Nkrumah’s appropriation of historical and dialectical materialism as a pathway to African Liberation from Neo-Colonialism

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts a critical examination of Kwame Nkrumah’s views that materialism as a form of socialism can be a panacea for the liberation of Africa from neo-colonialism. To this effect the paper scrutinizes Nkrumah’s rejection of Idealism in favour of materialism. Materialism, he argues, naturally promotes egalitarianism—a view critically looked at. It proceeds to analyze Nkrumah’s distinctive conception of materialism as a tool to fight against the vices of Western religion and politics, which constitute forms of neo-colonialism on the continent.

Keywords: Nkrumah, materialism, socialism, neo-colonialism, Consciencism, pan-Africanism

Introduction

Kwame Nkrumah contended that reality consists primarily of matter and not of mind. For him, “our universe is a natural universe. And its basis is matter with its objective laws.”¹ After asserting that our universe can be explained in terms of matter, he then adds 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 egalitarianism.”² However, this argument raises three main problems. Firstly, how correct is Nkrumah’s view that the world is basically matter? Secondly, with such a materialist interpretation of the universe, it is difficult to see how Nkrumah could, at the same time, claim to be a Christian. Thirdly, it is difficult to see how egalitarianism can be derived from materialism and oligarchy from idealism. That’s why this paper examines Nkrumah’s metaphysical argument in view of the above questions. With regard to the sociological argument, Nkrumah contends that traditional Africans lived communally and 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 contends that since traditional Africa enjoyed a communalist way of life, socialism would be easily introduced in the continent. This view that socialism should be introduced to Africa because of Africa's communalist past, presents its own difficulties.³ Firstly, was traditional Africa really communal in its socio-political set up? After all, Nkrumah himself later denied the view that Africa was traditionally communalist in nature. Referring to the traditional African society, he said, “I am afraid the realities of African society were somewhat more sordid.”⁴ 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 it had a communalist 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? It is against this backdrop that the research questions the relevance of Nkrumah’s materialism as embedded in pan-Africanism. The paper seeks to assess the extent to which this pan-Africanism succeeded to put to question the neocolonialist policies and ensure African independence and freedom.

The Rejection of Idealism in favour of Materialistic Ideology

For Nkrumah, idealism “is a species of philosophy in which spiritual factors are recognized as being primary, and matter held to be dependent for its existence on spirit.”⁵ Here we are talking of philosophical

²Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 75.
⁴Kwame Nkrumah, Revolutionary Path, Londons Panaf, 1973, p. 440
⁵Nkrumah, Consciencism, P. 15.
idealism not moral idealism. Moral idealism consists of devoting oneself to a cause or to an ideal. Nkrumah begins his discourse of idealism by highlighting its problems and contradictions, and rejecting them. He identifies solipsism as a source of idealism, in which the individual starts from a depressing skepticism about the existence of other people and other things, as if his/her own body is not part and parcel of the entire world. As Nkrumah’s argument goes, the logical result of the individual’s general pessimism is to disincarnate himself/herself, and in this way his/her role as the centre of solipsism and the centre of experience wobbles: “He, the subject, the sufferer and enjoyer of experience melts away, and we are left with unattached experience.”6 According to Nkrumah’s narrative, Descartes thought that since he could think of himself without any part of his body like arm or leg, then he could think of himself entirely without a body. However, Nkrumah maintains that disincarnation is not a physical deformity. According to him, Descartes proposed quite un-soberly to hang the whole universe on the existence of his body. However, he (Descartes) promptly admits that he cannot doubt that he is thinking: “… even if he doubted that he thought, he would still be thinking, as doubt was a form of thinking.”7 It was necessary for him to single out what he could not coherently doubt in order to peg his existence on it. Nkrumah says that Descartes would be “understanding too much” if he thinks thatCogito ergo sum (“I think therefore I exist”) would imply that an object exists, let alone that Descartes exists.8 He writes:

All that is indubitable in the first section of Descartes’ statement is that there is thinking. The first person in that statement is no more than the subject of a verb, with no more connotation of an object than there is in the anticipatory “it” of the sentence “it is raining”. The pronoun in this sentence is a mere subject of a sentence, and does not refer to any object which is raining. “It” in that sentence does not stand for anything. It is a quack pronoun.9

Nkrumah’s analysis leads him to conclude that due to the depth of solipsism to which Descartes descended, the “I” in “I think therefore I exist” is a quack pronoun that does not necessarily refer to an object, so that once again we have unattached experience-thinking without an object which thinks. Furthermore, since the subject is merely grammatical, the universe becomes a plurality of thoughts that are unattached.10 For Nkrumah, it is more normal to found idealism on some theory of perception, even though this leads to the conclusion that we can only know matter through perception, and this makes matter depend for its existence on perception, and since perception is a function of the mind or spirit, matter ends up depending on spirit for its existence. However, Nkrumah points out that our bodies are elements in the external world. If the body wins its existence from perceptual knowledge, it could not at the same time be the means to that knowledge. Body precedes perception. So the idea of perception through physical senses becomes incoherent in idealism.11

Knowing that solipsism is full of contradiction, it is pleasant to found idealism into perception. Perception in fact, is a product of the intervention of senses. Senses are the faculties of the body, the organized body. Therefore, the knowledge of the external world is function of the human body which is also external. But the human body is things, material depend, on the spirit. But here is also a contradiction that Kwame Nkrumah is showing:

I am at this stage compelled to emphasize once more that our own bodies are elements in the external world. If, therefore, matter were dependent on knowledge for its existence, so would our own bodies be. In that case, however, perception would require an altogether new conception. For perception only takes place by agency of the senses, and the senses are capacities of the living and organic body. If, therefore, body, being matter, wins its existence from perceptual knowledge, it could not at the same time be the means to that knowledge, it could not itself be the avenue to perception. The idea of perception through physical senses therefore becomes incoherent in idealism. And with this one step, idealism collapses in our hands; indeed, idealism itself stands revealed as the self-devouring cormorant of philosophy.12

A deep analysis of idealism shows that it is kneaded with contradictions: The contradiction, claims Kwame Nkrumah, is in the denial of the partial nature of mind and the compulsion to harbor spatial objects in it. For

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6 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 16.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., p. 17.
9 Ibid., p. 18.
10 Nkrumah, Consciencism, p. 18.
11 Ibid., p. 16.
12 Nkrumah, Consciencism, P. 18.
in idealism it is not only our bodies which are in our minds, instead of our minds being our bodies; the whole universe, to the extent that we can perceive or be aware of it, is nearly tucked away in our minds.\textsuperscript{13}

What we just say can still be verified in Nkrumah’s notes. The contradiction that is internal in idealism can be used or has been used by colonialists to exploit Africans, and to steal their resources. In fact, the form of idealism that we have presented had seen its full development in religions. Conscious of the deep relationship between idealism and religion, Nkrumah did not hesitate to say that: “Idealism suffers from what I might call the God-Complex; it is what Marx called intoxicated speculation; it is what may be called the ecstasy of intellectualism.”\textsuperscript{14} Now we can understand why idealism and his logical and direct representative: religion, have been intensively transferred in Africa. It was just an instrument of exploitation of Africans:

It is the recognition of this kind of contradiction and the use to which it might be put in the exploitation of the workers that impelled Marx to criticize religion as an instrument of exploitation, because religion was used to divert the workers attention from the value which they had created by their labour to “outside” concerns.\textsuperscript{15}

If Africans want to survive, they should divert their attention from religion which constitutes the Western trap. In fact for the progress of imperialism, Western countries have intensified the notion of God through religion to divert our energy from the real world. The recognition of this state of thing is extremely necessary for the entire liberation of the African continent in future. It will calm down the Western hope to always try to exploit Africans and poor people.

According to Kwame Nkrumah “Religion is an instrument of bourgeois social reaction.”\textsuperscript{16} Religion as illustrated is a weapon, a terrible weapon. Western countries have used this to conquer Africa. Africans that embrace it without intelligence will suffer from it their whole life. Religion is an instrument, a dangerous instrument. Dangerous because it can exert a certain fascination on a naïve spirit and divert him from the revolution he wanted to develop:

Its success in their hands [Religion] 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: Seizing the slightest of these chances, they in fact take two steps backward for the one step forward in order to enjoy a transitory consolidation based on a common religious belief and practice. This idiosyncratic tactic can only create more problems than it promises to solve.\textsuperscript{17}

Religion, we have said, is a dangerous instrument. It is dangerous because it is one of the best tools for politicians. They use religion to control the behaviour of their compatriots. Behind religion there are politicians. Their targets are the citizens. Their aim is to maintain the status of citizens in slavery. But this slavery is not the classical type; it is indirect slavery. The objective of the politician in religion is to guarantee the people’s obedience or to reduce the majority of the population to subservience. When you obey without any iota of mental contemplation, you are not yourself. You become an object that can be easily manipulated. The person who simply obeys is affected seriously by a passion; sadness. When you are sad, you are powerless; you are afraid. When you are sad, you are on your knees. In this situation you can just obey; that is, you can just serve as a slave.

This is how politicians manipulate the soul of the majority of the population. The Population through religion is a slave; an unknown slave. Politicians use religion to achieve their purpose. But sometime there is a serious conflict between the two and this conflict of power seriously affects the state. This is why Kwame Nkrumah thinks that it is better, for the security of African states, to maintain African state secular. He posits that:

For certain, it will check the advancing social consciousness of the people. Besides, in the long run a dialectical opposition between church and state will be re-created through what begins by being a tactical move becoming entrenched. This idiosyncratic tactic actively encourages religious forms and pactizes, as well as a religious ideology. When the relative political consolidation aimed at is

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., P. 19.  
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., P. 12.  
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., P. 13.  
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
achieved, the tactic is dropped, but the religious revivalism which it has fomented and exploited cannot be so easily checked. It is essential to emphasize in the historical condition of Africa that the state must be secular.18

Africans should be careful with religion, which is an idealist idea which seeks to be universal, destroying in its way, African traditions. But nowadays extricating religion from Africa is a daunting task, for the simple reason that it has become a social fact. As a social fact we just need to understand it clearly before attempting to tackle it.19 In sum, Religion is an idealist thought that condemns innocent people who believe in it. Religion often flourishes in poor countries. It is never fanatically embraced in rich zones. We can confirm this with the following quotation from Nkrumah:

People who are most 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. Quick confirmation can be found in Africa, Asia, Latin America and among the people of African descent in America and the Caribbean. Terrifying payerism, arising from the pre-technical nature of most contemporary societies, combined with the encroachment of world capitalism, a combination which can mete out prostitution, destruction, ruin and death from starvation and exploitation to its victims, quickly reinforces the religious feeling. Fear created the gods, and fear preserves them…20

The Distinctive Nature of Nkrumah’s Materialism

Generally, materialism refers to “a group of doctrines concerning the nature of the world which gives to matter a primary position and accord to mind or spirit a secondary, dependent reality or even none at all.”21 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.”22 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.”23 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 appealing 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 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 history. Armed with these explications of materialism; we can then appropriately try to answer the following question “What sort of materialism and metaphysical theory did Nkrumah postulate?” Or more specifically, “How did Nkrumah arrive at materialism as the right interpretation of the world? How does this materialism imply socialism?”

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18 - Ibid.
19 - According to Kwame Nkrumah : « Insistence on the secular nature of the state is not to be interpreted as a political declaration of war on religion, for religion is also a social fact, and must be understood before it can be tackled. To declare a political war on religion is to treat it as an ideal phenomenon, to suppose that it might be wished away, or at the worst scared out of existence. The indispensable starting point is to appreciate the sociological connection between religious belief and practice on the one hand, and poverty on the other.” In Consciencism, P. 13.
20 - Ibid., PP.13-14.
22 Ibid., p. 179.
23 Ibid.

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Nkrumah’s Materialism as Socialism

We 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 then to society. 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, which can be said to be concerned with two fundamental questions: ‘what there is’ and “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.”

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. To illustrate this view, Nkrumah gives 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, notably, “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 every time 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 its own causes.” 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 which 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 ‘For Nkrumah, this dialectic of the “inside” and “outside” causes of the world, has a social significance. If 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 contends that a contradiction is created in society resulting from the opposition between interests in the world, and interests outside the world. Nkrumah is of the view that this social condition occurs in several societies and it is the same condition that encouraged Marx to criticize religion. Nkrumah therefore agrees 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 because, in so doing, our attention is diverted from recognizing that the workers are being exploited.”

25 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
29 Nkrumah, Consciencism, op. cit. p. 8.
Nkrumah conceded that in African societies this version of concentrating on the “outside” interests was originally forestalled by making the visible world continuous with the invisible worlds. 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.”

The contradictions between the visible world and the invisible world) Nkrumah further states that the recognition of this contradiction may help in the process of de-colonization. Religion must be clearly recognized as a sociological fact but must not be allowed to act as a device for “diverting our energies from secular consensus.”

Nkrumah’s Materialism and the Problem of Religion
Religion for Nkrumah, like it was for Marx, is “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.” Further, “religion checks the advancing social consciousness of the people.” 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 opines that, in fact, “the people who are aggressively religious are the poorer people: far, in accordance with the Marxist analysis, religion is social, and contemporary religious forms and practices base their main root in the social depression of workers.” To illustrate his point, he attributes 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 berserk, fear of ‘acts of God’, fear today of the equally blind forces of backwardness and rapacious capital.” 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 recognized as primary and matter held to be dependent for its existence on spirit.” Nkrumah asserts that idealism comes, first from, 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.”

In other words, for Nkrumah, reality is only what the individual perceives. In regard to solipsism, Nkrumah observes 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 it touches any other body. In view of this, Nkrumah asserts 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 refers to the Cartesian Cogito, ergo sum as incipient solipsism and goes 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.” Resolute to reject idealism, Nkrumah refers to the German-trained African philosopher, W. Amo. Amo who argues that if mind was “in the eyes of idealism” pure active and un-extended, 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 retorts 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 rejects 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 Berkeley’s idealism. For these reasons, Nkrumah was convinced that the idealist position is warped. He then announced that idealism suffers from the “God-complex,” which is what Marx called “intoxicated

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., p., 20.
34 Nkrumah, Consciencism, op. cit. p., 20.
Having rejected idealism, Nkrumah proceeds 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 says “materialism is a serious objective and almost a descriptive kind of metaphysics. As a minimum he 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.”36 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,37 Nkrumah, aware of the above problems, set out to show the possibility of the categorical conversion. He initially cautioned that it is not the task of philosophy but science to trace the details of categorical 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 hardcore materialist.

In this way, other categories can then be shown to arise from matter through the process of categorical conversion and this gives to philosophical materialism a dialectical characteristic Categorical 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 believes that It has been shown that the inter-reducibility of categories is possible as in chemistry where “physical quantities give rise to emergent qualities.”38

**Nkrumah and the Notion of Philosophical Materialism**

Earlier, Nkrumah said that since categories arise from matter through a process, then what he called “philosophical materialism”39 becomes dialectical 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.”40 Unfortunately, Nkrumah admitted that his logical tools for demonstrating categorical convertibility, namely nominalism, constructionism and reductionism only stop at the logical level. But because matter is dialectical, categorical 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” and finally, that “our universe is a natural universe. And its basis is matter with its objective laws.”41 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?” Nkrumah says “today I am a non-denominational Christian and a Marxist socialist and I have not -found any contradiction between

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36Ibid., p. 20.
38 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
the two.”

Once Nkrumah had rejected idealism and the “outside cause”, he should have realised how difficult it is to recognize God let alone to be a Christian. Retch 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. 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.”

Nkrumah claimed that African traditional religion did not recognise the “outside” world’s interests as the Western religion does. However, this claim may be somehow erroneous 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 was 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 categorical conversion. His attempt to demonstrate categorical conversion also remains 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 lights and not “a different psychological reaction to quantitatively different wave-length of light?”

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. Accordingly, there is no logical proof showing the possibility of deriving historical materialism from dialectical materialism. Masolo suggests 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 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.” (source please; Masolo???)

Nkrumah, in almost all his books, emphasized 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 of any foundation for socialism. 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 1940s. 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 along socialist lines.

Conclusion

Nkrumah’s major preoccupation lay with freedom and African integration which colonialism and neo-colonialism had taken away from Africans. 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,

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42 Ibid.
violence, injustice, alienation can be detected as well. The Philosophical problem of African integration as propounded and defended by Kwame Nkrumah in his Philosophy of Pan-Africanism counts primarily on the complete independence of “post-colonial” Africa. Unfortunately, Africa remains a puppet in the hands of their former colonizers who are the faces behind the masks called African governments. These invisible Western colonizers impose their will on African governments. With this in mind, we want to state that despite Nkrumah’s attempt in Pan-Africanism, we live a situation all over Africa of disunity and disintegration. African states seem to enjoy, at face value, some form of independence, but in reality, they and their peoples are at the mercy of the different former colonial powers and multi-nationals. This, to us, defeats the very purpose of what Kwame Nkrumah stood for in his Pan-Africanism. This precarious situation of Africa is further aggravated by the western policy of Neo-colonialism and Globalization. For Nkrumah, materialism as a form of socialism is the only pathway for African liberation so that we can arrive at the realization of the dream of African unity through pan-Africanism.

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