹ and not "a different psychological reaction to quantitatively different wave-length of light?"⁴⁰ Nkrumah's logical arguments for categorial convertibility (nominalism, constructionism and reductionism) are assumed to be valid without proof. After all, Nkrumah himself admitted their weakness, namely, they don't explain anything beyond the logical level. He said that "their weakness as species of metaphysics rests in their lifelessness"⁴⁰. It appears to me that this weakness refers to the incapability of the arguments to provide experimental demonstration. If this is the case, Nkrumah should have abandoned these "logical"

arguments, because it is on the same account that he rejected existence of a cause of the cosmic stuff.

As already seen, Nkrumah asserted that "Dialectical materialism recognises differences between mind and brain between qualities and quantities, between energy and mass... Both in metaphysics and theory of knowledge, it does not allow the differences to become fundamental and irreducible"⁴¹. This is a categorical statement that has no proof. Ruch observes that Nkrumah's words "does not allow" within this context, indicate that his metaphysics and theory of knowledge take no account of what is real, except to keep in line with the desired conclusions.

Several times, we have mentioned Nkrumah's interest in the social contention of philosophical systems. His metaphysical argument in Consciencism must therefore be seen in this context. It was intended to boost this social contention. I have said in the last chapter that his socialism as an ideology and his philosophical consciencism as a philosophy are allegedly based on philosophical materialism presented in chapter one of his Consciencism. His assertion that "there are two philosophical alternatives: while idealism favours oligarchy, materialism favours egalitarianism"⁴² is very significant with regard to the scheme of Consciencism. By alleging that there are only two philosophical alternatives, Nkrumah limits our choice as if we have necessarily to choose only between the two. Later, however, it appears to me, Nkrumah did not wish to

logically commit himself. He uses the word 'favours'. This does not imply a logical deduction but rather a possibility, an inclination. Nevertheless, in the general context of Consciencism, Nkrumah should be understood as implying a derivation socialism from materialism. But how is this derivation possible?

Nkrumah's contention that idealism favours oligarchy and materialism egalitarianism, suggests that historical favours materialism is derivable from dialectical materialism. This derivation is based, in general, on what Nkrumah tried to show in chapter two of his Consciencism. A similar derivation had been done by Plekhanov in The Development of Monist View of History (1895), and by Lenin in Materialism and Empirico - Criticism (1909) who interpreted the derivation as the nature of the universe coinciding with revolutionary aspirations. Stalin developed it into what he called "Political cosmology" in his Dialectical and Historical Materialism (1939). Engels himself never argued that historical materialism was derivable from dialectical materialism. Nkrumah and those who made a similar derivation argued that the nature of the universe directly determines the political, ethical and economic structures. In other words, as Masolo says, the universe forms a "uniformity such that social, metaphysical or epistemological questions are but minor aspects of the one major material question of the constitution of the universe considered as a unity of things and events"⁴³.

Accordingly, there is no logical proof showing the possibility of deriving historical materialism from dialectical materialism. Masolo says that, "under no circumstances is it possible to deduce, philosophically, socialism from materialism ... it concerns the logic of passage from one of the categories to the other"⁴⁴. Apart from the belief that the dialectic is the basic law of development of nature, thought and society (this "law" is also questionable as a law), it is a neutral principle of change or motion. It can be said to operate in any system "without bringing any two things as realities in which it is operative together either as a deducible one from the other or as identical one to the other on the account of the common presence of the principle alone"⁴⁵.

Nkrumah, in almost all his books, emphasised socialism as the most convenient political - economic and ethical system for development. As a trained philosopher he tried to construct a metaphysical base for his socialism in Consciencism. Unfortunately, as has been shown, the metaphysical base does not offer any foundation for socialism.

(B) The Sociological Argument

The period immediately after independence in most African countries has been characteristically emphatic on some or other form of African socialism as the only valid and relevant social-political - economic ideology that can offer a speedy development. The term "African Socialism" does not have a specific meaning. It was first used by

L.S. Senghor in the 1940's. Later, during and after the struggle for independence, African socialism became fashionable among African nationalists. But the term referred to different systems of government pursued by African leaders. The Kenyan system, though basically capitalist, was called African socialism. Even though countries like Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Somalia describe their systems of government as scientific socialism, Oswald Hirmer groups them under African socialism⁴⁶. The African countries which claim to follow African socialism or scientific socialism intend to approximate to "real socialism". That is to say, their systems are aimed at realising the greatest happiness for the greatest majority of members in the society. They hope to achieve this by state control of means of production and distribution of goods and services. They also generally condemn capitalism and imperialism.

The main reason for the choice of socialism is that there is much that is common to both communalism and socialism. The principles are similar, but whereas communalism worked well in traditional societies, socialism would suit better the current technical society. Nyerere, for example, says, "Modern African socialism can draw its traditional heritage from the recognition of 'society' as an extension of the family unit"⁴⁷. Senghor is not far from Nyerere when he says, "Negro African society is collectivist, or more exactly communal, because it is rather a communion of souls, than an aggregate of

individuals ... Africa had already realised socialism before the coming of the Europeans ... but we must renew it by helping it to regain a spiritual dimension,⁴⁹.

This conviction was advanced more clearly by Nkrumah in his Consciencism (1970). He said for instance, "If one seeks the social-political ancestor of socialism, one must go to communalism"⁵⁰ and that, "because the spirit of communalism still exists to some extent in societies with a communalist past, socialism and communism are not in the strict sense of the word "revolutionary" creeds⁵¹.

In other words, the African traditional society is presented as a place where social classes did not exist. Property belonged to the whole community and a particular social group or part of that society never claimed more right of ownership than the other. Land was not monopolised to the disadvantage of others, but was supervised by a king or chief who was responsible for the society. The tools which were manufactured by blacksmiths were considered as their contribution to society. As for labour, each one was expected to work, though collectively. Nyerere said: "In traditional African society, everybody was a worker ... not only as opposed to 'employer' but also as opposed to 'loiterer' or 'idler';⁵² and even a guest knew that he could not be expected to indefinitely depend on his host. Hence Nyerere's commonly quoted saying: "Treat your guest for two days; on the third day give him a hoe"⁵³.

Nkrumah's opinion about the traditional African societies in his later books (especially in those written after the coup) changed. He said, for example:

African socialism seems to espouse the view that 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 a fetish of the communal African society ... I am afraid the realities of African society were somewhat more sordid⁵³.

He later said, "... Feudalism existed in some parts of Africa before colonisation; and feudalism involves a deep and social stratification ... It must also be noted that slavery by Africans existed in Africa before European colonisation"⁵⁴.

This change of attitude is significant in three main ways. First, that Nkrumah had not initially made an accurate judgement of the traditional African societies and could also be making another inaccurate judgement. Secondly, it affects his mode of struggle for freedom i.e., Nkrumah had previously claimed in Consciencism (1964), that "... because of the continuity of communalism with socialism, in communalistic societies, socialism is not a revolutionary creed, but a restatement in contemporary idiom of the principles underlying communalism"⁵⁵. In the 1970 edition of Consciencism, however, he modified this statement.

It should be pointed out that Nkrumah's changed view was not only in reference to the period after the advent of European rule but included even the undisturbed traditional African societies. Thirdly, the change of attitude about traditional African societies, deprived him of yet another justification for socialism as set out in his Consciencism (1964). Nonetheless, Nkrumah seemed not to have been too willing to give up the idea that African societies were communalistic as opposed to Western Capitalist societies⁵⁶.

Apart from Nkrumah's own rather ambiguous position, the general conviction that traditional African societies were communalistic, harmonious, humanistic and co-operative, is highly contested. Igor Kopytoff says, "... the often repeated claim that traditional African life-style was generally a form of harmonious communalism, is an exaggerated generalisation if not a downright myth"⁵⁷. Kopytoff argues that the claim of this tradition may be propaganda material for modern African leaders who wish to justify their attachment to the socialist ideology, otherwise the basis of this claim is scientifically shaky. In fact, many examples from the African society show how sordid it may have been. Nkrumah himself gave an example, apparently inadvertently, when he talked of ritual murders being committed⁵⁸. Slavery seems to have been a common phenomenon all over central Africa. In fact, almost all the traditional kingdoms had institutions of slavery. The Ankole Kingdom of Uganda for example, was ruled by the

'Bahima'. The 'Bairu', who were commoners, were always a source of slaves for the Bahima. And the reason for the acquisition of slaves was due to labour requirements. Burundi had a similar arrangement. The Tutsi were the rulers, while the Hutu were the commoners. In Rwanda, the social organisation was similar to the Nyankole social set up until the Rwandese revolution of early sixties. These were clearly pronounced social classes. In West Africa, wars were constantly raging - for example, "the Ashanti were industrious in pursuing attacks and forays against Fanti who occupied the African Western Coastal area"⁵⁷. Apter adds that some people had to pay tribute so as to exist independently like the Dagomba who maintained uneasy independence by annual payments of tribute⁶⁰.

However, these incidents do not completely negate the existence of the co-operative spirit found among traditional societies especially, at the Kinship level. But even if this type of co-operative spirit existed, it was not only at a primitive level, but also based on too small groups (kinships) to constitute viable conditions necessary for establishing modern socialism which involves planned productivity and equitable distribution. The co-operative spirit in traditional societies based on the kinship was too confined to serve as a basis for socialism, which is intended for a much larger, complex, inter-tribal, national or even a continental society. The traditional familyhood co-operation is of a different order from that one of nationalism or patriotism. As for

Kwame Gyekye, "to describe the African society as communal is to prejudge the issue regarding the place given to individuality"⁶¹.

Ruch concedes that the harmonious co-operative spirit does not derive only from practical advantages, but more essentially from the fact that African societies form "an ontological and well structured unit in which everybody is linked with other members, living or dead, through a complex network of spiritual relationships into a kind of mystical body ... As a result, a fundamental force in African life was religion which provided a strict moral code for the community"⁶².

Ruch here affirms the fact that communalism existed in African societies. Nevertheless, my contention is, whether it existed or not, it could not serve as a reason for introducing modern socialism to Africa.

In advancing this (sociological) argument, one fact seems to be elusive to the discussants. Communalism is, in my opinion, a kind of production relationship that each society enjoyed during its primitive stage of development. If communalism were then to be taken as a prerequisite for the establishment of socialism, every society would claim similarly. That African societies enjoyed communalism is not unique. For instance, Thachoff (or Tkachov), a Marxist scholar, wrote an open letter to Engels. In the letter, he emphasised the principle of

communalism in the traditional society. He was specifically attacking Marx's revolutionary socialism. In reply, Engels said: "In some primitive and pre-literate societies class distinctions are frequently absent, and every people has gone through such a stage of development. To re-establish this phase cannot be our aim..."⁴³.

Nkrumah himself mentioned the above view, although tacitly. Consider the following: "There have been five major types of production relationships known to man—communalism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism. With the establishment of the socialist state, man has embarked on the road to communism"⁴⁴. If one is to take these somewhat deterministic⁴⁵ stages of development seriously, then the communalism enjoyed by African societies was characterised by its backwardness and the African societies themselves should be expected to undergo the stages mentioned above.

It can be asserted that since the current African society is a new one, i.e. already capitalist, then necessarily, the workers would rise to overthrow the capitalists due to their class consciousness and not because of being told that their societies were initially communalistic. Hence it is not very logical to argue that communalism implied socialism. The linkages of communalism and socialism are too tenuous to call for socialism.

We have seen that the rationale for Nkrumah's adoption of a metaphysical assumption in Consciencism was

to act as a basis for his socialist ideology, as advocated in several of his books, and for his philosophy, which he calls "philosophical consciencism". As we have seen, there is no logical linkage between his metaphysics and his social-ethical theory, although Nkrumah tried very hard to establish one. The second major argument advanced by Nkrumah for adopting socialism has also been shown to be unsound. Once these two arguments are rejected, Nkrumah's Consciencism is dismantled. Tacitly, all those who advanced a similar argument (the metaphysical one) for socialism like Lenin, Plekhanov and Stalin fall down with Nkrumah. Equally, those who advanced a similar sociological argument fall down with Nkrumah.

Footnotes

- 1 Nkrumah, Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation (London: Panaf, 1970), p.28.
- 2 Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 5, p. 300.
- 3 ibid., Vol. 5, p.179.
- 4 ibid.
- 5 ibid. It is interesting to note that the physical properties are not precisely defined but only exemplified.
- 6 D.A. Masolo, ("Half A century of Philosophy") (Manuscript), p. 265
- 7 ibid.
- 8 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p.8.
- 9 ibid., p.8.
- 10 ibid., p.11
- 11 ibid., p.12.
- 12 ibid.
- 13 ibid.
- 14 ibid.
- 15 ibid.
- 16 ibid.
- 17 ibid., p. 14.
- 18 ibid., p. 15.
- 19 ibid., p. 18.
- 20 ibid.
- 21 ibid., p. 19.

- 22 ibid., p. 20.
- 23 ibid
- 24 ibid., p.21.
- 25 ibid.
- 26 ibid., p. 22.
- 27 ibid., p. 22.
- 28 ibid.
- 29 ibid.
- 30 ibid.
- 31 ibid., p. 24.
- 32 ibid., p. 28.
- 33 ibid.
- 34 ibid., p. 84.
- 35 Nkrumah, Autobiography (London: Panaf, 1957), p. 10.
- 36 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 13.
- 37 ibid., p. 13.
- 38 Ruch, African Philosophy: An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1984), p. 339.
- 39 ibid.
- 40 K. Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 22.
- 41 ibid., p. 23. See also, Ruch, op. cit., pp. 339-340.
- 42 ibid., p. 75.
- 43 ibid., p. 271. Refer also to Hountondji, op. cit., p. 153.
- 44 ibid.
- 45 ibid.

- 46 O. Hirmer, Marx, Money and Christ (Harare: Mambo press, 1982), p. 32.
- 47 J.K. Nyerere, "Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism" in Freedom and Unity (Dar es Salaam: 1968), p. 170.
- 48 L.S. Senghor, On African Socialism (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 29.
- 49 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 73.
- 50 ibid., p. 74. Nkrumah mentions this connection several times. See, for instance, pp. 68, 77, 78. See also his Revolutionary Path, pp. 440 and 441.
- 51 Nyerere, op. cit., pp. 164 - 165.
- 52 ibid., p. 165.
- 53 Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, p. 440.
- 54 ibid.
- 55 Nkrumah, Consciencism, (1964), p. 74.
- 56 Refer to Revolutionary Path, pp. 440-444 and Class Struggle in Africa, pp. 9 and 14.
- 57 Igor Kopytoff, "Socialism and Traditional African Societies" in Friedland and Rosberg, African Socialism (Stanford: Oxford University Press 1964), pp. 53-62.
- 58 Nkrumah, Autobiography (London: Thomas Nelson, 1957), p. 57.
- 59 D.E. Apter, Ghana in Transition (New York: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 62.

~~60~~ Ibid., p. 24.

61 K. Gyekye, An Essay on African Philosophical Thought
(Cambridge: Cambridge University press,
1987), p. 145.

62 Ruch, op. cit. This view is shared by A.

Busia and Mamadou Dia. See pp. 329-331, the same
work.

63 A. Mazrui, "A reply to critics" in Transition,
vol. 32, p. 52.

64 Nkrumah, Class Struggle in Africa, p. 13.

65 That is to say, as long as capitalism continues to
become more enhanced, the workers must overthrow the
capitalists.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study on Nkrumah's philosophy has revealed that the basic problem the author is grappling with is the one freedom. Although other theoretical issues can be identified in Nkrumah's philosophy, freedom stands out as paramount. In Nkrumah's opinion, colonialism deprived Africans of their freedom and in the light of what has been discussed above, this view is incontrovertible. I have already pointed out that freedom is a basic characteristic of man as a rational being. A rational being deprived of freedom is less able to fulfill his nature as a rational being. Therefore, Nkrumah's struggle to restore freedom to Africans is most laudable.

Further, Nkrumah should be commended for his choice of philosophy and ideology as means to achieve the lost freedom. I believe many social-political-economic mistakes can be avoided if philosophers are consulted whenever important decisions are being made. Due to its critical aspect, philosophy can more easily indicate possible dangers that lie in a given path than other disciplines. In this light, therefore, Nkrumah should be commended for his choice of philosophy as a liberating instrument. However, much care should be taken when implementing an ideology. Much as the ideology can be very instrumental in the fight for freedom, the fact that an ideology can be a wrong one, must be borne in mind. In fact, it seems to me that Nkrumah's socialist dreams came

to nothing because he failed to recognise this fact. *One may then concede that,* in addition, Nkrumah's failure to distinguish clearly between philosophy and ideology, ended up in compromising the role of philosophy.

In addition to philosophy and ideology, Nkrumah chose socialism as a social-political-economic system best suited to achieve and safeguard freedom. However, as have shown socialism per se has its own inherent weaknesses which make it inappropriate for such a task. These inherent weaknesses are perhaps the source of Nkrumah's failure to realise freedom for Ghana in particular and for Africa in general.

Ostensibly, the most interesting part of Nkrumah's philosophy is his attempt to give a metaphysical justification for his choice of socialism. This argument involves a derivation of historical materialism from dialectical materialism. *As* I have amply demonstrated, this derivation invalid for the introduction of socialism in Africa or any where else. The other argument which I called sociological is also unsound as has been shown. Consequently, Nkrumah's justification of socialism is not viable. Therefore, it may be asserted that Nkrumah's inconsistent theoretical basis could not provide a foundation for a socialist practice in Africa.

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