

**THE STATE, JUSTICE AND THE COMMON GOOD: AN AFRICAN
(NIGERIAN) PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

It is the onus of this paper to argue that philosophy is a human activity; and as a human activity it shares in a common humanity with a common problem; but yet these problems have their own peculiarities and uniqueness which might not be addressed in the same way. There are problems that are peculiar to Africans which is different from how the philosophers in Asia, Europe and America will address or view such problems. In so doing, after we have established the need to see African philosophy not as a reaction to Western philosophy but as an academic enterprise to help interrogate the African past as presented to us by the British colonialist using the analytical mind of human thinking and reflection as Africans. This will help to validate or invalidate what is said of Africans and in so doing address the issues of the State, Justice and the Common Good Vis-a-Viz the African (Nigerian) experience.

Introduction

It is a fundamental error to think separating African philosophy from Western philosophy is a futile engagement. In fact, African philosophy as an enterprise is contestable and debatable and as such the need to make it a viable field of study because one of the characteristics of philosophy is the problem of definition. The definition as to what philosophy is has no universal acceptability and this is even more an unfortunate situation in defining who an African is or what it means to be an African. African philosophers are yet to come to a universal conclusion as to who an African should be and this constitutes a problem in philosophy. Hence, the enterprise call African philosophy is still a search for a rational inquiry into what makes philosophy African and what constitutes African

philosophy. The acceptability of African philosophy resides not in its existence as a field of study, but of conceptualizing it clearly as well as distinguishing it from other areas of study such as African studies, anthropology, religion and even Western philosophy (Odhiambo, 2009:273). To undermine philosophy and relegate it to an activity of Western thought alone due to the believe Africans have no rationality, no thinking and no philosophy sets the stage to deconstruct the phenomenon call 'philosophy' so as to reconstruct a new dimensions of new realities that has made this enterprise call 'African philosophy' an area of discourse in philosophy. In as much this issue is still in contention, it is not the onus of this paper to extensively discuss the Western derogatory statements regarding Africans, but the fact that these derogatory statements has prompted African philosophers of Western influences through Western philosophical thought to now look inwardly for its own progress and prosperity despite the argument of some Western philosophers who argue that the African mentality or mind is primitive and therefore non-philosophical (2009:274). Despite these mentality of the West and even some African scholars (E.g. Kwesi Wiredu) there is a need to critically look at the current problems faced in Africa and evaluate the argument of those who disvalue the African thought. This could lead to a temptation of reconsidering the opinions of the West in relation to our African (Nigerian) condition. Nonetheless, it is these African conditions we are faced with that have brought about the realization for the study in African philosophy which distinct from Western Philosophy. Anyanwu expresses this insight adequately:

There is no doubt all men in all cultures and at all times are faced with certain basic problems, especially those of life and death, good and evil, man and nature, man and God. Even if all men are faced by the same experience, cultural and historical realities show that all men in different cultures do not formulate, interpret or give the same meaning to those problems of experience. Differences in assumptions, interpretative models, logics and conclusions give rise to different philosophies (1989:128).

It is the onus of this paper to argue that philosophy is a human activity; and as a human activity it shares in a common humanity with a common problem; but yet these problems have their own peculiarities and uniqueness which might not be addressed in the same way. There are problems that are peculiar to Africans which is different from how the philosophers in Asia, Europe and America will address or view such problems. In so doing, after we have established the need

to see African philosophy not as a reaction to Western philosophy but as an academic enterprise to help interrogate the African past as presented to us by the British colonialist using the analytical mind of human thinking and reflection as Africans. This will help to validate or invalidate what is said of Africans and in so doing address the issues of the State, Justice and the Common Good Vis-a-Viz the African (Nigerian) experience.

African Philosophy and Its Separation from Western Philosophy

African philosophy did not separate from Western philosophy; but its separation from Western philosophy as it is often misunderstood and misconstrued gives an erroneous understanding and interpretation of what philosophy in general means. Philosophy is a human activity and been a human activity is not the prerogative of the West alone but it is the activity of the human mind in rationality. It is understandably and partly correct that Africa philosophy came into the academia very late (2009:273) but its lateness does not deny the fact that Africans do not think, rationalize or philosophize as human beings. It is very natural for people or human beings to claim monopoly of what they think should be their sole right considering there are no evidences of who did what and when. Hence, the late entry of African philosophy as different from Western philosophy came as a result from the African to reinterpret the realities that confronts them after colonialism. Their realities as presented to us in the interpretation of our past does not necessary reflect the realities as we see them today in Africa. In his book *Witness to Justice: An Insider Account of Nigeria's Truth Commission* Matthew Hassan Kukah in his narrative of how colonialist perceived Africa different from Africans has this to say:

The British advertised the assertion that their brave men crossed the deepest seas, swam the widest oceans, braved dysentery and malaria to come over to Africa on *civilizing missions*. They came to help take the darkness out of the soul of the poor, uncultured savage African. What is more, British historiography posits, Africa was ravaged by war, the savages were killing themselves and then, like the knights in shining armour, they came and stopped the march of the wicked or the unrighteous over the righteous (2011:11).

This narrative as given above in the words of Matthew Hassan Kukah arguably calls for serious interrogation of the African condition before colonialism, during colonialism and after colonialism. How do Africans agree to these British

accounts about Africans? What empirical evidence do we have as Africans to rationalize the validity or invalidity of the British account about Africans? How did the British colonialist come to such interpretation of the African state without first interrogating the cause of the wars and killings carried out in Africa? How uncultured was the African culture? Who judges the superiority of cultures over another culture? These are the questions African philosophers devote their time, energy and attention to examining more closely the nature of the contested memories that have become part and parcel of our African history. This is exactly what we mean when African philosophers argue they are doing African philosophy in order to clarify the past so as to evaluate (analyse) the present, so as to confront the future. To deny Africans a philosophical tradition also puts the Western philosophical enterprise in a dilemma. This is because ancient Egyptian thought systems and culture have played an important role in Western thought and civilization. They believe that, in truth, the basis of Western thought is rooted in ancient Africa when looked at objectively without any ideological attachment (Odhiambo, 2009:288). This enough makes the African philosophical enterprise viable for fruitful engagement. This means that African philosophy as a rational activity of the human mind never separated itself from Western philosophical enterprise but that African philosophy as a discipline becomes very pertinent in an atmosphere in dire need of answering questions on its own existence as a race considering its condition as Africans descendants' struggle to survive in the politically and culturally inhospitable environment of the post-slavery New World (Asuk, 2019:54). In doing African social and political philosophy it is important to note that Africa cannot afford to continue to remain at the "fringes of development" (Oyebode 2001:53). In so doing, African philosophers must not go the Western-type of philosophical import type of integration but pool capacities and it must evolve a radical political economy as the erection and fortification of trading blocks and barriers are being intensified globally. An African philosopher needs to transcend orthodox approaches and adopt strategies capable of addressing its peculiar conditions (Asuk, 2019:58). This is what it means to do African philosophy as it relates to social and political philosophy and this is what separates it from Western philosophy. According to Kanu,

This makes African philosophy one of the resilient and fastest growing areas of human inquiry. It is resilient because it has survived the systematic and ruthless attempt to deny Africa the fundamental human right of self-determination and self-identity. A cursory glance at the historical evolution of

philosophy reveals that no 'regional philosophy' has suffered the bruises that African philosophy suffered on her way to survival, neither English, German, Indian nor Oriental philosophy... the question of whether there is an African philosophy or not has been overtaken, captured and conquered by African philosophers as seen in the works of Makinde (2010) in *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy* (2015).

Despite this closure of the debate, this paper does not in any way become impervious to current questions regarding the nature of African philosophy. This is why this paper has made the question of the existence of African philosophy a philosophical question and this brings about the viability of the academic discourse.

Politics and Philosophy: It Emergence

Philosophy as we are officially told began in Greece in the City of Athens notwithstanding the dynamics of its cultural influence. In the very beginning of philosophy which shifted from a cosmological interpretation of the universe in which philosophers questioned the ultimate reality and its fundamental principles in the universe, there was a shift from the cosmological questions to asking anthropological questions; which at the long run brought "man" or the "human person" at the center of social and political philosophy. According to Cicero, Socrates was the first to bring philosophy down from heaven, locating it in cities and even in people's kitchens and that is why Socrates seems to have been the first philosopher to treat ethics as opposed to cosmology and physics as a distinct area of inquiry. Philosophy might have to address the political but its highest calling soared above it; hence, Aristotle would try to separate the two as: the life of "politics and the life of philosophy". It is this part of philosophy that became prominent in the distinctive understanding of "politics" forged in Greece and was marked by the historical emergence of the independent city state (Melissa 2018). Political theorizing and the question of "who to rule?" was the bane of argument about what politics was good for; who could participate in politics, and why, arguments which were tools in civic battles for ideological and material control (2018) and this brought about the whole idea of how conflicts can be resolved in defining justice and the concept "justice" became a very central point of discourse as it emerged from ancient times into the classical period. Justice has become an important tool that has dominated social and political philosophy in which the purpose and its distribution is yet to satisfy

even contemporary debate; for it is only through justice the human person can live in happiness (*eudaimonia*) or the good life; this is because justice defined the basis for equal citizenship and the foundation of political life.

The desire for happiness is a natural desire for the human being to live a happy life and this cannot be obtainable if there is tension between ethics (morality) and politics. It is the reconciliation of treating these ethical and political questions as interrelated, and then going on to depict both an ideal political regime ("Kallipolis", the fine or beautiful city) in which these issues in politics can lead to an impediment to a happy life could be solved, and the imperfect regimes into which such an ideal regime will decay. This is the very reason Plato made recommendation for a philosopher king as the perfect leader to dispense justice for the common good in the society; as he view happiness as a consequence of justice in his *Republic*. The well-being of human beings is the product of the common good and the practical application of justice; the human being is both the product and recipient of what constitutes a happy life through the instrumentality of the state and this is the very reason why the state emerged.

The Origin and Purpose of the State

The origin and purpose of the state cannot be undermined. Human beings had to live at least temporarily in some society to be able to survive as a race. A mere chimera lifestyle replete with predators or carefree attitude is completely unrealistic and impossible for human beings, for no one can supply his or her needs unaided (Adidi 2019:106); and this is why the state exist. Despite the ambiguity in defining what the state is, one basic fact is that the state cannot be without the human being and the human being cannot realize its potentials without the state. Yet, the origin of the state and its development is highly controversial but nonetheless Aristotle makes an attempt to clarify the issues regarding the origin and emergence of the state thus:

... the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole of necessity prior to the part... The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficient; and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is self-sufficient for himself, must either be a beast or a god; he is no part of the state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature, and yet he who first founded the state was the greatest of benefactors. For man, when perfected, is the

best of animals, but when separated from law and justice he is the worst of all. (BK 1 Ch.2:362).

For Aristotle, the state has so many function and purpose and this includes the function of law and justice. Yet, despite the various theories associated with the origin and emergence of the state, it is very obvious that the various interpretations of what the state is and its function, it is knittingly embedded in the African structure of its own traditional government. According to Kanu Ikechukwu, he asserts that thus:

In the political administrations of the Yoruba and Igbo traditional political systems, there were very strong systems of checks and balances, and this is consistent with most socio-political structures of ancient Africa. Although, the Alaafins and the Igbo heads wielded much power, they were not absolute leaders. There was elaborate organization of palace officials or chiefs especially the *Oyomesis* to regulate their power, the *Oyomesis* were regulated by the *Ogboni* council who were backed by the authority of religion (2015:323).

This definitely reflects how the African state evolved with the emergence of Western import to what we have now as a state. Despite this emergence, there is a very strong romance between the African traditional political system and the current interpretation of the state; this is the very reason with the practice of democracy Africans still uphold the traditional rulers as very relevant in the development of a state and it is in view of this development that Africans and African nationalist supported the move that development would quickly come to Africa through the instrumentality of indigenous framework of development in which the state will help in ameliorating the African condition. According to Makinde;

Before the declaration of independence by their colonial masters, some politically minded African intellectuals seemed to have had their own ideas about the system of government they considered most suited to the African situation, based on the traditional beliefs of the African people. The word 'socialism' is a foreign word, and may therefore have different meanings to different linguistic communities. In the African context, socialism could mean living together in a spirit of love and brotherhood. It could also mean, as Nyerere puts it,

Ujamaa i.e. “familyhood” or “community spirit”; the “foundation” and “objective” of extended family (Makinde 2010: 186).

It is this familyhood that constitutes citizenry and community spirit in which the state emerged. The purpose of which the state exit is because ‘man is a ‘political’ or ‘gregarious animal’, one of the human instincts is social (Awolowo: 1966:276). Since the individual person is an agent of social, political, economic and scientific changes, the overall achievement of a society and the state depends on the achievements of its citizens, individually and collectively (Makinde 2010:174). The state exit for its citizens and the citizens in turn has its own responsibilities towards the state; since the state cannot do without the citizens and in turn the citizens cannot realize their potentials without the state. As such, the human being is of very utmost importance to exit within a state and function in a state.

The African Perspective of the “Human Person”

In African culture, religion and philosophical thought, the human person is anthropocentric (Kanu 2015: 101) and at the same time theocentric. A discourse in addressing the human person in Africa, two extremes ought to be avoided. It is difficult to talk about God and not to talk about man; and to talk about man and not to talk about God. In fact, Man is at the center of the universe, more central than God. According to Mbiti, “Man is at the very center of existence and African people see everything else in its relation to this central position of man ... it is as if God exists for the sake of man (1969:92). In *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes*, Metuh agrees that “everything else in African worldview seems to get its bearing and significance from the position, meaning and end of man” (1991:109); the idea of God, divinities, ancestors, rituals, sacrifices etc., are only useful to the extent that they serve the needs of man (Kanu 2015:101). According to Kanu,

The analysis of the Yoruba idea of the human person as *eniyán*, reveals the African concept of man as a being having its origin and finality in the Supreme Being. This implies that the human being in the African universe is best understood in his/her relationship with God his/her creator, whom from the Igbo perspective, he/she is ontological linked with through his/her *chi* (*destiny*), the spark or emanation of God in each person (2015:110).

It is within this context of the ontological relationship between God and man in Africa that makes the human person have a mission and destiny. Therefore, this

ontological relationship is expressed in a relational dimension were human beings ought to strive to establish a cordial relationship with another in contrast to the Hobbesian state of nature were human beings is warre against every human being. Hence, the need for justice and equal dignity in the society is to maintain such cordial relationship with man/woman (human beings) as C.B. Okolo remarks reflectively that the human person is “not just a human being but essentially a ‘being-with’”. It is the basis of this claim that he is an African (1993:5). Placide Tempels stresses the unique features of the African human person thus:

Just as Bantu (black Africa) ontology is opposed to the European concept of individuated things existing in themselves, isolated from others, so Bantu psychology cannot conceive of man as an individual, as a force existing by itself and apart from its ontological relationship with other living beings and from its connection with animals or inanimate forces around it (1959:103).

Hence, this relationship of humans in relations to others is ontological drawing from the anthropological and theological intricacies of the human person as conceived and perceived in Africa. Yet, despite this connectedness of human beings as they relate to one another, it is only through justice that this relationship can be maintained and sustained so that the human person’s aspiration does not override or outweigh the common good of the society; this substantiate the Ubuntu philosophy of “I am because you are” which also can be vice versa “you are because I am”.

The African understanding of human society in relation to the human person is different from the western understanding of human society. African societies tend to be organized around the requirements of duty; while western societies tend to be organized around the postulation of individual rights (Menkiti 2003:180). In the African understanding, priority is given to the duties which individuals owe to the collectivity, and their rights, whatever these may be, are seen as secondary to their exercise of their duties. It therefore means that the notion of justice is centered around the community and in the interest of the community rather than an individual. For justice to be measured in the African society, it must not be detrimental to the common good because according to Menkiti:

Personhood is the sort of thing which has to be attained, and is attained in direct proportion as one participates in communal life

through the discharge of the various obligations defined by ones stations. It is the carrying out of these obligations that transforms one from the it-status of early childhood, marked by an absence of moral function, into the person-status of later years, marked by a widened maturity of ethical sense—an ethical maturity without which personhood is conceived as eluding one. (2003:176).

It is this duty to the community every individual owes the community that could be translated to what Plato identifies in his own interpretation of justice as “everyone doing his own job”.

Justice has always been a very problematic area of discourse from ancient times up to contemporary times. In African philosophy, this area of discourse cannot be avoided most especially in the discourse of African social and political philosophy. In this paper, the researcher will not explore justice as perceived in western thought, because it has been dealt with especially by the western scholars (Oladipupo 2016:361); but nonetheless, this research paper will be limited to the African understanding of justice as the basis for an African philosophical approach to the issues raised in this topic. No doubt, most African sources in dealing with the nature of justice have no documented or written conceptualization of what justice is; but its pragmatic application is drawn from experience. For example, according to Oladipupo,

In the Yoruba traditional society, justice, is one of the fundamental pillars of legal system. The Yoruba have a strong sense of justice profoundly found in their cultural norms and values. Thus their notion of justice could be adjudged to have some dint of pragmatic values. The pragmatic values and senses of their justice is enshrined in their adoption of proverbs, idioms, folklores, folk songs, symbols and interpretation of myths with practical values to bring justice to bear (2016:365).

It is important to note that there is no human group without its own history, language, custom, tradition, culture, political organization, religion, literature, mythology, law and philosophy; Godwin E. Azenabor puts it succinctly, thus:

... African philosophy cannot adequately be fashioned without considering history, traditions, culture and experience as the appropriate soil which it is to grow... After all, the traditional thinking about the foundation of morality is refreshingly non-

supernatural... it is instructive to note Oluwole's position... Indeed, many would see it as the apex of human thought, the inevitable end of rational endeavours to understand man (2010:120).

Therefore, we might be having proliferations of various idea of justice in Africa but we shall limit it to the Yoruba culture and if need be add again another tribe for the sake of this paper. Hence, in the cause or an attempt to speak or act for the cause of justice, the Yoruba, according to Adegbindin (2012:175), use words like *otito* (truth), *ododo* (honesty), *eto* (right) to depict concepts that are closely related to justice. Just like any other tribe in Nigeria, there is no single word that could be used to mean justice (2016:365). Thus, the concept justice among the Yoruba could be better understood if located within the matrix of the underlying moral philosophy of a people whose religion doubled as a way of life (Alao 2009:30). This is very important for the study of African social and political philosophy because some of these concepts cannot be explain without religious undertones as seen even in western philosophy.

The main expectation of the Yoruba idea of justice is to secure peace in the human society where everyone will be happy; and this is the whole essence of social and political philosophy in which the purpose for the study of African social and political philosophy is for the happy life and this could be achieved through the various vehicles of justice; be it reconciliatory, retributive, restorative etc. The purpose of justice for the Yoruba land is a peace-centered justice, because it focuses on restoring peace, mending relationship without compromising the truth (Oladipupo 2016:374); for the well-being and prosperity of the entire community (Oke 2011:414).

The Condition of the African (Nigerian) State

The condition of the African (Nigerian) State is one that will definitely keep the African philosophers on their toes. The problem that characterizes Africa is such that the entire African states have almost completely lost sense of this human dignity as is relates to the human person. In other to apply the words of Gabriel Marcel in relation to the African condition were the human person has been depersonalized and human dignity ignored (1991:76). Despite the increase in globalization as the world keeps moving towards each other, Africans have not learnt from modernization so as to add value to the human person but rather human beings have become more functionaries without vitality to make them

live a happy life as human beings. In fact, the African (Nigerian) condition reflects the Hobbesian state of nature the level of inhumanity to man is on the increase. The idea of blaming our colonizers for our present condition in Africa no longer hold water in academic thought because ever since we craved and clamored for independence thinking and expecting that we have what it takes to make Africa great can be considered an illusion. We cannot continue to blame Europe and America for our woes because we created our problems and we must be the ones to solve it. In the words of Matthew Hassan Kukah in his book *Witness to Justice* he opines "We created most of our mess ourselves and we are the ones who have to clean it up; those who might wish to help us are welcome, but in my view, they should come and find our hands duly soiled from labour" (2011).

In other for our hands to be soiled, it is now the duty of African social and political philosophers to capture the Africanness of his thought system and experience so as to restore that human dignity that is frustrated by religious fanaticism, tribalism, ethnicism, corruption, gross violation of human right, poverty of leadership as it leads to other forms of poverty, civil wars, xenophobia, terrorism, insecurity etc.

Africa is an irony of plenty and wants; a land suffering from underdevelopment when it has all it takes to be part of the developed world. The questions one will ask, what led to the independence in the first place? For what purpose did we gain this independence? Did we really warrant the independence? Those who called for the independence what were their motives? Can we really say we are independent as African? Where do we go from here? This current state of affairs hinders development and calls for serious attention from social and political philosophers if we must have something to offer Africa and African philosophy as an enterprise. How can African philosophers go beyond the classroom and engage the leaders of Africa? These questions indeed are very fundamental associated with socio-economic development in Africa as it is associated with bad leadership. African is synonymously always identified with an almost failed government due to political instability and as Asouzu opined as depicted in the work of Ejikemeuwa Ndubuisi and Augustine Onyemaobi thus: "one thing that is very clear is that African leaders usurp power through questionable and upon ascension to office, they turn themselves into demigods" (2016: 140). Hence, according to Chinua Achebe "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure in leadership" (1984:1). This does not in any way make Africa (Nigeria) the worst continent in the world. This is indeed a human problem in a human

society that is inhabited by human beings, and every human being is infected by the virus of self-centeredness (Akinwale 2019:7). This is exactly the problem of Africa as it is today in our contemporary Africa which equals the common good question.

The Problem of the Common Good and African Socialism

The basic reason why the problem of the common good though difficult to realize but not impossible is the fact that the game of politics has been transformed into the game of bitter politics in most African countries, both spectators and players in the political stadium and have become victims of circumstances and as such an average political leader in Africa display all forms of individualistic tendencies with a high superlative degree of greed. At the inception of independence in most African countries, African leaders and African philosophers as well made frantic effort to solve the problem of these individualistic tendencies that have affected the hygiene of our politics and polity through the vehicle of African Socialism. Socialism is not new to Africans and as such, despite its own weakness, it is an antidote to the self-centeredness of an African who is a human being.

African leaders and philosophers made several attempt to use African socialism to get rid of neo colonialism, to institute self-rule and all the vestiges of foreign rule in the efforts to formulate a pragmatic socio-economic and political theory for the African people. This led Julius Nyerere to formulate his *Ujamaa Philosophy* which means *Familyhood* which was intended to show that socialism is not alien to Africans. According to Samuel Jegede:

This type of socialism is not the scientific, atheistic, class struggle induced socialism of the West; rather it is a humanistic, egalitarian, communalistic socialism which enabled all Africans not only to be workers, but also to be their brother's keepers before the Europeans came (2012:146).

This kind of socialism solves the poverty and attitude of the mind. According to Julius Nyerere:

Socialism like democracy is an attitude of mind. In a socialist society, it is the socialist attitude of mind, and not the rigid adherence to standard

political pattern, which is needed to ensure that the people care for each other's welfare (1987:512).

There is no doubt that Julius Nyerere is not left out in the pursuit of African Socialism as Leopold Sedar Senghor's Negritude which is a variant of African socialism also known as *Senegalese Socialism* rejected capitalism as a vehicle for development (Jegede 2012:148). He opts for *Senegalese Socialism* which in his view serves as a catalyst for the implementation of the Senegalese development plan. However, this type of socialism must be built on the ideology of *Negritude* (2012:148). According to Senghor "Negritude is the whole complex of civilized values- cultural, economic, social and political-which characterize the black peoples or more precisely, the Negro-African world" (1987:83). This, negritude is in response and reaction to the French Policy of Assimilation considering the circumstances and realities of his time.

More so, another African voice was Kwame Nkrumah; in his work *Consciencism: The Philosophy of Decolonization* much emphasis is laid on *Positive Action* which is a philosophical foundation known as *Philosophical Consciencism*. According to Nkrumah:

The philosophy that must stand behind this social revolution is that which I have once referred to as philosophical Consciencism; Consciencism is the map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable 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 (1974:78).

Nkrumah sees the African personality as the cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society; hence, the need for a United States of Africa to push through an integrated African society which Obafemi Awolowo prescribed in his *Democratic Socialism* as he identifies the contemporary problems of the African states as the problem of underdevelopment; the problem of individual freedom, the problem of constitution making and the problem of African Unity. Although, Obafemi Awolowo was not the originator of *Democratic Socialism* but he adopted as a remedy to the African situation. Democratic socialism for Awolowo is one that is universal and scientifically verifiable and it should rest on social justice, equality, respectable standard of living, employment for all citizens, social amenities such as free education, free health services etc. As against the violent struggle of Consciencism, Obafemi Awolowo advocated for

non-violence administration of force and hence he was against Karl Marx view that the only way society can change from capitalism to socialism is by force.

Despite these prescriptions by various African philosophers and leaders, it is important to note they all have their weaknesses but at the same time in their attempt to solve the problem of Africa, African is yet to become politically stable, economically it is depressed, morally it is bereaved, and socially it is bankrupt.

Conclusion

The African (Nigerian) situation is one that will constantly make African philosophers reflect more critically if we must be very useful to the present Africa. African philosophers must constantly engage its citizenry and leaders so as to make the society a better place so that everyone can live a happy life. African problems are peculiar to Africans and it must be able to use its own pragmatic steps to solve its own problems and not to depend on Europe and America. Despite the controversies as to whether African philosophy is a dead end or not, this paper has made an attempt to establish that as long as there is a controversy as to the independence of African philosophy as a discipline, then it is this controversy that makes the African philosophical enterprise realistic and obtainable for academic engagement.

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