

T I T L E

PHILOSOPHY AND DEVELOPMENT:

(An Inquiry into the Role of Philosophy in the  
Development Process of Post-Independence Kenya)

BY


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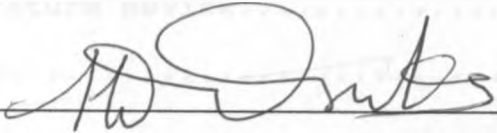
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D E C L A R A T I O N

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

  
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This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

  
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A B S T R A C T

This study sought to inquire into the specific functions of philosophy in the development process of post-independence Kenya.

It was provoked by the realisation that since 1963, philosophy in general and the national philosophy in particular had increasingly been subordinated to ideological interests and imperatives which had not only falsified the essential functions of philosophy in national development but had also resulted in unphilosophical devaluation of philosophy, distortion of the historical realities, misperception of basic development necessities and finally subordination of the national philosophers to a sense of fear and uselessness.

The purpose of the study was, therefore, to expose the magnitude of the damage wrought by subordinating philosophical principles to ideological imperatives in the process of national development and to suggest methods of adequately utilizing enormous philosophical resources in rational and beneficial national development.

To achieve this end, the central hypothesis was that philosophy was increasingly being underutilized in the national development process due to unphilosophical subordination of national philosophy to narrow ideological interests and political expediency.

The study was divided into five chapters. Chapter one was basically introductory. It provided the historical roots and theoretical

justification for the research problem.

Chapter two reviewed the historical birth and development of the modern Kenyan philosophy exposing, as it were, the origins of its eclectic and pragmatic character.

Chapter three focused on the national philosophy: its perception, problems and application to national development.

Chapter four critically looked at the philosophical attitudes of the national philosophers, their problems, limitations and their dismal participation in the development process.

In Chapter five, the entire study is summarised before suggestions and recommendations for the Government, scholars and researchers are given.

We adopted dialectical-conceptual method and conducted the study within a specific historical perspectives.

Our primary source was the library where we relied mainly on both published and unpublished works including: Government documents, policy papers, journals, newspapers, seminar papers, conference papers and relevant books.

Despite the three main problems, namely, lack of adequate literature;



political oversensitivity of the research topic and the new political thinking and philosophical consciousness, the study established that philosophy had made little impact in Kenya in general and national development in particular due to: poor philosophical heritage; poor philosophical attitudes of the national philosophers; lack of moral authority and political support for austere philosophical approach to national life; and finally, an overbearing external economic pressure incompatible with a truly independent philosophical reflection, choices and actions.

Therefore the study recommended that the Government should urgently establish a National School of Philosophy through statutory provisions and that this school should be run by people from all walks of life but under distinguished and committed professional national philosophers. Among other things, however, this school should engage in popularisation and democratisation of the utility of philosophy in the whole country. It should also simplify and translate philosophical works into local languages for the benefit of everyone.

Lastly, a complete bibliography was provided.

## CHAPTER ONE

### I N T R O D U C T I O N

#### I. I. General Introductory Statement

Man is the only species of nature endowed with rationality. He can think, reflect and act on his thoughts and his reflections. This unique gift of rationality provides him with the essential awareness and consciousness to distinguish between good and bad; make rational choices among several alternatives; and utilize his potentialities to satisfy his natural and social necessities as dictated by the specific conditions prevailing in his existential situation.

Every human being has the quality of rationality. Essentially, rationality is neither racist nor sexist nor masculine nor feminine nor tribalist; it is simply human. Under normal circumstances, however, man will tap his rationality as the historical reality dictates him to constantly improve the quality of his life. This is both a right and a duty that every sane man must fulfil. Herein lies the essence of man's constant urge for a better life which must be predicated on reality. But if rationality is disregarded altogether, then gross injustices and irrationalities become the most conspicuous features of the entire development process and all activities. Indeed, whenever reason is confused with something else or abused, even the whole concept of man is contradicted. In such an even, man's rationality may become a

burden or an abstract thing or an illusion. This will be reflected in his hostile attitudes towards moral values like truth, justice, freedom and honesty. In the majority of cases, when reason, justice, honesty, freedom and truth become a burden, the society becomes repressive and deceptive as the more powerful forces will unduly and unjustly be tempting to impose their untruths, injustices, unreason, and freedomlessness on the less advantaged. In many closed, undemocratic, totalitarian and exploitative nations, this trend is quite common.

The essential point here is that human activities and reason (philosophy) are essentially interrelated. All human beings are supposed to predicate all their activities on truth and reason, at least in normal situations. However, the use of reason is even more necessary and in fact, indispensable since man cannot, "ipso facto", develop by chance, proxy or idle speculation. He must consciously participate in his development.

As a thinking being who is constantly becoming (struggling to use his potentialities to satisfy his needs in the best way possible), man must understand, interpret and rationally guide his development objectives, policies and priorities on the basis of rationality. He must equally recognise that he is the most important object for all the development activities. Where reason is respected, this should be categorical rather than conditional. History, however, suggests that under various social systems, the more powerful and influential

forces have a tendency to negate the rational imperatives in favour of the non-rational ones. And this devastatingly affects the essence of development.

By its very nature, development (the conscious urge to improve the quality of human life) at every historical juncture, should always be predicated on rationality. In fact, every act of development needs reason in order to be historically approved, economically sustainable, ethically justifiable and politically practicable otherwise wrong questions will be raised about development and wrong answers supplied to the detriment of the overall performance of development. This implies that development needs to be informed by a good philosophy not a bad one. A bad philosophy will most probably put more emphasis on non-moral values (things, wealth, money, property) as opposed to moral values (justice, freedom equality, etc.), at the expense of the sanctity and dignity of man in the whole process of development. In a situation where development is founded on a bad philosophy, characterised by irrationalities, it easily becomes morally indifferent, economically burdensome, socially an embarrassment, politically impracticable, historically irrelevant and even scientifically untenable.

It suffices to state that only a good, just and human-centred philosophy can guarantee a humane, equal and most necessary development. This presupposes an equally real philosophical framework that will not only provide the basis for philosophical

approach to development but will also be the very process of philosophical considerations in the development process. Essentially, it is a basic fact that a just, fair and even development that human beings aspire for can hardly be the product of non-rational acts.

History amply indicates that at the level of practice, both philosophy and development are determined by ideological interest or forces which sometimes have no regard for truth, justice and rationality. This implies that both philosophy and development will essentially relate on the basis of social interests or real material life. Both philosophy and development are neither interest nor value-free. Thus, it is most likely that only philosophy located in the specific realities of a specific society can really inspire, inform and guide real development.

In a class-structured society, philosophy can hardly escape ideological biases, abuses and adulteration. This claim is borne out by the fact that in an ideological situation, the national philosophers for instance, like everyone else in society, can neither be neutral nor even disinterested actors in the process of development. If the ideological imperatives rather than philosophical principles hold the sway, then logically, the most essential functions of philosophy will practically be more responsive to ideological rather than philosophical dictates thereby subordinating philosophy to distinct social interests. This explains

why hitherto, the functions of philosophy in various societies have been either repressive, retrogressive, reactionary, revolutionary or liberative depending on the level of development of the ideological forces and the level of development in each case.

In many developing countries like Kenya, it is common knowledge that due to the fragility of the political systems, economic dependence, social stratification and the levels of development, there is usually a tendency to run away from philosophical truths and approaches to development. In most cases, the political leadership in these countries are so insensitive to reason and so allergic to truth that they do not only encourage a flight from philosophical truths by promoting populist politics but they also make philosophical thoughts and practices highly vindictive. Instead, they resort to brute force or pseudo-philosophies as the basis of development in the hope that their misdeeds might not be exposed and tables turned on them. Consequently, most of the citizens of the developing countries are afraid of free philosophizing on their social activities in general and are never ready to philosophically think aloud or criticise the unphilosophical trends of the political leadership.

Can development be achieved without an application of sound philosophical principles? Certainly not. If all the citizens have to equally participate in development, then steps should always be taken to ensure that philosophical principles are not merely stated as fashionable, expedient or populist practices. They must be

recognised and effected or applied as the indispensable requirements for the essential development of the whole society in general and its members in particular.

In fact, now, (1991), more than ever before, more critical questions of development are confronting the whole world in general and Kenya in particular. Among other things, for instance, the most pressing issue today is the absolute imperative of restructuring political systems which will definitely affect every nook and corner of the globe. Is it not, therefore, absolutely necessary to review and establish more practicable philosophical principles which will help mankind in general and Kenya in particular to transcend parochial and usually discriminative and narrow ideological interests in the vital response to more acceptable development practices?

As a matter of fact, post-independence development in Kenya has to, a large extent, been mainly influenced by one category of the selfish national philosophers, namely, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers, all of whom have been practising politicians. It is imperative to note that the rest of the national philosophers, namely, the radical nationalist-ideological philosophers; and the liberal professional philosophers have little made an impact on the development process. This, however, seems to be a typical phenomenon in independent Africa. Not very infrequently, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers in Africa have blocked avenues for national philosophical practices by deliberately confusing

philosophy with ideology and insisting both in theory and practice that ideology and philosophy can be used interchangeably. In the process, most of the citizens have been scared of philosophy. Consequently, the perception and application of philosophy in national affairs have greatly been falsified and philosophy either ignored altogether in the development process or simply haphazardly appealed to.

One serious consequence of this tendency is that there has been an inadequate philosophical participation in all spheres of national life. This anomaly has been made more complicated by the monopolistic political and even philosophical tendencies of the African politicians in general and the Kenyan politicians in particular. Apart from being only comfortable with matters which may help perpetuate their hegemony as the leaders with vested interests in the "status quo", the political leaders have increasingly manipulated the psyche of the general public and self arrogated themselves the Platonic "Philosopher Kings" with all the "answers" that development in Africa needs!

More often than not, the ideological interests of the political leaders and their political conduct are radically discrepant with ethical philosophical thoughts and principles absolutely necessary for national development. Throughout independent Africa, this has resulted in the emergence of over-ideologized national philosophies which are either grossly ambiguous, morally indefensible,



democratically unacceptable, scientifically untenable or typically lack a real philosophical rationale.

Today, three decades after the grandiose celebrations of independence, citizens of many independent African countries like Kenya have a fairly narrow view of the national philosophy leave alone its essential values and functions. Through subtle political designs, they are more prone to overstated philosophical principles and their underutilization. In fact, many people in Africa feel particularly reluctant to philosophize due to the fear caused by the institutionalized politics without morality in independent Africa.

Generally, real philosophical approach to development in independent Africa has been circumscribed by the institutionalisation of bad politics coached within defective philosophical frameworks and directed by unphilosophical minority ideology. In many African states, there are pieces of evidence which attest to the fact that the so-called national philosophies have no more characteristics of philosophy than billowing concepts, subtle rhetorics and a facade for maintaining the minority hegemony over the majority.

However, some African leaders may still qualify as philosophers. These include: the late Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana; the late Augustinho Neto of Angola; the former Senegalese President, Sedar Senghor; the former Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere; the former Zambian

President Kenneth Kaunda, Amilcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau, Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

However, strictly speaking, their philosophies have been unable to make much impact on development due to some inhibitive factors including: their own philosophical attitudes, the low levels of political and philosophical awareness of the masses, political authoritarianism as the political style in independent Africa, and defective structural and institutional frameworks.

In a society where the national philosophers are the most powerful national politicians more interested in protecting their selfish interests, compromise of reason and truth in the development process may be the rule of conduct. Indeed such leaders may neither tolerate self-criticism, dissenting ideas, nor even provide democratic philosophical dialogues.

Up to now, almost all the independent African states have literally operated within repressive ideological and political frameworks where genuine philosophers are forced to play subordinate roles in which free philosophizing is closely associated with sedition and non-conformism. Essentially, the African political leaders, who also boast of being the philosophers, do not see eye to eye with philosophical truths. Interests of the political leadership in many an African state not only come first but are the official "prima facie" case for philosophical truths. Therefore, it is no surprise

that some of the views and assumptions associated with philosophy and development have been fallacious. In Africa and Kenya alike, philosophy and development have been reduced to the status of philosophical non-starters. In the process, pockets of some very genuine national philosophers have become victims of politics of intrigue, personality cult and intransigency.

As a matter of fact, the interest of the ruling elites in independent Africa have practically been antagonistic to the interests of the majority they are supposed to rule. Indeed, the struggles for popular democracy and recognition and respect for human rights of the majority and resistance of the rulers have been indicative of ideological barriers in Africa. While the political leaders and their entourage really benefit from the socio-economic and political systems as they are, majority of the people are unjustly impoverished without any compunction. In recent times, however, due to lack of free philosophical dialogue, thought and practice, it has been virtually impossible in Africa to seriously harmonise disparate philosophical stances of the political leaders and the broad masses respectively. Nevertheless, it is not only the masses who are philosophically deprived but also the professional and non-pro-establishment philosophers.

There is evidence that in many African States, rhetorics about the national philosophies are increasingly being seen by the pro-establishment ideologues and philosophers as constituting the

national philosophy. But national philosophy, the sum of all ideas, values, beliefs and principles guiding the movement of a nation in the historical context, cannot be forged without involving the masses in free philosophical practice. There is no way a national philosophy can simply be imposed as a passing fad. Yet in independent Africa, more often than not, the masses have been forced to pretend to be fully in support of the minority national philosophies imposed on them. This is their tactical way of escaping the vicious arms of the usually vindictive state. Of course, there is usually real danger of appearing to be doubting the official national philosophies.

This abundantly explains how development has been the subject of poor philosophical direction. Is it not unthinkable that in some states in Africa, "status quo" and loyalty to the repressive political leaders are erroneously but deliberately interpreted as development while constructive criticisms of the undemocratic tendencies of the politicians is seen as anti-development and even treasonable! It is wrong to think that the best way to national development is to isolate the rest of society from philosophical practice or foster hostility among the various categories of the national philosophers on the grounds of selfish ideological self-gratification interests. While the reality of ideology as a programme of action for a particular group with specific interests, may be quite instrumental in ensuring the translation of the national philosophy into useful

practice, it is erroneous to use both philosophy and ideology as if they were synonyms; they are not.

On the contrary, while a sound ideology would still need to be guided by a sound philosophy, a sound philosophy will not need to rely on a sound ideology; it will naturally produce its own corresponding ideology. In practice, there are tremendous advantages in directly applying a sound philosophy to national development. No better understanding and practice of a humane national development can be achieved with the conscious, purposeful and scientific application of a socially acceptable and democratically less harmful philosophy. This role of philosophy will best be articulated if all the national philosophers freely associate and co-operate among themselves and engage in philosophical practices which are above narrow selfish interests. In fact, this would be one of the best ways via which the national philosophers would directly be pedagogically involved to lead the nation to higher horizons of conscientization (learning with a view to fully understanding and interpreting the political, social, economic and real philosophical contradictions and isolating through thought and practice all the possible repressive obstacles in the whole society). Given the primacy of philosophy in human development, all the nationals should be given the right facilities, support and a climate conducive for a meaningful and useful philosophical involvement in all spheres of life. This would be the only sure way to strike a balance between the non-moral values and the moral values in national development.

Independent Kenya has made some very impressive social, political and economic development compared with the rest of independent Africa. However, philosophically, the performance has increasingly been dismal with the moral principles being ignored and moral standards falling every other day. Generally, the apparently impressive development has been minoritarian to a great extent. This has had multiplier effects on the socio-economic and political inequalities and deprivations which have now become so conspicuous that they manifest themselves as anti-social activities most harmful to national development. Today, the Kenyan social landscape is characteristic of drug-abuse, sex-abuse, child-abuse, prostitution, tribalism, discrimination against women and the youth, greed, corruption, dishonesty, violence of sorts and a tendency towards what one would term consciencelessness. Political leaders have been accused of authoritarianism and lack of partiality. Police and the prisons have also been accused of unlawful and arbitrary torture. The intelligentsia has been accused of double standards and dishonesty. The evolution of these vices should be seen against the background of the unphilosophical approach to the basic questions of national development.

Thus, the inevitable questions are: how much has the national philosophy helped to clearly understand, interpret and suggest possible remedies? How committedly have the national philosophers been involved in the development process with a view to offering

solutions to national development problems by appealing to reason? How often has rationality been used in the process of development? Can the national philosophy as it stands lead to an egalitarian society? How can philosophical resources be pooled together for the common good of the whole nation? How can matters of ideology and parochial sectional interests be superseded in the process of national development?

If the experience of independent Africa is anything to go by, then it is reasonable to claim that despite the endless allusions to African Socialism<sup>1</sup> as the primary basis of the national philosophy and national development, ostensibly the use of reason in development is suspect. Perhaps this is more evident in the handling of the problems of land, annual floods, tribalism, poverty in slums and the rural areas, educational problems, constitutional amendments, the national culture, democracy, the rule of law and the role of the intelligentsia and the national philosophers, to mention a few examples. In particular, the here-and-now approach that has become the haphazard way of handling some of these teething national problems amply suggest that the powers-that-be are more at home with the practice of "Management by Crisis"<sup>2</sup> approach to critical national issues rather than a clearcut appeal to reason which would lend itself to more lasting solutions. In such an approach, the national Government goes in for politically expedient short-run solutions which yield unwarranted long-run dangers.

However, it is apparent that one of the obstacles to free philosophical life in development is neo-colonialism (the new form of colonialism). This is not a phenomenon confined to Kenya alone; it affects almost every developing country. It is the new form of new methods of imperialist exploitation and domination. It involves both the imperialist powers who had colonised and the imperialist powers that never participated in orthodox colonialism like the United States of America. Through neo-colonialism, the former colonies like Kenya now neo-colonies are culturally, intellectually, economically and politically dominated. The domination is, however, done through the operation of international finance capital working through the transnational corporations in conjunction with the local agents in the neo-colonies who must be maintained as political leaders. Over the years since independence, neo-colonialism has overreproduced itself and rendered free philosophical approach to national development quite questionable.

We do not, however, claim here that philosophy would be the panacea for all the national problems. We are aware that however perfect a national philosophy may be, it can hardly create a perfect development practice. But it can significantly help to offer a wide range of possible solutions to development problems in a manner that would show respect for the sanctity and dignity of the nationals as the very primary object of national development. Imperatively, every sane society needs a rational basis for its development to assist its development planners, its policy-makers, its donors and the very



central objects of its development in making appropriate choices in development policies, goals, priorities and strategies. Without a sound national philosophy, vital questions for development simply become null and void. While national resources are wasted on non-essentials of life.

## 1. 2. The Research Problem

This topic was selected after a critical evaluation of what was going on in Africa in general and post-independence Kenya in particular with respect to the nature of philosophical thoughts and practice. It was obvious in Kenya that like the rest of independent Africa, philosophical questions were being disregarded in favour of ideological interest, power and prestige of the pro-establishment politicians and the privileged classes who, incidently were very hostile to genuine philosophical participation in the national life. This hostility was being extended even to the other categories of the national philosophers who, because of the fear or the political embargoes, were increasingly being relegated to the rear where they became victims of apathy, cynicism, fear and passivity concomitant with the philosophical underdevelopment or decay.

No sooner was independence pronounced in 1963 than the nationalists saw themselves as the novel national philosophers if not philosophers per excellence. This was quite a dangerous precedent for the national philosophy although it was inevitable. In fact, the new nationalists

hastened to call for a pragmatic approach to the consolidation of the just attained independence. This meant that they would be more concern with the results rather than the rational basis of the strategies to those results. Usually, it is a mania for politicians-turned philosophers cum politicians to play down the import of reason in favour of narrow interest as the African experience of independence exemplifies. In a situation like that, issues will revolve around personalities believed to be a kind of patrons or godfathers. When such individuals become the personification of the national life, they might erroneously see themselves as the panacea for all the national ills including development problems. As a result, there is little respect for truth, reason or intellect.

After independence, the late Jomo Kenyatta created a mystique around himself as the "Father of the Nation"<sup>3</sup> in what appeared to be the beginning of the culture of personality cult in Kenyan politics. It appeared to me that such roots might explain the patterns of the national philosophical life as well. It also appeared <sup>me</sup> to be a dangerous approach to national issues.

By 1966, however, it was obvious that two antagonistic social realities had already taken roots in Kenya. While one social reality was neo-colonialism, the other one was anti-neo-colonialism struggling for control. Oginga Odinga<sup>4</sup> the first vice-president after independence, described this situation as "Not Yet Uhuru" in 1967. In his thesis developed in a book with the similar title (Not Yet

Uhuru, London: Heinemann, 1967), Odinga vividly portrayed the intense rivalries between the two social realities. The hostility, suspicions and distrust which developed between the two groups continued over the years and has since reflected deeply very opposed categories of the national philosophers as will be seen in chapter three and four respectively .

In 1966, Odinga formed an Opposition Party, the Kenya People's Union (K.P.U.) to protest the philosophical and political direction of neo-colonial Kenya. However, in 1969, his party was banned and its entire leadership detained without trial. About a decade later, a group of left-leaning workers, politicians and intellectuals emerged with similar views that Odinga had raised. This time, however, the anti-leftist hysteria became so real that even the State- University relations rapidly deteriorated with several lecturers being detained without trial for raising similar critical questions about missing dimensions in national development.

In the mid-eighties, however, the whole nation was increasingly being polarised along ideological lines. This was suggested by the official political categorisation which saw the society divided into pro-government or loyalists and anti-government or "dissidents". According to the official views, the "dissidents" were anti-development, unpatriotic and stooges of some unnamed "foreign masters". Without ever considering the fundamental issues raised by the "dissidents", the State would obstinately assume the posture of

holier than their attitude and simply dismiss them as "irrelevant and unrealistic."

In 1982, for instance, the ruling party KANU, took a decision which was destined to create more problems as it was prompted by ideological rather than philosophically analysed interests. This was the abrupt amendment of the Constitution to change Kenya from a "de facto" one-party rule to a "de jure" one-party one without the nation's approval despite public demands. Three years later, the 8-4-4 system of education was also introduced the same way to buttress the ideological rather than the philosophical. This was followed in 1986 by the controversial queue-voting procedure which has since been abolished on public demand.

Many more examples are citable but our point is that to a student of philosophy, it appears that a strange code of conduct was being used to determine national issues. Thus, this topic could not be less important, less timely or even irrelevant. Such a study would, no doubt, help stimulate philosophical interests in social life in general and national development in particular - and even the question of national philosophy. Through clear philosophical reflections, dialogues, debates and committed practices, a developing society like Kenya may keep pace with dialectical changes at local and international levels.

It was also apparent that due to the hostile political climate, philosophical resources were significantly being both wasted and underutilized. While the nationalist-ideological philosophers were free, the rest of the national philosophers would stick out their necks to critically philosophize on national questions only at their own risk thereby forcing the less courageous among them to overconcentrate only on detached and abstract academic issues where their safety would be guaranteed. This adversely affected national development.

By 1980, there was already an amounting body of evidence suggesting that there were deliberate official efforts to underutilize the rest of the national philosophers by dominating all aspects of the national life by the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers. While there was a meteoric multiplication of political sycophants in the President Moi's regime at the political level, it was also evident that a new culture of fear, lethargy of silence and passivity had enveloped the intelligentsia too. It was that the tendency to run away from reality, truth and reason was becoming a common practice. This was most observable among the politicians who specifically preferred justify unpopular policies or defend some of the most unphilosophical practices of the regime as essentially philosophical ones! This conduct soon beefed up unphilosophical outlook to national life to be increasingly popularised as a rational approach to reality.

For instance, in 1978, the Kenyan leaders convened a Leaders' conference at the Kenyan Institute of administration at Kabete, to discuss the controversial "Kenya We Want". Incidentally, they never involved the masses. It never worked. Two years later, it appeared that the resolutions passed in 1978 had not yielded the Kenya of the leaders' vision. So, in 1980, another conference was held at the same venue to discuss the latest developments which among other things, included: massive corruption and malpractices. Such gambling with the destiny of a whole nation were part of the provocations of this inquiry.

It was clear that inadequate philosophy was being used. In fact, since 1978, malpractices have multiplied by leaps and bounds. For instance, quite a number of State Corporations were either under receivership or being run by commissions or being probed or in the process of being sold suggesting, as it were, that something was absolutely wanting. A research of this kind, no doubt, would help the country to fully understand itself and further appreciate that no one can really change reality without ever philosophically understanding it.

It was also surprising to learn that contrary to popular expectations, the professional philosophers who sought to rise to the occasion and protect the dignity of philosophy were simply becoming indifferent in a counter-productive way even when philosophy was being subordinated to narrow ideological interest. They appeared

to be increasingly content with the thankless task of pretending that reality would simply adapt itself to harmful theoretical frameworks and "truths" created by powerful politicians. This was an absurdity as most of these politicians exhibited little philosophic knowledge. This was quite harmful to national development. It was, therefore, worth inquiring into this.

Another observation which provoked this inquiry was the fact that through<sup>out</sup> the world, there were already waves of political, economic and social restructuring. We believed they would definitely have a far reaching impact on the consciousness of the Kenyan peoples and ultimately alter their philosophical thoughts and practices as well. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to examine and re-assess the role of philosophy and the role of the national philosophers as the most important elements in the interpretation of realities. It was our hope that this might help purge this nation of retrogressive and reactionary beliefs which are incompatible with genuine national development.

This inquiry, therefore, sketches pieces of evidence which support the fact that there is need to reactivate the place and role of philosophy in the development process. It also exposes the shortcomings of poor philosophical approach to development and suggests some prescriptive options which might facilitate or trigger off future researches. It is our contention that although man is philosophically significant, his activities are not usually

philosophical. Thus, all Kenyans, like all men, constantly need to be philosophically reactivated in order to perform better in the process of development in the interests of humanity.

As a matter of duty, everyone should be pre-empt<sup>ed</sup> from treating philosophy as a cliché because without the due respect for it, there is no way the whole society can adequately tap its resources for essential development. Both ontological and historical possibilities need to be purposefully and consciously harnessed for the common good of everyone. Thus without a philosophical approach to development, a schism readily develops between reality and the real development where the efforts of the citizens are permanently enfeebled and resources wasted or underutilized to the detriment of their well-being.

The realities of history are such that it is far much better to opt for a rational means to resolve development problems than to resort to brute force. Indeed, there is no better approach to this than committed and conscious appeal to reason and truth. While we are not oblivious of the fact that the use of reason in development in a developing country is no less an ambitious project, it is recognisable that the tangle of contradictions already created in the development process could be resolved only through a carefully considered and administered philosophical guidance aimed at creating an egalitarian socio-economic system. Therefore we believe that such a study should reactivate, as a matter of great concern and urgency,



free and democratic national philosophical dialogues, praxis (thought and action). The results of this would be useful in giving the national development a real push through more serious and democratic considerations.

### I. 3. Operational Definition Of Philosophy

Historically, philosophy is as old as mankind. Only written philosophy is a recent phenomenon stretching to the invention of writing. In its common conventional usage, philosophy is traditionally a Greek term which means "Love of Wisdom". But this definition is inadequate when seen against the background of what philosophers do today. It does not tell us for instance, how philosophers would uphold "Love for Wisdom" in their respective nations. While we accept the element of wisdom to be an integral part of philosophy proper, it is our view that it is essential to go beyond it in order to take care of what philosophies and philosophers do today.

Philosophy can be used in two senses: the narrow sense and the popular sense. In the narrow sense, it refers to a discipline which uses conceptual analysis to arrive at truths. Here, philosophy subsumes a reflective discipline involving methods of reasoning and logical arguments whose main objects are to establish the truth. The truth in this context refers to reality. This kind of philosophy is found mostly in schools, colleges and universities. Defining

philosophy in the strict sense, many philosophers have confined philosophy to some abstract thing for the esoteric few. For instance, in the more recent years, Professors Henry Odera Orika and Kwasi Wiredu have reasoned that:

...philosophy in the strict sense is a critical reflective ratiocinative discipline. In that discipline abstract and fundamental issues are raised about the conceptions and principles underlying our putlook on life and on the world in general, and answers are sought to these issues by means or argumentation using the methods of conceptual description, analysis and synthesis?

But philosophy may be used in a wider or popular sense where it refers to a set of guiding principles of conduct. In many cases, when it is used in this sense, it becomes a rationale or a justification for general human conduct with respect to social practice. It is in this sense that Wiredu argues that philosophy can be used in the "nationalistic" sense. In his view, the nationalistic sense of philosophy would be concerned with:

...accumulated wisdom of what might be called the collective mind of our societies, handed down through traditions both verbal and behavioural, including aspects of art, ritual and ceremonial<sup>6</sup>

It is apparently in this sense that we will consider African Socialism,<sup>7</sup> "Harambee"<sup>8</sup> and "Nyayoism"<sup>9</sup> as philosophies in their own rights. Professor Orika has adopted this position too. In a Faculty Seminar, he said of the popular sense of philosophy:

...Philosophy is taken as the rationale or justification for a belief, habit or practice; more popularly, philosophy can be the rally cry of whatever we practice or take as commitment. In this sense terminologies like "Harambee" and

"Nyayo" in Kenya may popularly be treated as the philosophies of the current Kenyan political practice.

In the subsequent analysis, it will be seen that since independence, it is the popular sense of philosophy that has stolen the limelight in Kenya.

But Professor Abiola Irele has also given a definition of Philosophy which seems useful to our analysis. He says:

...Philosophy can be regarded as the most self conscious of all disciplines. It is the core discipline that involves, by its very nature, a constant process of reflection upon itself. This process of self-reflection, inherent in the nature and practice of philosophy, bears not only upon its purposes, objectives and methods upon its relation to the world and to human experience in its multiple pressures, upon its status among other disciplines and forms of intellectual pursuits and discourses, but also, most radically, upon its very nature as an activity and an enterprise.

Thus, generally philosophy can be used as the basis for understanding the fundamental questions of life. It may also be used as an instrument for critically examining, evaluating and synthesising the conditions of human participation in history. Understood this way, it would be a contradiction for any authentic philosophy to be insensitive to criticism or progressive ideas at any given moment in history.

In the current study, philosophy is seen in the light of the two senses cited above. However, with respect to development, it is regarded as the best rational means for understanding and

interpreting the entire process of human development within the parameters of historical conditions. We are aware that philosophy rests on rational rather than empirical grounds. From the above definitions, it is clear that philosophy may be learned, acted, distorted or falsified. But it cannot merely be wished for. However, it may be inherited as part of the historical legacies as will be demonstrated by our analysis of the national philosophy in independent Kenya in chapter three. At this stage, it is important only to stress that every authentic philosophy must constitute an epistemology (theory of knowledge) and an ontology (theory of existence). Without these, there is no way one would philosophically define what we can know and why we should know it at all.

Through many of its branches for instance, ethics, logic, aesthetics, axiology, epistemology, metaethics and mathematics, philosophy provides the basis for critically examining the basic foundations of man's social life by establishing a rational basis upon which rational development of man may be predicted. In practice, every philosophy needs to be critical while all philosophers need to be self-critical in order to establish scientifically tenable truths. A sound philosophy cannot, therefore, embrace dogmatism as one of its essential components; such a philosophy would be less altruistic and self-contradictory. Without openness and receptivity to reason, criticism and objectivity at the level of practice, philosophy soon degenerates into a fossilized thing. Both philosophy and philosophers should, as a matter of practice, be open to rational

change. They must directly be involved in development. Only in this way can genuine philosophers rise above the Marxian challenge that:

The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.<sup>12</sup>

For a meaningful functioning of philosophy in the development process, there must be essential freedom. This should manifest itself as economic freedom, political freedom, social freedom, intellectual freedom, national freedom, and individual freedom. When the atmosphere is obtainable, definitely, there will not be lack of respect for human and democratic rights of each individual thereby boosting the further respect for the dignity and sanctity of human nature. As a matter of fact, philosophical participation should be seen as consistent with natural and historical efforts to fulfil the historical and ontological possibilities of man. This can be best attained through fuller identification with philosophical praxis<sup>13</sup> rather than philosophical hexis<sup>14</sup> which will essentially allow every man to create and recreate as necessity dictates. Paulo Freire seemed to have captured this view when he observed:

Men are fulfilled only to the extent that they create their world (which is a human world), and created with their transforming labour. The fulfillment of men as men lies, then, in the fulfillment of the world. If for men to be in world work is to be totally dependent, insecure and permanently threatened-if their work does not belong to them-men cannot be fulfilled. Work which is not free ceases to be fulfilling pursuit and becomes an effective means of dehumanisation<sup>15</sup>

This implies that in an economically dependent society, say a colony or neo-colony, philosophical thought and practice will be quite difficult. The reason is this. In every society, the dominant social forces are the sole determinants of the direction that societies do take. Under economic dependency, ideological restrictions and repression abound. Our focus on colonialism and neo-colonialism alike will reasonably substantiate this claim. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that under economic dependency, political repression will be a very close bedfellow and as result, this will also be reflected at the level of philosophy. While one philosophical trend will be to service continuity, the other trend will be aimed at changing or transforming continuity into utilitarian benefits. This is part of the historical laws of motion; it constitutes a necessary truth.

Since the attainment of juridical independence in 1963, African Socialism has officially been promulgated and politically popularised as the embodiment of the Kenyan national philosophy especially by the new nationalist who saw themselves as the new authentic philosophers. When the Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965: African Socialism and its Application to planning in Kenya, was launched in 1965, the late President Jomo Kenyatta had this to say:

This paper which sets out to outline our philosophy and ideology defines our course of action; we are laying the foundation of our own ideology<sup>16</sup>

In this respect, the late President saw it as an ideology and a philosophy. An ambiguity. Presenting the paper to Parliament,

however, the then Minister for Economic Planning and Development, the late Thomas Joseph Mboya, saw it this way:

The paper assembled in one document a philosophy by which we can live in pride social justice, human dignity and political equality<sup>17</sup>

In the more recent times, President Daniel arap Moi, the author of "Nyayoism" has reasoned this way:

Ever since Kenya attained self-government, the country has been guided by one philosophy or another along the road to development. The philosophies look different but, in truth, they stem from the same root of Traditional African Societies. First on 1 June 1963, Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta officially launched the practical philosophy of "Harambee" (Self-help)<sup>18</sup>.

The point here is that since independence, the supposed national philosophy has been seen as an ideology too.

Although philosophy in the popular sense is very close to a political ideology, we still maintain it is wrong to equate philosophy to ideology. This may lead to harmful ambiguity. Listen to this statement:

However with the aim of offering Kenyans a decidedly Kenyan philosophy of development, the first independent Government published the Sessional Paper No.10 which put forward the national ideology based upon the traditional African heritage<sup>19</sup>

It seems that in the post-independence Kenya, the philosophical ambiguity has been growing with independence. Since 1978 when

President Moi took over the political leadership from the late Kenyatta, the nation has been experiencing the novelty of a "new" national philosophy called "Nyayoism" whose guiding principles include; Peace, Love and Unity. President Moi who is the brainchild of this philosophy has said of "Nyayoism":

Our national philosophy is "Nyayoism", whose upholding principles are peace, love and unity. This national philosophy finds practical expression in our style of national leadership and in our efforts in nation building. At the core that philosophy is our African Socialism<sup>20</sup>

Writing about "Nyayoism" in 1981, Krishna Gautama, a lawyer and the then member of Parliament for Parklands in Nairobi, had this to say in defense of "Nyayoism":

"Nyayo" is a unique principled way of life that recognises the past limitations, present hurdles and future challenges as the criteria for its people to seek their own identity without interference<sup>21</sup>

However, given the background of the author and his political situation, it may justly be argued that there is no doubt that this claim was provoked by deep ideological interests rather than genuine philosophical needs. In fact, three years later, almost similar claims were made by a senior lecturer at Kenyatta University. In 1984, Dr. George I. Godia said of Nyayo:

...over the years, the word "Nyayo" has acquired a deeper meaning which reflects Kenya's political direction. It has enabled Kenya to consolidate her national identity. It is based on the principles of African Socialism, which are rooted in our history and culture. It is not a borrowed ideology. It is also in conformity with Kenya's alated ideals of co-operation, self-help and non-alignment<sup>22</sup>



According to this view, "Nyayoism" is an ideology. He sees it as an indigenous ideology. In this respect, it is evident that despite the efforts to explain "Nyayoism" as a national philosophy, the term appears to be quite bedevilled by obscurity, ambiguity and manifest contradictions occasioned by its advocates who neither distinguish between an ideology and a philosophy. Herein lies the problem of trying to reduce an ideology to a philosophy and vice versa for narrow expedient interests. Whenever it is done, the essential functions of philosophy are easily blurred. Although the popular sense of philosophy is common in the post-independence epoch, it should be noted that each time it is applied, it must be understood that philosophy in the popular sense will remain theoretically irrelevant and harmful to development unless it is coached within the philosophy in the professional sense. In simple terms, it has to be philosophically justified.

It is our view that both philosophy and ideology have erroneously been used interchangeably. In practice, the official definitions of philosophy appear to make sense only when philosophy is made to conform to the very definition and role of ideology. In our view, this is quite unphilosophical since the two concepts are essentially different. Thus when we are analysing the role of philosophy in development, we are aware that we are handling an ideologically distorted notion of philosophy that has been popularised and institutionalised in post-independence Kenya.

#### 1.4. Operational Definition of Development

Here we are concerned only with the philosophic view of development. Development is a term that has greatly been confused with economic growth. Perhaps it will not be wiser to review the many controversial definitions of it here. It is our view that philosophical definition of the term is more important than any other definition.

Development is essentially a conscious act of every man by which he naturally and historically projects himself toward the <sup>esse</sup>ntial realisation of his potentialities within his concrete existential conditions of living in society. This concept of development is contingent upon man's ability to rationally control and harness nature for social utility. This struggle of man's becoming needs freedom and in the absence of freedom, it must be the very process of struggle to restore the lost freedom. In fact, by its very nature, essential development is very much tied to both human labour and human reason. It implies the qualitative changes that man must effect in order to improve his well-being which is the most important primary objective of rational development. Every development undertaking which does not subsume the notion of man as the primary objective of development tasks is both unrealistic and unphilosophical. All development policies, objectives and strategies are meaningful only with reference to man; there should be nothing

more dignified in the process of development than the well-being of man. Underscoring this view, Dr. Bishop Henry Okullu has stated that:

...man is the crown of creation and has been given power to overcome nature and make it serve him. (...) Where a man ceases to have control over himself and his goods he has developed in the wrong way. Speaking about development we must speak about the quality of life and not the quality of goods produced<sup>23</sup>

Although we fully agree with the Bishop about his notion of man, we believe that development must also embrace the quality of goods. But the primary thing must be the quality of human life without which all efforts at development simply contradict the very essence of both man and development. Kwasi Wiredu has also expressed this philosophic view of development when he put it this way:

Development does not mean merely the acquisition of sophisticated technology with its assorted material benefits; it means also the security of such conditions as shall permit the self-realisation of men as rational beings<sup>24</sup>

However, it is important to realise the significance of freedom which seems to permeate the whole process of development. Essentially, the philosophic view of development includes the concept of freedom as well. There is an inseparable relationship between essential development and essential freedom. Perhaps the former Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere, had realised it when he noted:

...without freedom, you very soon lose your development<sup>25</sup>

It was most probably in the same breath that the late Frantz Fanon, the articulate anti-colonialist sought to define man in terms of freedom concluding, as it were, that the attainment of authentic freedom from colonialism would lead the colonised to go beyond the imposed complexes to create a new cycle of self-realisation. In Black Skin, White Masks, he strongly claimed:

...human reality in itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and through the risk that conflict implies. This risk means that I go beyond life towards a supreme good that is the transformation of subjective certainty of my own worth into a universality valid objective truth<sup>26</sup>.

Thus for the colonised, he prescribed the use of violence to free himself. He stated:

...it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence of a human world<sup>27</sup>

According to this view, the implication is that essential development demands a reasonable degree of consciousness and freedom such that a philosophically guided development becomes a direct product of self-reflection. Man is a rational being that thinks and acts. Thus, he cannot afford to simply avoid reflecting and deciding upon development issues on the basis of reality and necessity without harmful consequences. In terms of development, man is his own vehicle for thinking and acting on rational development undertaking. Thus, to dispense with reason in matters of development is not only dangerous, unrealistic or presumptuous but also irrational.

Amplifying this view of man, one philosophy lecturer at the University of Nairobi observed in a conference paper that:

Man has the moral duty of transcending himself at any given time. He has the duty to cultivate and perfect himself. He is a continuous self-invention, a potential, a potential self-transcendence"<sup>28</sup>

The inference that can be made from this claim is that the important function of reason in the conduct of human affairs is crucial to the development of man as it is quite consistent with human rationality. It should be manifest in the development of productive capacity of man at all times. In this respect, development finally boils down to a progressive struggle of man to free himself from constraints and barriers to create a developed society which Ahmed Babu sees as:

A developed society is the one which has moved furthest from natural necessity. (....) to this day the most important yardstick of development is the productivity of labour the most developed society being that with highest level of labour productivity<sup>29</sup>

Let us add to this definition that man must morally, socially, economically, politically, culturally, psychologically and philosophically benefit from his development in a rational way in a society or developing society or developing society. Every rational and fair development must be seen in the general planning and fair development must be seen in the general planning and patterning of development as a problem-solving purpose shaped by a unique sense of purpose and a special vision of the future. Sound development of man cannot, in this respect, be reduced to such things as loyalty to the

Government irrespective of its policies and respect for human rights. Thus, from the standpoint of logic and commonsense, every development task must have the purpose of progressively developing the human being.

Today, just development, democracy, the rights of the individuals and the new political and philosophical thinking must be at the agenda of human development throughout the world. Such an ambitious programme cannot be founded on dogma or ideological fetters; it must be based on a complete analysis of reality which will guarantee the triumph of reason, truth and justice at home and meaningful international contacts and co-operation abroad. It is in this sense that we have analysed the relationship between philosophy and development in independent Kenya.

### 1. 5. Our Hypothesis

In this study, we hold that philosophy in general and national philosophy in particular, have been increasingly underutilized in the national development process due to unphilosophical subordination of philosophy to ideological interests and imperatives, coupled with political expediency perpetrated by the privileged few.

It is our firm contention that philosophy in general and the national philosophy in particular can be both popularised and reactivated to

play their vital functions in the national development process without causing any national disaster.

#### 1. 6. Purpose Of The Study

The work is intended to open philosophical discussions among the Kenyans in general and the national philosophers, bureaucrats, the intelligentsia, the youth, the women, policy-makers, legislators and everyone involved in the national development tasks in particular. We wish to attain five things which include:

- (a) drawing the attention of the whole society to the importance of philosophy in the development process by identifying the factors which have led to unphilosophical development.
- (b) exposition of the damage already wrought by confusing philosophy with ideology and pursuing ideological interests without due regard for philosophical principles.
- (c) demonstrating that there could be no ideal way of determining development objectives, policies and strategies except on the basis of rationality.
- (d) drawing attention of the Kenyans to enormous philosophical resources and potentialities being wasted at the expense of genuine national development.
- (e) our intention to help suggest means and ways of mobilising and using all the national philosophical resources for the common good of all the Kenyans.

- (f) An attempt to facilitate the cultivation of more interest in philosophy including getting official political and financial support for the establishment of a National School of Philosophy to guide philosophical conduct at all levels of the nation.
- (g) finally, calling for the assessment of the national philosophy against the background of the new political thinking and international developments.

### 1. 7. Methodology

We have adopted dialectical-conceptual approach which is mainly definitive, analytic, critical, expository and prescriptive. Being an inquiry, this work is essentially historical. We do not claim special knowledge nor are there pretensions to scholarship nor perfection. Rather, we merely expose and analyse ideas, facts, concepts and philosophical practices of the national philosophers while categorically emphasising the vital import of philosophy to a just development. We do realise that this is a very intricate subject and that a non-speculative proposal of philosophic model as a rational approach to development problems would be vain without both philosophy and development being clearly understood within a specific historical context. Therefore the organization of the work reflects its method. The expository and analytic inquiry is organised in such a way that the historical and logical relationship between philosophy and development are clearly brought out. Our theoretical categories



and guides have been distilled from historical experiences and are intended to lead to a logical analysis which will permit us to derive conclusions of specific validity and accordingly suggest some prescriptive proposals.

In adopting dialectical-conceptual method, both philosophy and development are given proper conceptual and historical perspectives which make it almost impossible to conceal the historical--and the ideological forces which have not only undermined the functions of philosophy in national development but have also been responsible for the development of the modern Kenyan philosophical framework and trends. This approach makes it impossible too to explain away the impact of imperialism on the evolution of the philosophical thoughts and practice. It should be noted that without this historical survey and a critical consideration of colonialism and what it bequeathed to independent Kenya, it is not possible to comprehend the historical origins of the complex of problems which still block free philosophical life. In addition, this approach helps us to fully identify and analyse the colonial impact on the Traditional African Society believed to be the primary source and informative force for contemporary Kenyan philosophical thoughts and practices.

As a philosophical work, the study is very rich in concepts yearning for definitions. Thus from the inception of the study, definition of difficult terms or concepts is carried out throughout the study. Apart from philosophy and development, the other important concepts

include: imperialism, neo-colonialism, African Socialism, "Harambee", "Nyayoism", National Philosophy, National philosophers, ontology, ideology, philosophical nationalism, the intelligentsia, conscientisation and the new political thinking ("Perestroika" and "Glasnost"). Each term is defined either where it first occurs or where most appropriate.

To carry out the investigation, we mainly relied on the current categorisation of philosophy in contemporary Africa as a working theoretical model. Although there are four categories of philosophy in Africa: Sage Philosophy, ethnophilosophy, nationalist-ideological philosophy and professional philosophy, our only justification was that in terms of national development, it has been more manifest, effective and very influential in determining development objectives policies and even priorities.

Besides, it is a fact that since independence in 1963, it has frequently been stated that African Socialism is not only a political ideology but also a philosophy for national development. Although there might have been talks about "Harambee" or "Nyayoism" as the philosophies or ethics for national development, the zeal and intellectual vigour with which African Socialism has been brandished as the most ideal philosophy for national development is quite unique.

We, therefore, strongly hold that our theoretical model would be incomplete without a thoroughgoing consideration of the dynamics and implications of the nationalist-ideological philosophy of which African Socialism is the essence. In discussing the question of national philosophy, it will be realised that the discussion mainly focuses on the African Socialism, its perception, its aspects and the implication to national development.

It is imperative to note that this kind of research problem could hardly benefit from any other form of inquiry. For instance, it was quite difficult to use questionnaire or personal interviews due to the sensitivity of the subject of the inquiry, coupled with the national political setting.

#### **1. 8. Literature Review**

Not many Kenyan authors have specifically addressed themselves to the critical role of philosophy in the development process. Although the number of philosophical works is already steadily increasing, most of them tend to isolate only aspects of philosophy which do not really give an overall picture of philosophy in the entire development process. Sometimes, even the specific functions of philosophy in development in particular and in life in general are only implicit. However, some research papers and books have made some very impressive contributions towards the understanding of the functions of philosophy and therefore merit mention herebelow.

One such contribution can be gleaned from W.O.E. Onono's "Philosophy of Education in Kenya", unpublished M.A. Thesis, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1976). Although the work dealt more with educational issues exposing, as it were, the shortcomings which included poor application of philosophy to development issues by way of discussing the missing dimensions in the educational practices, it did not, however, specifically pursue and elaborate on the overall functions of philosophy in the development process of which education is an integral part.

In March, 1978, Professor J.G. Donders of the Department of Philosophy, University of Nairobi, presented a paper entitled "Technology and Human Development" to the Kenya National Academy, in which he underscored the vitality of philosophical approach in the pursuit of technological advancement. In December of the same year, he presented another paper: "The Role of Ethics in Education" to the Naret Conference, (Limuru:1987). Like Onono, however, he only concentrated on the role of philosophy in the educational sphere with only casual reference to the overall importance of philosophy to national development.

In 1979, however, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development extended invitation to the University of Nairobi to present background reports to "Strategies for Intensified Social Development". The University team which was led by Professor Philip

Mbithi, the former Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi, included: Professor J.G. Donders of Philosophy and Dr. Judith Mbula of Religious Studies, University of Nairobi. They submitted their report which was subsequently incorporated as "Strategies for Social Development" in the 1979-1983 Development Plan, (Nairobi: Government Printer, 1979). Among other things, this report included: rationale for social development; religion and social development; family and social development; alcohol-related problems; men and social development; research and statistical needs. Although these efforts significantly bordered on the role of philosophy, they were not explicit enough to be seen as amplifying the functions of philosophy.

Between 1974 and 1975, Professor J.G.Donders and Henry Odera Oruka conducted researches on "Thoughts of Traditional Kenyan Sages" in order to help expose the African Philosophical thought in the serious mind of the remnants of the Kenyan sages. (Prof. Oruka has since edited a comprehensive work on sage philosophy, Sage Philosophy Nairobi: Acts 1991). This was to be followed by more specific researches by Professor Oruka on "Philosophy and Culture" in 1981. While the research on the sages had merely generalised the use of philosophy, this particular research emphasised the relevance of philosophy to the effective functioning of the national culture. This was basically the theme of "On Philosophy and Culture", presented to the Faculty Seminar, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1981).

The explicit function of philosophy is more vivid in Oruka, H.O., Punishment and Terrorism in Africa, (Nairobi: Kenyan Literature Bureau, Second Edition, 1985). Here, Oruka suggests a radical departure from the conventional approach to the theory and practice of punishment. Although this book underscores the role of philosophy in the legal development, its only limitation or tragedy is that in the present set up, it sounds like an idle proposal. Another book that comes very close to underscoring the role of philosophy in development is Oruka, H.O., Mugambi, J., and Ojwang', J. B., The Rational Path: a dialogue on philosophy, law and religion, (Nairobi: Standard Textbooks Graphics and Publishing, 1989). This book unambiguously emphasises the benefits to be harvested by adopting philosophical approach in all the practical problems of social life. It also underscores the use of philosophy in the resolution of conflicts in society. This function of philosophy is also highlighted in Ojwang', J.B., Mugambi, J.N.K., (Ed), The S.M. Otieno Case: Death and Burial in Modern Kenya, (Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1989). When the court of Appeal failed to render its judgement in the case of Virginia Edith Wambui versus Joash Ochieng' Ougo and Omolol Siranga in 1986, it paradoxically but usefully exposed the deep philosophical undercurrents between statutory and customary laws; and conflicts between customary laws themselves. This suggested a missing dimension in the jurisprudence (philosophical theory of law) of the Kenyan customary law. Resort to philosophical approach could certainly be part of a lasting solution to this.

In 1984, Dr. G.I. Godia of Kenyatta University published Understanding Nyayo: Principles and Policies in Contemporary Kenya, (Nairobi: Transafrica Press, 1984) raised some very useful issues in understanding the functions of "Nyayo" philosophy although his efforts underscored deep ideological biases. Otherwise the book clearly shows how the popular sense of philosophy may be overstretched. Although Godia attempted to de-emphasise the ideological factors in "Nyayoism", in 1986, President Daniel arap Moi came out so clearly in Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles, (London: Macmillan, 1986), where the ideological objectives visibly outweigh the philosophic contents. Ideological rhetorics dominate the whole book as if the collection of speeches was meant to shadow-box political opponents.

In the educational sphere, however, the functions of philosophy seem to have been better exposed. Although a general work on Africa, Philosophy and Education in Africa, (Nairobi; Transafrica Press, 1986) and Social Education and Ethics, (Nairobi: transafrica, 1986) by R.J. Njoroge and G.A. Bennaars have certainly been more eloquent and specific on the place and role of philosophy in all aspects of development. Whereas they are meant as school texts, one cannot ignore their possible impact on the philosophical development of the Kenyan youth and their teachers too.

In the same tradition, we find Masolo, D.A., and Ongong'a, J.J., tackling various ethical questions very relevant to national development in You and Your Society.<sup>1</sup> (Nairobi: Longman, 1987) and Masolo, D.A., You and Your Society Book II, (Nairobi: Longman, 1988). The role of philosophy in guiding national life is very clear in these works.

Mojola, A.O., has also contributed to the understanding of the functions of philosophy in social life in his radio lessons which have been compiled into Introductory Ethics for College Students and Teachers, (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1988).

Professor Henry Odera Oruka has recently published Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy, (Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers, 1990) where the role of philosophy is visible in the categorisation of the four trends in African Philosophy. Although the work is more general than specific with respect to philosophy and development, the present work has greatly benefited from Oruka's classification of the African philosophers which seems to be quite accurate notwithstanding its failure to further divide the nationalist-ideological philosophers. It convincingly contributes toward the understanding of the development of philosophy in Africa.

There have been some individual and joint philosophical works by some professional philosophers. For instance, in 1980, Professor Oruka of the University of Nairobi and Dr. B. Wambari of Kenyatta University



conducted a joint research on "Principles of Ethics". This was followed by another research by Prof. Oruka on "Philosophical Roots of Culture in Western Kenya". Clearly underscoring the essential role of philosophy in the development of the national culture, Professor Oruka concluded:

The findings of this research will later need to be coordinate with the findings of similar researches from other parts of the republic. Given all these results, a special committee at the national level will need to be formed in order to help filter the results into the programme for development and maintenance of philosophy of Kenyan national cultures<sup>30</sup>

Generally, most of the issues raised in the philosophical works mentioned above are crucial to the understanding and proper interpretation of the rational path to national development. They teach some of the most plausible ways to fully tap all the potential of the citizens in the development process. In addition, these works are apparently unanimous on the damage that may be done when moral responsibility and moral values like justice, equality, truth, honesty, obedience, industriousness, peace, love and unity are presumed in the development process. The vacuum left however, might very easily lead to anti-social activities like: corruption, bribery, repression, drug-abuse, laziness, authoritarianism, violence which ultimately must deform the development goals. The present work is therefore, more well placed to give an overall picture of the place and role of philosophy in the national development process.

Notes

1 African Socialism, believed to have its roots in the Traditional African Society, is seen as the nucleus of the Kenyan national philosophy. However, more radical thinkers in Africa and even in Kenya have argued that there is no such thing as African Socialism. They say it is a baptism that the African elites, working in collaboration with neo-colonialists or seeking to institute the third way--to development, coined to rally the masses behind them, they <sup>Lalbeit</sup> knew there was nothing socialistic or African in it. To their mind, it is more philosophical to talk of socialist Africa. See Babu, M.R.A., African Socialism or Socialist Africa, (London: Zed Press, 1981), chapters 4 and 7. See also the Manifesto of the Kenya People's Union, (Nairobi: Pan-African Press, 1986).

2. Implies the here-and-now approach to problems.

3. Many political and philosophical thinkers argue that the over-congratulation of some African nationalists and their insistence on being seen as the "Fathers" of their respective nations has been partly responsible for the evolution of authoritarian presidencies in independent Africa.

4. Oginga Odinga, the first vice-president in independent Kenya, broke with Jomo Kenyatta regime in 1965. He thereafter formed the leftist-leaning Kenya People's Union which was banned in 1969. Today, Oginga Odinga belongs to

the category of the radical nationalist-ideological philosophers. The common theme in his political philosophy include: rule of law, democracy, independence, development, justice and pan-africanism.

5. See Oruka, H.O., "Four Trends In Current African Philosophy" and Wiredu, K., "What Is African Philosophy?". Both papers were presented at the Symposium in Commemoration of Anniversary of the Matriculation of Amo, (Wittenberg: Germany, 1978), p. 21.
6. From Wiredu.K., Philosophy and an African Culture, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 28.
7. African Socialism is popularly held by many African political leaders as the philosophical basis of the African States. It has, however, been used quite often to justify all policies.
8. "Harambee" is a kiswahili term meaning "let us pull together". In Kenya, it is seen as the most practical aspect of the African Socialism. At best it is viable ethic for collective social responsibility.
9. "Nyayo" means in swahili, "follow my footsteps". Since 1978 it has increasingly been regarded as a national philosophy which means peace, love and unity.
10. This was a paper that Professor Henry Oruka presented to a Faculty Seminar organised on "On Philosophy and Culture" (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1981) p. 4.

11. This was part of Ibiola Irele's introduction to Hountondji, P., African Philosophy, Myth and Reality, (London: Hutchinson University Library for Africa, 1983), p. 7.
12. See Karl Marx's Eleventh These On Feuerbach
13. Implies philosophy of reflections and actions.
14. Is the opposite praxis. It implies a philosophy of passivity, reaction or retrogression.
15. Articulated by Freire, P., Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (London: Penguin Books, 1972), P.114
16. Jomo Kenyatta's Statement to a K.A.N.U conference in March, 1966.
17. Contained in East African Standard, (Nairobi: May 5, 1965), p. 2.
18. Extracted from Moi, D. T. A., Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles, (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1986), p. 35.
19. *ibid.*, p. 35.
20. *ibid.*, p. 83.
21. See Daily Nation, (Nairobi: January 2, 1981), p. 6.
22. From Godia, G. I., Understanding Nyayo: Principles and Policies in Contemporary Kenya, (Nairobi: Transafrica Press, 1984), p. 8.
23. In Okullu, H., Church and Politics in East Africa, Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1975), pp.22-23.
24. Philosophy and an African Culture, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

25. See Nyerere, J. K., Freedom and Development, (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 58.
26. See Fanon, F., Black Skin, White Masks, (London: Paladin, 1970), p. 155.
27. ibid., p. 165.
28. This position was adopted by Masolo, D. A., in "Truth As The Basis Of Fundamental Experience of Being-in the World", (Nairobi: International Society for Metaphysics Conference on Society and Truth, 13th-17th August, 1981), p. 7.
29. See Babu, M. R. A., African Socialism or Socialist Africa? (London: Zed Press, 1981), P. 19.
30. Part of Professor Odera Oruka's Research Proposal on "The Philosophical Roots of Culture in Western Kenya", University of Nairobi, 1981), p. 10.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN KENYAN PHILOSOPHY

2. 1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the historical evolution of the contemporary Kenyan philosophy. It underscores the eclectic nature of the Kenyan philosophy being a product of dead Traditional African Society and the European philosophical thoughts and values. It is noteworthy that the essential development and use of any philosophy are, like history, products of active and conscious social activities. Indeed, what Karl Marx said of men in history is very true of philosophy and philosophers too. In the Eighteenth Brumaire to Louis Bonaparte

Men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, philosophy is basically a product of history. Contrary to claims by the politicians and the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers that the national philosophy has its roots in the African past, it will be seen that the real predecessors from whom the national modern Kenya philosophy takes its start are mainly the colonialists.

Two facts merit mention. Firstly, the nostalgic remembrance of the "glorious" past aside, the reality is that modern philosophy in Kenya owes much to colonialism than to the Traditional African Society.

secondly, we are not oblivious of the fact that the replacement of one philosophy by another in a developing country may not be less revolutionary. It will be accompanied by some fundamental political, social and economic changes. The impact of colonialism on the texture of Traditional African Societies is our irrefutable witness in this regard.

In this study, we hold that philosophy is a product of the socio-economic formation in society. Therefore we propose to examine the very socio-economic fabric that has produced the philosophy under investigation. We strongly argue that the contemporary philosophical thoughts and practices have their roots in historical as much as economic roots or causes. Hopefully, this will map out the historical evolution of the philosophical ideas which have influenced the theory and practice of national development since independence.

In essence, however, the focus on traditional philosophical thoughts and practices will be crucial for understanding how the traditional society was eclipsed at the instigation of the European imperialism and how the entire social, political, economic and philosophical settings were disrupted and destroyed beyond repair. While we strive to explain how imperialism entered the traditional societies

helplessly submissive to the imperialist-inspired world views and ideas, we are apt to plot the response of the colonised and how their nationalistic response constituted philosophical nationalism best demonstrated in the unrelenting agitations for independence. Further, this historical background abundantly explains the origins of philosophical ambiguity, pragmatism and elitism, coupled with eclecticism which amply suggest, as it were, the subordination of philosophy to political and social interests.

## 2. 2. Socio-Economic Basis of Philosophy

By its very nature, philosophy is basically a product of material life in every society. It is a basic fact of life that all human beings must eat before they can philosophise. Although there are people who would eat without necessarily having worked for it, work as the productive activity of man is very essential for all his activities including philosophisation.

Essentially, no one can understand any society without significantly first understanding how that society produces goods to meet its needs; how the goods produced are distributed and who really owns the means of producing those goods. This understanding of the relations of production (who produces, who owns, who distributes and who consumes) is a necessary pre-condition for understanding the politics, economics, culture, law and even philosophy of every society. But it will be established that in the



process, the economic factors seem to have more influence on the thought processes of each society. This point was underscored by the German, Frederick Engels, in this way:

The economy creates nothing absolutely new ( a novo) but it determines the way in which the existing material of life is altered and further developed and that too for the most part indirectly, for it is the political, legal and moral reflexes which exercise the greatest direct influence upon philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

In practice, those who are economically more privileged will ideologically be forced to protect their privileges by hook or crook while the underprivileged, on the contrary, will express the desire to transform the social order deemed to be against their interests as a class. In this sense, it may be inferred that economic structure sets the stage for political alignment, social intercourse and philosophical conduct of the whole society. If the economic arrangements provide room for inequalities, then the very inequalities will also be reflected at philosophical level.

History of philosophy indicates that philosophy has never been free of ideological influences; it is ever prone to ideological struggles characteristic of all social systems. In a class-structured or a socially structured society, philosophy is used mainly to ensure its continuity. It may also be used by the same classes to service acquisition, maintenance and protection of private property. This tendency is universal. It is, therefore, quite erroneous to ever divorce philosophy from ideological overtures; all philosophies are

best understood within the orbit of their social milieu and ideological frameworks. However, whatever is the situation of society, the main philosophical influences will be originated by the privileged than the underprivileged classes or social categories. It is in this context that we should understand philosophical practice in the pre-colonial era too.

### 2. 3. Pre-colonial Philosophical Thought and Practice

Irrespective of the level of its development, every society has its essential philosophy. Philosophic idea or knowledge is not the monopoly of any one man or one race or one class or one sex. It is, therefore, needless to emphasise that there were philosophical systems in Kenya long before the colonialists arrived. As human beings, the Kenyans had their authentic philosophies and genuinely philosophised just like other people did. They were never innocent of philosophy; moreover, they had specialised traditional philosophers popularly known as the sages who commanded enormous philosophic knowledge which included; a clear conception of man; rights and duties; vision of a humane society; law, morality and government; the doctrines of the good, the evil, death and god. By its nature and given the level of development (note that the traditional Kenyan society was basically communal), this philosophy was basically the folk genre. Although it was essentially pre-scientific as its critics have argued, its philosophic content is not in dispute. In fact, one would agree with

the Nigerian philosopher, Professor Kwasi Wiredu, when he strongly states that:

Every traditional philosophy is essentially pre-scientific; and every people has its own traditional philosophy, a stock of originally in written proverbs, maxims, usages, etc., passed on through successive generations from when societies were simpler and organised as as yet unknown.<sup>6</sup>

Recent researches have proved that sayings were well spread in every community.<sup>7</sup> The fact that they were unable to write down their philosophic knowledge and thoughts cannot be used against them in view of the fact that in traditional societies, education was acquired informally through systematic and deliberate acculturation and induction, coupled with the societal upbringing in which faith in the ancestors, the gods and the elders was a great springboard for a sound moral uprightness and philosophical formation and development.

At the arrival of the British colonialism, most of the Kenyan societies were in three stage of communalism ( a stage in which ownership and use of resources were collective). But the communal life had a distinct structure of politics, law, religion, morality, economics, and philosophy. The dynamics of socio-economic life included: property relations, technology, values, interests and political institutions consistent with the level of development. They also helped to protect the social fabric of society, the collective will and the role of the individual in promoting the well being of society.

According to some thinkers, the traditional societies drew their forcefulness and authenticity<sup>8</sup> from what Professor John S. Mbiti has described in African Religions and Philosophy, (London: Heinemann, 1964) as "anthropocentric" nature of these societies. Essentially, Professor Mbiti meant to say that in African Philosophic knowledge, everything (the living and the dead) is being seen in terms of its relation to man. In other words, there is harmony between social and natural phenomenon. The dead are as effective as the living due to vital force.<sup>9</sup> But Traditional African Society is more explicitly expressed by Willie Abrahams in The Mind of Africa, (Weidenfeld, paper edition, 1966). Generally, what was true of the Akan in Ghana was also true of the traditional Kenyan societies. Just as life was divide into rights and duties among the Akan so was the case in pre-colonial Kenya. There was the right to work and the duty to share equally the fruits of labour. Since production relations had not been sophisticated enough, being exclusively communal, there were very strong bonds of love and unity sustained by a high sense of mutual social responsibility and assistance in which the primary goal of society was the obligatory protection of the sense of brotherhood, coupled with the satisfaction of the members needs. For instance, land, the mainstay of the economy, was communally owned, used and protected for the common good of all.

Politically, the basic unit was neither the individual nor the family but the whole society. According to former Tanzanian President and

one of the renowned African Philosophers of Contemporary times, Julius Nyerere, who strongly advocates the "virtuousness" and "innocence" of the Traditional African Societies, democracy was a well established thing in Africa, whenever the members of society disagreed, they would discuss until they agreed. Inasmuch<sup>10</sup> as it erroneous to postulate that the Traditional African Societies would demonstrate a social system that was more or less inclusive of mutual responsibility, distributive justice and collectivism which were incompatible with individualistic ethics.

Humanism appeared to have been part of the philosophy of life in the traditional setting. It would boast of the respect of man, human dignity, human labour and human equality. However, this is far from claiming that, therefore the traditional African Societies were "virtuous" or "innocent"; they were not. The only important point here is that at communal stage of development, life appears to be deceptively virtuous and innocent due to the fact that antagonistic ideological struggles or social forces have not fully crystallized given the level of economic development and technological backwardness.

For good or ill, the whole fabric of the traditional African Societies in Kenya was brought tumbling down into ashes, by colonialism which devastatingly transformed the political setting. In terms of philosophy, however, the sages were immediately eclipsed and it

became obvious that longevity would no longer be the only sure path to philosophic knowledge.

#### 2. 4. The Import of The Colonialist Philosophy

The British colonialism had devastating consequences for the philosophical thoughts and practice in Kenya. It turned the country into a haven of dehumanisation, exploitation and oppression. This virtually interfered with the historical and ontological dispositions of the indigenous people denying them the freedom of philosophical praxis. Perhaps a brief focus on the impact of European imperialism in Africa in general might help clarify the damage wrought on the African philosophical development.

Historically, the imperialist objectives were basically the same: to exploit the economic resources of the colonies; get cheap labour; get markets for their manufactured goods and render the colonised permanently dependent on them if possible. Inspired by individualistic morality and economic greed for super profits, the basic principle of imperialism was: the end justified the means. Therefore in order to fulfil their objectives, the imperialists had to transform the colonies into sanctuaries for exploitation and oppression needed to force the colonised into mere objects without feelings and needs.

Thus through organised dehumanisation, psychological disorientation, cultural alienation, economic exploitation and philosophical abuses, the colonised would carry the "White Man's Burden" without much resistance. History demonstrates that the perpetration of inhumanities against the colonised created a special situation which favoured only the imperialists. Frantz Fanon, the African anti-colonialist, termed this situation the "Colonial Situation" describing it in the following words:

...the confrontation of the civilized and the "primitive" men creates a special situation and brings about the emergence of a mass of illusions and misunderstanding which may only be explained by a philosophical analysis.<sup>11</sup>

Knowingly, however, the imperialists concocted racist attitudes which would facilitate the systematic dehumanisation consistent with the imperialist programmes. This injustice was more conspicuous in colonies which had settler domination like Kenya. In such colonies, human beings would be classified as the colonial masters while the colonised would simply be the "natives". Jean Paul Sartre summarised the relationship in these words:

For the one, privilege and humanity are one and the same thing, he makes himself into a man by freely exercising his rights. As for the other, the absence of any rights sanctions his misery, his chronic hunger, his ignorance, in short, his enthusiasm status.<sup>12</sup>

It needs no emphasis to point out that the imperialist racism and exploitative machinery denied the colonised their qualities of human beings and left them hopelessly bereft of all basic material means

for free philosophical undertakings. Writing about the ill-fated colonised, Aime Cesaire, stated:

I am talking about societies drained of their essence cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions snatched, magnificent artistic activities destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out.<sup>13</sup>

It was this devastative inhuman approach that prepared the stage for socialisation into foreign values, ideas and cultures. Assessing the damage done by imperialism on the colonised, Albert Memmi argued:

The most serious blow suffered by the colonised is being removed from history and from the country. Colonialism usurps any former role in either war or peace, every decision contributory to his destiny and that of the world, and all cultural and social responsibility.<sup>14</sup>

These pernicious inhumanities culminated in complete rupture of the ontology and psyche of the colonised. The results were the divisive tactics of the colonialists. In some ways, colonialism brought the colonised together in new ways and for the new purposes providing "new integrative factors". In other ways, it aggravated already existing differences and introduced new ones. For instance, in the pre-colonial era, there was considerable understanding among the Kenyans. The crucial fact is that each community would decide for what purpose and in what ways it should relate with others. This state of affairs was utterly disrupted by colonialism but serviced by the colonised. This set the stage for acute ethnic competition for the defence of their interests. After independence, such arrangements never changed at all.



Although traditional institutions varied widely, reflecting differing historical experiences, they were primarily designed to facilitate dispute settlement among relatively ethnic groups. Some of these institutions were reshaped during the colonial era, to become, if anything, less responsive to the demands of the broad masses of the African population. However, colonialism created new privileged classes which would continue to respond to their needs even after independence, coupled with acute ethnic rivalries in several countries including Kenya. This had very serious implications for national development; either it would be dominated by the state or the new elite. Interested in protecting their vested interests, both the state and the elite would see development from their own biased positions while the rest of the nation would be left in the lurch to find their own levels without betraying the state and the elite.

The attainment of political independence by the African countries did little to alter the irreversible character of the new class cleavages. Moreover, the educated elite who assumed the political leadership were predominantly beneficiaries of the colonial system and had become even colonial apologists. Therefore if real changes were to be made in development, it needed the entire colonial heritage or legacies to be critically re-assessed. The justification for this lay in the fact that colonialism had essentially alienated the colonised from their historical realities and vital philosophizing on the broad spectrum of social life.

Colonial alienation meant a total discord with the realities of the human aspirations and the existential conditions. The intensity of deprivation meant that the colonised no longer needed to really rely on his basic traditions but on imperialist values and ideas as the reference for socio-economic and political praxis. History does indicate that the imperialist vices were usually so harsh that they would force most of the colonised to helplessly accept the desperate conditions of dispossession, hopelessness and meaninglessness without ever realising that most of the colonialist practices were aimed at depreciating them as human beings without rights to assert. Unknowingly, they would end up servicing colonialism and philosophising in favour of the colonialists. This had devastating effects.

Economically, Kenya became a capitalist-oriented nation. Individualism hence became the primary ethics for economic conduct and social outlook. Inevitably, the vicious profit motive also became the primary mover in the social and economic life of the Kenyan nation with development being interpreted as endless acquisition of private material property and the committed protection of the same at the expense of the dignity and genuine development of all the nationals.

In ushering Kenya into a new economic category sustained by a strange new approach to philosophy hitherto unknown in Kenya was

born. Its outlook was to help develop the invaders at the expense of the invaded. As a matter<sup>of</sup> colonial policy, however, the colonised Kenyans were expected to produce for the "Mother Country" rather than for themselves. Such economic practices were in fact reflected at all levels of socio-economic and political activities.

For instance, at political level, the institutions that emerged virtually reflected the colonial political values, ideologies and lack of democracy in dealing with the colonised. In Kenya, the situation was more complicated by the domination of political and economic life by the settlers who blocked all avenues for free political, economic and philosophical participation in the national life. Practically, the ruthless exploitative economic machinery designed by the intransigent settlers had underdevelopmental effects on the consciousness of all the Kenyans. They undercut their efforts to really assert themselves as human beings.

Culturally, the damage was more devastating. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has succinctly summarised it this way:

Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world.<sup>15</sup>

This was most characteristic in the sphere of language. The imposition of English Language as the sole language for commerce and

communication and instruction led to the utter suppression of the local languages and this was essentially tantamount to the domination of a people's consciousness. Language may oppress, help exploit or even liberate and help develop. But in the obnoxious "colonial situation", a foreign language of the oppressors would simply force its colonised speakers to think in terms of the philosophies, ideologies and world views that colonial language really expressed. In colonial Kenya, English Language was one of the most effective instruments for drafting Kenyans into the imperialist-originated and inspired thought processes. Consequently, the Kenyans became "the prisoners of an unbearable insularity" to borrow Frantz Fanon's phrase. Ngugi wa Thiong'o again correctly observed it when he asserted:

...annihilation of a people's language is tantamount to annihilating that people's collective memo-bank of the past achievements and failures which form the basis of their common identity. It is like uprooting that community from history.<sup>16</sup>

It is just to state that colonialism completely destroyed the significant relationship between culture and philosophy since to control a people's culture is to deprive them of the basic tools for philosophical reference, definition and courage. In using the English Language as the sole medium of instruction in schools, the colonial intent was to psychologically, mentally and philosophically enslave the Kenyans into the ideological connotations that the imperialist world expressed.

Many cultural practices were destroyed. For instance, polygamy, traditional religions and rituals which were part and parcel of the transcendental unity were replaced with new practices which were incompatible with the historical march that the people were familiar with. Generally, the cultural devastation was facilitated by the pedagogy of colonial education whose central goal was to undermine the traditional setting and alienate the colonised from reality and history. Writing about the impact of colonial education in Africa, Albert Moumini, said what was very true of colonial education in Kenya. He said:

Colonial education corrupted the thinking and the sensibilities of the African and filled him with abnormal complexes. <sup>17</sup>

Everywhere in colonial Africa, colonial education was aimed at political domination, economic exploitation and unequal development of the colonised. It was never primarily humanitarian as has been alleged by colonial apologists. Its supposed benefits were basically incidental; the results of the contradictions in the very process of colonialism. Of course, colonialism would be incomplete without such education; the colonialists needed an education that would help impart a culture of docility and subservience. This is how the Kenyan cultural outlooks were shaped and transformed along European patterns.

In many instances, christianity would make inroads where colonial education and brute force failed. Thus the western philosophical

thoughts and practices got their ways into Kenya via christianity, colonial education, economic domination and political control. Consequently, the new socio-economic and political network created a virtually new philosophical pattern which radically contradicted the traditional world that the kenyans were comfortable with. The unsuspecting and the mesmerised among them who saw no way out of the colonial quagmire simply slipped into the insignificant background not to re-organise and challenge the colonialists but to slowly but surely decay while remaining very nostalgic of the proverbial good old days of bliss and euphoria.

As things fell apart for the traditional setting whose centre of gravity would no longer hold, new philosophers were bred to replace the sages. However, there were acute differences as to whether the foreign values should be unquestionably imbibed. In Central Province for instance, where developed an intense confrontation between the ikuyus who collaborated with the colonialists and the ones who outrightly resisted. This confrontation between the Kikuyus and the imperialists on one hand and the collaborators and resisters on the other did crystallise into a new form of philosophical nationalism in the 1950s and was best expressed by the Mau Mau Chapter published by the late Dedan Kimathi, the Mau Mau leader. In underscoring the role of the new interpreters of national life, the document argued along this line:

We want an African self-government now in Kenya...We reject the foreign laws in Kenya for they were not made in Kenya and are not righteous.

We reject to be called terrorists when demanding our people's rights.

Our real fight is not against the white colour but is against the system carried on by the white rulers.

Fighting for our stolen land and our independence is not a crime but a revolutionary duty.

Nothing is more precious than our independence and freedom.

Only when we achieve our independence can our people have genuine peace.<sup>18</sup>

In our view, one of the remarkable developments of the "colonial situation" was the dialectal emergence of the militant and radical nationalists who were the precursors of the radical national philosophers of the post-independence era. They were radically different from the collaborators who preferred to accept Europeanism in open acquiescence. In fact, the fundamental differences between the collaborators who were precursors of most of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers and the radical nationalists can be seen from the verse from Maina Wa Kinyatti's Thunder from the Mountains: Mau Mau Patriotic Songs:

You who sell us out are our great enemies  
Look around you and look at the British  
And also look at yourselves.  
The British are foreigners,  
And they will surely go back to their country,  
Where will you, traitors to your country,  
Run to?<sup>19</sup>

The significance of these differences is that they have continued to characterise the political and philosophical thinking of the national philosophers. While the radical nationalist-ideological philosophers and the left-leaning national philosophers have apparently played heir to the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers, on the

contrary, appear to have replaced the pre-independence collaborators.

## 2. 5. The Colonial Philosophical Legacies

The British colonialism bequeathed to independent Kenya a poor philosophical outlook. It was poor because no sooner did the country celebrate independence than the ideological interest began to suppress all other interests including reason and truth. This could be attributed to four factors. Firstly, a new ontological stance emerged in which the nation displayed grave doubts about its abilities to break away from the repressive past which had numbed clear philosophical consciousness. It appeared that the new philosophers would simply be content with the complementary role in a dependency.

This was mostly seen in their readiness to adopt the colonially inspired philosophical frameworks despite their claims to African Socialism. After accepting the colonially designed philosophical framework, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers rushed to dress them in new attire which would appear and sound deceptively nationalistic and Africanist. Meanwhile, the capitalist mode of development quickly assumed the new cloak of neo-colonialism



in which dependency on foreign aid became the primary basis of national development.

Secondly, it was more than visible that colonialism had instilled the fear of freedom, reality, responsibility and the future which essentially precluded independent thinking in almost every sphere of life. In opting for continuity without much effort to transform the structural and institutional frameworks to be more responsive to the hands of colonialists, it was obvious the majority of the repressive colonial ideas and values would be left intact. It was, therefore, no accident that the concept of development that emerged and was subsequently institutionalised was more oriented to things and property than to human beings. It was a morality in which the sanctity of property was more revered than the dignity and essence of man.

Thirdly, all colonial deformities injurious to useful philosophical practice and influence were inherited per se. Thus, it may be said that the main analytical element in philosophy was apparently declared null and void as it became common practice that development would be predicted on pragmatic approach. To most of the new nationalists, pragmatism was more suitable for striking a balance between the best of the traditional Kenyan Society and the Foreign values, ideas and institutions. However, how this was to be achieved was never specified leaving the pragmatism of the nationalists completely fraught with loopholes which amounted to uncritical

acceptance of the rigidified and pre-determined forms of thinking and conduct most suitable for neo-colonialism rather than a democratic national independence.

Fourthly, although pragmatism was the most practical approach to development, its being founded on the framework of colonialism would hardly augur well for the realities of the young nation. Whereas we hold that there was nothing wrong adopting the free-enterprise philosophy of development, it was certainly obvious that it would never lead to the independent development of an independent national economy since it was more suited for the facilitation of corporate capitalism and dependency which in the long-run would only help to re-integrate the national economy into a vicious circle of dependency quite harmful to development. In terms of philosophy, room for free philosophical practice would be as narrow as a hair's breadth.

## 2. 6. Critical Remarks

At independence, it was a grave error to assimilate, sanction and promulgate some of the colonial injustices without a philosophical guided restructuring. The elites, who replaced the sages, quickly surrendered to be locked into subordinate positions in the development process without any bold effort to re-orientate the people who had not really recovered from the shock and confusion imposed on them by colonialism. Thus, the Greco-Roman culture was re-adopted as the new philosophical guide for independent Kenya. Like

the British philosophy, the modern Kenyan philosophy owes its inspirations, origin and basic doctrinal nutrients not to the Traditional African Society but to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle however distorted they may be. The Kenyans came in contact with the Greeks via the British and the values and institutions which influenced and still influence modern Kenya are very much Platonic and Aristotlian.

Therefore modern Kenya philosophy is basically the product of capitalism rather than communalism; it has virtually assimilated the capitalist ethnics through the Western-inspired educational philosophies, religious values, economic morality and political culture. Of course, apart from giving modern Kenya laws and new morality, it has systematically helped to fully integrate the nation into the international capitalism and capitalist philosophical system.

It is little in dispute that Kenya has not fully forged a national philosophy consistent with the historical experiences and existential conditions. Indeed, there is nothing unique in independent Kenya laying claim to the national philosophy which is essentially compatible with neo-colonialism. In retrospect, after independence, almost every African country did not appear to be aware of how to genuinely tap the philosophic knowledge of their peoples. There was little evidence of the visible philosophical understanding and interpretation of the serious implications of independence. In short,

there was no concrete analysis of the new concrete situations. This was a real potential danger that future undertakings would have to reckon with.

Consequently, while philosophy was increasingly and erroneously seen as synonymous with ideology, development strategies were equally erroneously conceived on the premisses of perceptions completely unrelated to the dialectical principle of history which, among other things, demands that in every situation, there should be a a critical re-appraisal contingent upon relevant facts and guided by practice.

However, one can make a critical re-appraisal of a given historical situation if and only if one has grasped all the facts surrounding it. In this respect, it is more plausible to postulate that although the challenges, difficulties and expectations associated with phenomenal independence should have provoked the new philosophers into specific and purposeful political and philosophical restructuring such as we are faced with today, there was no such conscious interpretation of the post-colonial epoch. If anything, the whole concept of "Uhuru" was apparently misinterpreted, vulgarised and adulterated much to the detriment of the destiny of the young and wanting nation.

To do justice to the new "interpreters", it is important to recognise the fact that their unphilosophical approach to the challenges of "Uhuru" of which national development was top in the agenda, was essentially tantamount to a deliberate de-education and de-philosophisation of the masses whose philosophical nationalism was yet to be both rehabilitated and restored leave alone being

That the new "interpreters" never addressed their knowledge and political awareness to the provocative challenges may be construed, in our view, in two important ways. Firstly, it would appear that the only convincing justification for the indifference of the new philosophers was that most of them opted for the "devil" they deceptively thought they knew better. This was more of a subtle way of accepting "defeat" and accepting the colonial legacies as more formidable forces such as the dependent and opportunistic elite would hardly contradict leave alone challenge.

Secondly, it would also appear that in the effort to understand the dynamics of "Uhuru", genuine philosophical reflections and actions were either haphazardly understood or paradoxically understood to be irrelevant to the pragmatic approach that the departing colonialists had recommended.

Notes

1. See Marx, K., The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 15.
2. In Frederick Engel's "From Letters On Historical Materialism" Marx, K., Selected Works Vol. 1, (New York: International Publishers), p. 387.
3. Imperialism implies a forceful domination of a people usually foreigners for profit, power and prestige. Historically, was a stage in the development of capitalism from feudalism in the fifteenth century. It was accomplished by the emergence of powerful international industrialists who began to colonise distant lands for raw materials cheap labour, and markets. However, the most devastative phase of imperialism was colonialism which has since been replaced by the new colonialism or what is popularly known as neo-colonialism-demonstrated by political, economic, cultural and philosophical domination of the Third World (Africa, Latin America, The Carribean and Asia). The trappings of neo-colonialism have been a great obstacle to philosophical thought and practice in a meaningful sense. Even in post-independence Kenya.
4. Selected Works , op. cit., p. 387.
5. The sages were the philosophers par excellence in the Traditional African Societies. They would help interpret

or disentangle difficult natural and social problems for the societies. To be a sage, one needed to be intelligent, influential and authoritative. This could be acquired or inherited. See Research by Donders, J.G., and Oruka, H.O., "Thoughts of Traditional Kenyans Sages", 1974/1975.

6. See Philosophy and an African Culture, op. cit., p. 29.
7. Research on "Thoughts of Traditional Kenyan Sages". See also (Oruka, H.O., Sage Philosophy, Nairobi: Acts, 1991)
8. See Mbiti, J.S., African Religions and Philosophy, (London: Heinemann 1964), p. 16.
9. From Tempel, P., Bantu Philosophy, (Paris: translated in English from La Philosophie Bantoue by Dr. A. Rubbens, Presence Africaine, 1959), p.44.
10. The attempts to justify the "Virtuousness" and "Innocence" of the humanism of the Traditional African Society has typically characterised the politics and philosophies of independent Africa. These claims have universally been documented as official national philosophies. In independent Kenya, African Socialism, "Harambee" and "Nyayoism" are popularly believed to have their roots in these claims.
11. See Black Skin, White Masks, op. cit., p. 60.
12. Extracted from Jean Paul Sartre's preface to Albert Memmi's Portrait du Colonise, p. 34.

13. This quotation comes from the interview given to Aime Cesaire by the Monthly Review of New York. The quotation was lifted from Discourse on Colonialism, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 21.
14. See Memmi, A., The Coloniser and The Colonised, (New York: Ornx Press, 1974), p. 91
15. See Wa Thiong'o, N., Decolonising The Mind, (Nairobi: Heinemann, Kenya, 1986), p. 16.
16. From Wa Thiong'o, N., Writer in Politics, (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981), p. 60.
17. This statement was made by the Tunisian nationalist, Abdou Moumini. Here, it is quoted from Rodney, W., How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1972), p. 273.
18. Part of the 79 articles of the Mau Mau Charter quoted from Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Barrel of a pen, (London: New Bacon Books, 1973), p. 12.
19. The fifth stanza of the Mau Mau song: "You White People Are Foreigners In Our Country", in Maina Wa Kinyatti's Thunder from the Mountains: Mau Mau Patriotic Songs, (London: Zed press 1980), p. 92.
20. The contemporary Kenyan liberal capitalism exhibits class orientations which have drawn much from Plato and Aristotle through the adoption of the Western-shaped economic and political values and institutions. The conduct of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers is quite



reminiscent of Platonic "Philosopher Kings" while that of the middle class is typically Aristotelian.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY: PERCEPTIONS, FUNCTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses and assesses the import of African Socialism to national development in Kenya. It also focuses on "harambee" and "Nyayoism" as significant aspects of the African Socialism as the nucleus of the national philosophy. It is our contention that it is not useful to discuss the main functions of the national philosophy without a critical focus on the characteristic features of the very national philosophy. To do so, one would simply be begging the question of rationale.

Simply defined in our context, national philosophy would be taken to mean the sum of all the fundamental principles informing, guiding and if possible, protecting the social, economic, political, moral, legal and philosophical conduct of the nationals. Every nation has its own national philosophy either in a completed form or still in formation. There is not any one nation without its national philosophy. Neither is there any one nation bereft of philosophic knowledge. In the words of one Korean philosopher, Chou Min Hong:

The great thoughts or philosophies are not the possession of a single country or race, but are shared by and belong to all men throughout the world<sup>1</sup>

share this view. Every nation, irrespective of its level of development, has its authentic national philosophy. It does not matter whether it is eclectic. The Korean philosopher says:

It is a fact of history that a nation with a culture, history and time-honoured tradition, has its own philosophy, vigorously developed through a long tradition, appears as an originally systematised set of ideas. This is what we call the philosophy of each nation that we meet today.<sup>2</sup>

In the previous sections, we noted that the long history of colonialism greatly affected the philosophical system and tradition in Kenya. During the peak of colonialism, deep philosophical thoughts and practices were prohibited. In the process, the colonised saw the imperialist contracts as the reference point for every social activity of which philosophy was an integral part. Determined to pursue the selfish imperialist interest to the detriment of the colonised, the colonialists became obstinately rigid and quite inflexible with regard to locally inspired ideas, values or institutions.

It was part of this rigidity on the part of the colonialists and the desire to be free on the part of the colonised that inevitably led to the crystallization of all forms of nationalism, including philosophical nationalism, to challenge the colonial lies, complexes and inhibitions. Thus, at the zenith of anti-colonialism in the 1950's, the British colonialism was fought militarily, diplomatically and philosophically by

patriotic Kenyans determined to establish a free society patterned and inspired by historical necessity and a philosophy whose basic tenets and vision they understood. Although there was no explicit reference to the national philosophy at the time the anti-colonialist being preoccupied with the restoration of the lost sovereignty, on the attainment of political independence in 1963, the way was paved for the construction of an authentic national philosophy. However, the nationalists hurried to adopt the pragmatic approach to the challenges of independence. According to them, there was need to mingle the colonial heritages and the traditional values in order to produce a kind of synthesis which could lead to an acceptable compromise and the consolidation of independence which they realised could only be sustained under the auspices of the departed colonialists operating as neo-colonialists.

In order to appear more African and more acceptable to the people, whose expectations of independence were yet to be fulfilled, the nationalists who had just assumed the reins of political power, deemed it fit to give the nostalgic fondness of the dead Traditional African Society a new and fashionable attire termed African Socialism. Although part of the ideological struggles going on at the time, and although a typical African reaction to western capitalism and eastern communism and the Cold War, the African Socialism was officially made the primary ideology based on the values of the nostalgic Traditional African

Society. It was also popularised by the African politicians and intellectuals as the essential national philosophy not only in independent Kenya but in almost every independent African socialisms which with time assumed various aspects like "Harambee" and "Nyayoism." We shall return to this later. Meanwhile, we shall consider the functions of a national philosophy.

Among other things, a genuine national philosophy should articulate such diverse functions as the formulation of how moral values can be attained and upheld in the development process. In fact it requires little emphasis to state that there is always an overriding need to categorically distinguish between philosophy and ideology, national philosophy and national ideology.

Whatever the epistemological pretensions of the philosophers and pseudo-philosophers alike, the philosophic truth should always be separated from the ideological interests and political expediencies.

While we agree that the national philosophy may be politically, ideologically and institutionally supported or protected, we contend that it would be both incomplete and illusory without the vision of truth. Philosophical truth does not merely spring up from the brain in its purest form; it must be socially determined and influenced. It is, therefore, our strongest view that the functions of national philosophy in national development should be measured by the degree of rationality in facilitating rather

than hindering real development through subtle or crude approaches.

In Kenyan situation, however, the question of the national philosophy cannot be discussed without due focus on neo-colonialism, class structure, tribalism and economic dependency, which typically characterise the independent Kenya. The irrefutable fact is that there are many social struggles going on all the time. These struggles are more visible at political, economic, institutional and cultural levels. They are conducted by people who are basically divergent in terms of social interest. One cannot, therefore, avoid asking the following questions: in the face of social struggles suggesting heterogeneity in the Kenyan nation, can one still talk of the national philosophy? Or would it be more logical to talk of philosophical duality? Can national philosophy be forged or imposed on the people?

Our penultimate response is this: since philosophy is essentially human it may exist irrespective of the harmony or disharmony in the whole society. However, its essential functions as the national philosophy may greatly be negated. When we talk of Indian, Cuban, Russian, American or Kenyan philosophy, we do not imply that these philosophies are contingent upon social stratification as such. Rather, we only imply that there is something historical that makes this philosophy Kenyan and that

one American irrespective of the social forces at play. Social stratification, like ideology or falsehood, does not form the national philosophy; what really constitutes it includes: history, culture, traditions and material conditions (of course social forces may be part of this). L a

Neither does national philosophy simply transcend the social stratification. However, it affects the patterning of the social forces. In a neo-colony like Kenya, there are quite a number of people including some philosophers, who benefit a lot from neo-colonialism while the rest are more impoverished and repressed as a result of it. Is it not logical to expect the two groups to be philosophically hostile to each other? Certainly, they will be. But the hostility is more ideological than philosophical. What can be inferred from this is that it is hard to contemplate a national philosophy that does not categorically and rationally resist neo-colonialism. In a neo-colonial situation, the national philosophy should unconditionally oppose all forms of exploitation and oppression. For all practical reasons, it should constitute a positive body of ideas that clearly aims at reconstructing the national culture, the national economy and the cultivation of a political culture that will give the nation a meaningful identity rationalised on progressive philosophy.

### 3.2 Fundamental Character of Modern Kenyan Philosophy

Pragmatism is the most conspicuous character of the modern Kenyan philosophy. Historically, pragmatism is widely known as a distinctive American Philosophy initially popularised mostly by William James. Although it is mainly concerned with what practically and strategically works in the realm of practice, it has not, however, been accepted as a philosophy on its own right. Functionally, it is more of an ideology than a philosophy. In Four Pragmatists: An Introduction to Pierce, James, Mead and Dewey, Israel Scheffler has seen pragmatism in these words:

In its search for an integrated interpretation of human life, it strives to relate mind and nature, language and thought, action and meaning, knowledge and value, emphasising always the primary significance of critical thought, logical method and the test of experience in all realm of endeavours.<sup>3</sup>

In terms of philosophy, development and other social activities, pragmatism is treated as a practical application of philosophy the purpose of which, to produce tangible results irrespective of, is the means used.

The pragmatic character of the modern Kenyan philosophy has its origins in colonialism. The colonialists had adopted pragmatic approach to development because the philosophically conceived development contradicted the colonial objectives. Incidentally, the nationalists who took over the political leadership accepted the colonial notion of development and opted to work within the philosophical frameworks which had been designed to support it.



The re-adoption of the pragmatic approach to development prepared them fully for the ensuing intermediary role which appeared to be a calculated refuge in pusillanimous neutrality characterised by platitudes without any philosophical concern for development. Since that time, pragmatism has typically characterised the conduct of the national philosophers especially the liberal nationalist-ideological ones. However, the bone of contention between the liberals, the radicals and leftists seems to have created or given the modern philosophy a protest character stigmatised by political monolithicism and the demand for pluralist politics.

Albeit the Kenyan philosophy is eclectic having borrowed from the Traditional African Society and Europe, essentially, it is apparent that the search for the more relevant philosophy ended in adopting a strategy that would least tamper with the neo-colonial establishment. In both practice and principle, one is tempted to argue strongly that dependency and inequalities were accepted as part of the necessary conditions for national development for this is essentially what pragmatism implied in another sense. It is, therefore, no accident that a more powerful impetus emerged for the development of dependent capitalism. In our view, it was this pragmatic approach to national development that the nationalist - ideological philosophers baptised African Socialism.

### 3.3 African Socialism As The Nucleus of The National Philosophy

In early 1960s, there was a preponderance of development policy papers designed by the departing colonialists to facilitate the development programmes for independent Africa. This tendency gave birth to "Paper Socialism" in almost every independent African nation. The papers which were basically the same were, however, given different labels and additions to conform to the historical experiences of each nation. For instance, in Zambia, it was baptised "Humanism". In Tanzania, "Ujamaa". In Uganda, "The Common Man's Character" and in Kenya, it was "Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965: African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya".<sup>4</sup>

Although each country had its own approach depending on the neo-colonialist influences, the common denominator was that African Socialism supposedly drew its authenticity from the principles of the Traditional African Societies.

But what really is the meaning of African Socialism? Many definitions have been suggested. Perhaps it will not be wise to review all of them here. However, some of them merit mention here. For instance, Father Bede Onuoha, sees African Socialism as an expression and affirmation of African authenticity. He states:

African Socialism is an expression of the desire of all

Africans to find themselves be themselves and assert themselves. It is a crystallization of the African genius and a declaration of ideological independence in a world flooded with learned masters.<sup>5</sup>

This definition is very close to Jitendra Mohan who says:

African Socialism is a three-fold affirmation. That means that it affirms Africans' "originality", its distinctiveness and its personality. It stresses African's independence, ideologically as well as politically. Furthermore, it affirms Africa's open-mindedness, its rejection of the "tyranny of concepts" and indeed of ideologies, its adaptability and flexibility- in short, its eclecticism.<sup>6</sup>

One of the staunch advocates of African Socialism, Julius Nyerere, has seen African Socialism this way:

'Ujamaa' then, or 'Familyhood', describes our socialism. It is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man.<sup>7</sup>

One thing is apparent; African Socialism was basically an intellectual, political and ideological reaction against Western capitalism, Eastern Socialism, colonialism and the desire of the African political leadership for the third way to development. The political leaders thought they would woo the world by proving the "glorious" past of Africa, little remembering that what Africa needed was a glorious future not a past which was equally corrupt. Essentially, African Socialism was intended not for a meaningful socialism but for a middle-of-the-road-approach to development that would steer off the paths of socialism and capitalism in favour of what has come to be known as non-

alignment. If this was the correct picture of the motive of the African leadership, then it can safely be stated that the prime motive was to simply hoodwink the Africans into thinking that the just attained independence did not really mean further collaboration with imperialism.

Although described as "African", there was nothing essentially African in these claims. Besides, some of the qualities constitutive of the "glorious" past alleged like equality, brotherhood, humanism, etc., were not African attributes but human attributes obtainable at every stage of human development. What Africa needed was a philosophy for the future not the past. Thus, in view of the fact that socialism can neither be contrived nor wished nor created by rhetorics, one would agree with Morag Bell, who has seen African Socialism merely as a new style of political leadership expressly in favour of the new African elites. He has stated:

Essentially, African socialism was an ideology of development arising from the unique circumstances of oppressive colonial rule and incorporation within it the essential qualities of traditional society. It was a banner which appealed to the African leadership<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, since its inception in Africa, the capitalist principles of individualism, private enterprise and the moral principles have been attended to more than the basic tenets of African Socialism.

In Kenya, the main features of the Seasonal Paper No. 10 of 1965: African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya include: political democracy; mutual social responsibility; various forms of ownership.<sup>9</sup> Among other things, however, the paper, which embodies official African Socialism in Kenya, states that African Socialism is a term describing an African political and economic systems that is positively African; that a rigid doctrinaire system will have little chance for survival; that Kenya is free to choose those methods that have been proven in practice and are adaptable to Kenyan conditions regardless of the ideologies. It is these main features of African Socialism, which essentially constitute the same body of principles and objectives, that have been interpreted mostly by politicians and scholars as the core and essence of the national philosophy in Kenya.

Historically, the Kenyan African Socialism was drawn under the auspices of the departing colonial powers, who were still bent on creating political, economic and philosophical frameworks most suited to neo-colonial objectives. The outgoing colonists resolved to maintain cordial and exploitative relationship with independent Kenya through subtle neo-colonial arrangements which would negate the free re-emergence of philosophical nationalism that independent Kenya really needed. Thus, the Kenya African Socialism was essentially a dress rehearsal for capitalism and neo-colonialism incompatible with traditional values which were

being evoked. Today, it is clear that it sought to promulgate colonial legacies in favour of the politicians who were against communism. No sooner was African Socialism promulgated than it was turned into an anti-Marxist instrument. In the Kenya Peoples's Union's Manifesto, the Kenya African Socialism was correctly seen in these words:

In what mouths of the Government and K.A.N.U leaders, 'African Socialism' has become meaningless phrase. What they call African Socialism is neither African nor Socialism. It is a cloak for the practice of capitalism. To describe the policies of the present Government as 'African Socialism' is an insult to the intelligence of people. The deception is obvious but the leaders of the Government and of K.A.N.U do not have the courage to admit that they are fully committed to the Western ideology of capitalism.<sup>10</sup>

This was a very accurate assessment of 'African Socialism' in Kenya. It was basically aimed at pragmatism which would essentially tolerate neo-colonialism. Writing in 1975, Colin Leys, a British political economist, expressed it this way:

African Socialism was a pure statement of bourgeois Socialism (i.e, focused on redressing social grievances in order to ensure the continued existence of bourgeois society) skillfully adapted to the interests of the comprador elements in a neo-colonial situation.<sup>11</sup>

Essentially, it was "Paper Socialism" which was diametrically unsocialistic. It categorically rejected Marxism stating:

.....valid as Marx's description was, it bears little similarity to Kenya today. (.....) The historical setting that inspired Marx has no counterpart in independent Kenya<sup>12</sup>

In outrightly dismissing Marxism and class stratification, the

paper registered its own anti-socialist stance: there was no way genuine socialism and a philosophically inspired development would be implemented within the colonial framework that had literally denied the colonised opportunity to philosophically act on their tangible development tasks. Therefore the re-adoption of a poorly conceived philosophy which provided no room for a decisive response to the raging neo-colonial challenges definitely pre-empted a positive perception of national development.

Philosophically, a socialist philosophy of development should have essentially been anti-neo-colonialist, nationalistic and historically explanatory of the conditions of the people. Genuine socialism must not only recognise reason but must also practically utilize it in facilitating development matters. Thus, on the basis of these observations, it is justifiable to assert that African Socialism in Kenya was basically an ideological front designed by the new elite to help mobilise the people for capitalist mode of development. Of course, with time, the use to which "harambee" ethic and "Nyayoism", whose advocates claim are significant aspects of African Socialism, in mobilising the people and resources for various activities, have become living testimonies that African Socialism was probably one of the most pragmatic instruments for spearheading the new form of nationalism.

### 3.4 "Harambee" As An Aspect Of The National Philosophy

A Kiswahili term, which means "let us all pull together", "harambee" has also been used as spirit, an institution and a method for resource allocation. Its history goes back to colonial days when it was popularised as a collective effort by the patriotic Kenyans against the British colonialism. In this political function, it signified an essential spirit of national struggle for independence. It was seen as the most pragmatic effort by the Kenyans to mobilise their collective resources to fight for and restore lost sovereignty.<sup>13</sup>

In this sense, however, "harambee" was an integral part of the anti-colonialist philosophical nationalism. Since independence, it has been seen as the embodiment of the essential ethics for collective responsibility for utilitarian purposes. It is through the invocation of collective ethical feelings that "harambee" has enormously been used to promote ideas of mutual assistance and self-reliance in various ways. Since independence, all the development plans affirm that "harambee" contributions have officially been recognised as significant aspects of participation in national development. For instance, the Development Plans amply indicate that between 1965-1969, there were 6,811 "harambee" projects<sup>14</sup> and the number rose to 14,028 in 1980-1984.<sup>15</sup> During the 1970-1974, "harambee" contributions in cash and kind amounted to Kf 8.5 million.<sup>16</sup>



Such contributions rose to Kf 28 million during the Development Plan 1979-1983.<sup>17</sup> In 1980 for instance, "harambee" contributions in the form of cash, labour, materials in kind as professional services amounted to Kf 32.5 million. Thus, at sociological level, "harambee" has closely been associated with ideas of mutual assistance, social responsibility and communal self-reliance.

Essentially, national development has greatly benefitted from "harambee" ethics. These figures illustrate that since independence, Kenyans have increasingly and committedly contributed to the country's national development through various "harambee" projects most of which have principally aimed at alleviating illiteracy, ignorance, disease and poverty. In every community, there are projects intended to improve the social amenities and infrastructures. In fact, even some very poor families have managed to educate their children through communal "harambee" contributions. Moreover, currently, most women groups flourishing all over the country are basically being organised on the basis of "harambee" ethic suggesting, as it were, that the "harambee" ethic has been imbibed by almost everyone involved in the development process.

Unfortunately, despite its impressive contributions to individual, communal and national development, "harambee" ethic has not escaped the political, social and economic inequalities

in independent Kenya. It has become a dangerous instrument for exploitation and violence especially by the privileged elite. In a research conducted in Machakos District, Kenya, in 1976, Rachel Musyoki partly reached these conclusions:

The poor are the most active in self-help efforts and contribute most in cash, labour and materials, while elites are the ones who benefit, with the consequences that "Harambee" movement enhances and perpetuates inequalities within the rural areas<sup>18</sup>

In addition to outright exploitation, illegitimate use of force has become an inseparable aspect of "harambee" practice. Before the abolition of forced "harambee" in November, 1990, by President Daniel arap Moi, at the call of the public, force had become quite rampant. For instance, by August, 1990, the growing menace and militarisation of "harambee" had forced the Catholic Bishops in Kenya to make the following remarks in a Pastoral Letter published by "Society Magazine" it stated:

.....now this concept (harambee) whose original inspiration was one of voluntary giving and doing, has been transformed by some misguided leaders into an obligation and a forced exercise.<sup>19</sup>

The clergymen went further to strongly state:

We know of cases where government officials have issued circulars demanding a certain amount of money from each family i.e cases where through departmental offices, workers get their salaries slashed, chiefs and their assistants wait for people at cereal boards, parents are compelled to pay money at such a time when such funds are being raised e.g Presidential Bursary and many more cases.<sup>20</sup>

Such unjust tendencies, commandism and authoritarianism of the politicians, bureaucrats and the elite have coloured and indignified the "harambee" ethic and ultimately deprived it of essential philosophic contents.

Many shortcomings are identifiable with "harambee". Firstly, the ethic has been part of the many stumbling blocks towards the essential balancing between personal initiatives and national potentialities. Since independence, a very strong syndrome of dependency at individual and national level seems to have emerged. At individual level, some citizens have simply become increasingly dependent on others with very little utilitarian concern or moral compunction. At the national level, the nation depends more on foreign "aid" usually wasted by unscrupulous individuals. As a result, it has been quite difficult to harness and exploit our own national resources before looking for supplementary assistance. It is, therefore, no surprise that the dominant ethic of dependency appears to have been institutionalised much to the detriment of national creativity and development-in the philosophical sense.

As the basis for self-reliance, "harambee" appears to have lost its philosophic substance due to being politically corrupted and prostituted in addition to being eroded by the socio-economic inequalities. In these conditions, "harambee" practices easily become victims of such inequalities. For instance, given the

structural unevenness, regional disparities, institutional inequalities and class structures, it is deceptive to rely on "harambee" donations to foster equal national development. For instance, it has been amply demonstrated that schools with more influential and powerful godfathers, usually politicians, enjoy more power, prestige and frequent and generous "harambee" donations than the helpless ones. Consequently, the class, regional, structural and institutional imbalances in the entire country are formally accentuated than minimised. This is a great setback to national development.

Nevertheless, the tangible contributions of "harambee" are quite commendable. Under normal socio-economic conditions, "harambee" can be a very significant ethic for mobilising the whole society for a philosophically guided democratic national development. The abuse by politicians aside, one would say that it is more of a frustrated child of genuine socialism whose tragedy is that it has been brewed within the womb of dependant capitalism! This is to say that within the present socio-economic framework, "harambee" ethic does not seem to entail an acceptable vision of development leave alone man. In strict ideological terms, it remains a populist slogan or call for mobilising and controlling the broad masses of the people. But philosophically, it poorly represents any introspective cultural and historical values due to the politically motivated abuses it has been exposed to. Within a sound democracy, it can be quite a reliable lever for

national development.

### 3.5 Nature, Principles and Functions of "Nyayoism" in Development

since 1978, there has been a shift of emphasis from African socialism in general to "Nyayoism" specifically as the new national philosophy. A look at the newspapers, local magazines, official speeches and a listening over the national radio services fully substantiate that "Nyayoism" is the new official national philosophy. Moreover, it has crept into the school curriculum and is now being taught and popularised as the authentic national philosophy. But what really is "Nyayoism" in relation to national development?

Ordinarily, it means "Peace, Love and Unity". According to its cardinal author, President Daniel arap Moi, the meanings of "Nyayo" and "Nyayoism" can be seen this way:

..... all intelligent human actions are normally motivated by a purposeful spirit directed and energised by fundamental motivating spirit which comprises peace, love and unit. This spirit is fundamental and of critical importance to African societies. Therefore our "harambee" has found a driving spirit somewhere. It derived its supporting philosophy from a source. And that somewhere, that source is the fundamental African spirit which I call "Nyayo". "Nyayo" is the spirit and "Nyayoism" is the philosophy<sup>21</sup>

According to this definition, "Nyayoism" is essentially a subtle restatement of African Socialism in Kenya. However, this time, it is coached in more attractive universalist precepts: Peace, Love and Unity, which are significantly, human rather than African. In this sense, "Nyayoism" passes as a philosophy in the popular sense. A philosophy that expresses contemporary Kenyan philosophico-ideological identity. One University professor has seen "Nyayoism" this way:

The word "nyayo" is not just a political slogan. It has evolved into a consolidated belief system that projects Kenya's identity. It has become a projection of President Moi's philosophy of national life. It is a guiding framework to Kenya's efforts to eradicate all the problems of underdevelopment both internally and externally. It is within this context that "Nyayo" is referred to as a philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

There is no dispute that Peace, Love and Unity are essentially philosophic; they are some of the most important precepts that every humane philosophy would embrace as its essentials. In terms of development, they are most necessary for a healthy development of both the individual and the society. However, it appears that like African Socialism, "Nyayoism" is a version of romantic idealism far removed from the realities in Kenya. In other words, it is essentially speculative and unrealistic. As long as such features as class stratification, tribalism, regional imbalances, structural inequalities and temporal unevenness and exploitation sustained by foreign and local forces are the characteristic features of the Kenyan society, peace,

love and unity cannot really be effected; they simply become rhetorics for political survival and populist politics. If you doubt this, then seek the opinion of the staunch advocates of "Nyayoism" on political pluralism or popular democracy and you will come into full grasp of the real essence of peace, love and unity.

At international level, "Nyayoism" can be a very effective tool for diplomatic manoeuvre. But at home, it essentially remains a philosophical non-starter having been circumscribed by the inherent inequalities which are everyday multiplying ideological hostilities, rivalries and antagonism. Thus, like "harambee" ethic, "Nyayoism" cannot escape the neo-colonialism and inequalities of the contemporary Kenyan society. History amply attest to the truism that in a neo-colonial situation where the national economy is dependent on the vagaries of foreign and international market forces, usually beyond the contradiction or challenge of the neo-colony, it is practically impossible to create conditions conducive to the attainment of peace, love and unity, the basic tents of the "Nyayo" philosophy. In as much as the politician would make us believe that peace, love and unity are possible without ever tempering with or transforming the state of inequalities into the state of equalities, the objective reality is that these precepts can hardly be achieved in society where the majority are poor, politically ignorant, legally unaware while the minority are wealthy, enjoy unlimited political

power and prestige.

In a socially stratified society like Kenya, "Nyayoism" would be the best philosophy for equal national development but there is no way it can be neutral. However attractive it may be, the objective reality is that it cannot truly express the democratic needs of the whole society within the rigid and closed political system which has frustrated many national philosophies in Africa. It is, therefore, condemned to remain basically theoretical and militantly rhetorical since in its present posture, it cannot transcend the vested social interests without contradicting its "raison d'etre."

Hitherto, it is an open secret that the militant advocates of "Nyayoism" have behaved as if the class disparities were a thing of the past. According to most of them, "Nyayoism" implies unquestionable loyalty to the Government, ruling party, KANU and its President and an unswerving support of the "status quo" of the socio-economic and political establishment. They even mistake constructive criticism of unpopular policies and Government excesses for non-conformity or dissidence. In this respect, it is arguable that while there is nothing wrong with the philosophic content of "Nyayoism" its most committed advocates are ironically less and less philosophical in thought and deed. For instance, it is not only a thankless and obstinate thinking that contemporary Kenya can promote peace, love and



unity if it rejects democratic changes but also unrealistic for a national philosophy predicated on such universalist precepts as peace, love and unity to stand on the path of historical laws of motion. No peace, love and unity can be attained in a society that undemocratically denies its citizens free philosophical dialogues on the dynamics of change and the destiny of the whole nation. Perhaps this explains the recent resurgence of tribalism or petty nationalism in contemporary Kenya.

The application of the "Nyayo" philosophy has been recently tested variously. Corruption, tribalism and use of violence have sufficiently been documented. There have been instances where cabinet ministers who profess "Nyayoism" have called on their tribesmen to arm themselves with "rungus" and knives to fight advocates of popular democracy and other tribes in the name of "Nyayo" philosophy without any legal actions being preferred against such ministers. But while the ministers went scot free, leading advocates of democracy were not so lucky. For instance, a journalist, the Editor-in Chief of "The Nairobi Law Monthly" - Gitobu Imanyara<sup>23</sup> who drew the attention of the nation to bizarre tribalistic domination of some parastatals had to be arraigned in court for "evoking tribal hostility to excite disaffection from the Government!"<sup>24</sup>

Our point is that the social struggles in Kenya cannot be resolved by an appeal to impracticable peace, love and unity but

by resort to a free democratisation of the whole society. "Nyayo" philosophy would be a dependable national philosophy if and only if it fully identified with and applied democratic ideals in efforts to translate theory into practical benefits for the common good of all the citizens.

peace, love and unity should be the synthesis arising from the resolution of the social antagonism. A national Philosophy which is over-ideologized and personalized like "Nyayoism" can neither be nationalistic nor the fundamental basis for a meaningful peace, love and unity within the socio-economic and political framework which is essentially hostile to the same. We contend that although "Nyayoism" constitutes some of the most cherished human values which should be integral components of national philosophy, its contents can only remain declaratory rather than practicable due to external economic pressures, domestic political hostilities and ideological interests which sometimes surface only as tribalism.

The mere allusion to the "virtuous" past where it is associated with African Socialism does not add anything philosophic to "Nyayoism". If anything, in assuming that poverty, social stratification, lack of sufficient democracy, tribalism and economic neo-colonialism can be by-passed, the novel philosophy seems to be trying to fit square boxes into circular holes and this constitutes a grave epistemological blunder. As it stands,

and with all due respect, "Nyayoism" appeals more to the Kenyans who are privileged and would wish to protect their privileges by hook or crook.

We are not claiming here that the comparatively underprivileged do not need peace, love and unity; they equally need them. In fact, to appeal to everyone to work for peace, love and unity can be a very great Philosophical contribution to Mankind if petty and artificial differences are forgotten for the greatest possible good. But from the viewpoint of the underprivileged, perhaps it sounds rather ridiculous to simply wish away such tribulations like abject poverty in favour of abstract peace, love and unity. In fact, it is even very absurd to subtly lure the poor for instance, into helping the wealthy to consolidate their gains without any equal or corresponding rewards in the name of national peace, love and unity!

Essentially, the falsification of reality in the name of the national philosophy can hardly create a sound national philosophy. Historically, nowhere has falsified reality ever been synonymous with reality; to the best of our knowledge, it is always a negation of it. As a negation of reality, however, whatever an ideologized national philosophy advocates at all, it must remain substantially pretentious, opportunistic, vindictive and unscientific. For instance, is it not a fact that political, social and economic crises cannot be resolved by wishful thinking

or sentimental appeals? History of independent Africa, amply attests to the fact that only committed democratization of all aspects of national life can yield rational approaches and solutions to national development problems.

Whereas history affirms that reality has never adapted itself to illusory or imposed truths, in the Kenyan philosophical life, there have been deliberate attempts to force the society to accept various untruths in the name of the well-being of the impracticable national philosophy which changes as the political situation changes. For instance, since independence, the political leaders have endlessly condemned tribalism which has, however, remained their strongest political currency. It has become an extremely important political currency appealed to by politicians and bureaucrats who claim that there is need for a tribal balance. What is most puzzling, however, is that despite the official recognition of tribalism as a problem in Kenya, "nyayoist" politicians would rather conceal it by preaching peace, love and unity rather than going into its roots. In fact, loyalty to the tribe is much stronger than loyalty to the nation and this is suggestive of the fact that there has been a decline in nationalism leave alone patriotism. When the tribe is erroneously identified with the nation, the stage is set for respecting and overprotecting tribalist loyalties at the expense of nationalist ones and when this becomes a permanent imprint on the consciousness of the various tribes, the claims to peace,

love and unity become null and void. And a genuine national philosophy should not condone this.

Nationalism and not tribalism can be the only sure basis for managing national affairs. The national philosophy can best work within a national rather than a tribal framework. To talk of the national philosophy while at the same time practicing tribalism can be seen in two ways. Either the national philosophy is cliché or it is an euphemism for something else or it has virtually been "revolutionized". As such, it cannot be used as the basis for guiding national development without a thorough restructuring of the existing structural and institutional frameworks, to create acceptable and justifiable framework for genuine philosophical practices.

Therefore, it would appear that what the "Nyayo" philosophy needs is the courage to go to the roots of the anti-social vices which are obstacles to peace, love and unity needed for national development. For such vices as corruption, dishonesty, violence, lies, exploitation, tribalism and witch-hunting to be overcome, the national philosophy must honestly be philosophically practicable. There is no way a national philosophy can espouse beautiful precepts like peace, love and unity at individual, national and international levels without addressing itself to the causal factors. This would be begging the question of rationale.

In addition, there is no way a national philosophy can condemn the social vices as a matter of fashion while at the same time making the best use of the same for ideological purposes.

Moreover, there is no way an authentic national philosophy can willy-nilly find a "modus vivendi" with unphilosophical practices and try to make the best use it can of them ideologically. This readily contradicts its whole concept of being an authentic philosophy that can steer a young nation to greater horizons of development or become a reliable philosophical basis on which every citizen may, without much difficulty and complications, rely in the sure hope and certainty that it will be consistent with individual and national aspirations as the historical conditions dictate. In this important respect, it is reasonable to argue that there are still a number of unresolved questions about the national philosophy and unless they are sufficiently resolved, it would be idle to dream to imagine that in the present forms, the national philosophy can effectively influence the national development.

### 3.6 Resolving The Question of The National Philosophy

One of the problems facing developing countries is the chronic falsification of reality. As a result, every philosophy that they concoct must, perforce, ultimately defend the falsified reality as its most committed objective in development. In the majority of cases, such philosophies are vulnerable to giving

only an appearance of the basic philosophical questions of life in general and development as a process in particular.

The irony of the philosophies born and bred in such conditions is that in theory, they may sound deceptively revolutionary, utilitarian and quite plausible while masquerading as the unjust front for unphilosophical domination and frustration. It is probably in this sense that the post-independence national philosophy should be understood. Among other things, however, the national philosophy has been a victim of undue ideological pressures, ambiguity and various abuses perpetrated by some philosophers.

All independent African countries have been victims of philosophical deception. Indeed, this has widened the essential gap between reality and vital consciousness up to the point of completely alienating most of the citizens of these countries from serious philosophical reflections with regard to the basic national problems facing them. In most of these countries, which are undeniable neo-colonies, unphilosophical approach to national problems has created situations which are, to say the least not favourable for the constructive development and utility of authentic national philosophies. It is imperative to note that the national philosophies cannot be founded on falsehood or wishful thinking. Every national philosophy that flourishes on the foundations of falsehood or wishful thinking must ultimately

defend poor perception and practice of development however pretentious it may look. Perhaps it is in this sense that neo-colonialism has been portrayed by some neo-colonies as a rational system for national development while resistance to it has been dismissed as irrational, ill-conceived and enemy of development!

The protection of neo-colonial and sectional interests has stifled the philosophical nationalism that had really been instrumental in solidifying the anti-colonialist struggles during the struggles for independence. Thus, one way of rehabilitating the functions of philosophy is to consciously and essentially replace it with philosophical truths and philosophical nationalism. In a developing country like Kenya the real national philosophy must constitute the dialectical rejection of philosophical illusions in favour of philosophical nationalism and reality.

Our justification for this is that economic arrangements in the final analysis determine the entire character of the national philosophy. For instance, currently, all the African countries are faced with either moving towards the multiparty democracy or forfeiting foreign aid which is the central lubricant of the African economies.<sup>25</sup> It does not matter whether these states are prepared for it or not; they have no choice. Since the African economy is essentially dependent on foreign aid, whatever implications the pluralist democracy may have for them, it is



something no African state can really command the moral to reject.

This view was recognized by Karl Marx this way when he argued that the character of every society is the product of its economic stature. Said Marx:

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness<sup>26</sup>

This implies that the transformation of the economic systems in a developing country, for instance, would have ramifications for the social praxis which directly derives from the active economic causes. Once more Karl Marx would correctly remark:

With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformation, the distinction should be made between the material transformation of the economic condition of production which can be determined with the precision of natural sciences and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic - in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out<sup>27</sup>

It is our view that the development of the national philosophy and its use in Kenya could really benefit from a rational rejection of philosophical deception the consequence of which should be a victory over the main "pandoras box" thereby leading

to the rebirth of a more patriotic, nationalistic and utilitarian philosophy capable of providing and guaranteeing peace, love and unity.

The African experience clearly indicates and teaches that while pieces of legislation can be used to protect the national philosophy, they cannot be used to create it. Essentially, the national philosophy cannot be separated from the national history and material needs, freedom, justice and the search for truth. National Philosophy should neither be an abstract idea divorced from reality nor a travesty of Philosophy.

In Kenya, Philosophical deceptions have created a vicious circle <sup>L</sup> of anomalies and paradoxes in which various people see the functions of philosophy as merely satisfying the tribalist interests at local level; the elitist interests at the national level; and the donors at the international level. These unphilosophical attitudes have stood on the way of many Kenyans to philosophically stand erect against unphilosophical practices in the development process. It is no longer debatable that one of the problems of independent Kenya is the alienation from truth, justice and democracy. For instance, it is quite easier for the Government to accept that tribalism is a great problem that should be fought by all means but the same Government would readily victimize whoever exposes tribalism. Listen to what one intelligent and controversial Kenyan clergyman has recently said

on tribalism which has been recognized as a national cancer:

In Kenya, we cannot talk of tribalism without at the same time willing to suffer for pointing at tribalism as a sin in the heart of the Government itself<sup>28</sup>

since no authentic national philosophy can condone such conduct, it would be just to argue that the national philosophy is only being accorded lip-service in the process of development.

The struggle to purge the national philosophy of unphilosophical practices or tendencies should essentially be seen as the struggle to rehabilitate the whole society. When participation in national development through the contribution of progressive and constructive criticism can lead to being arraigned in court to answer questions on trumped-up charges or to be illegally tortured by security or detained without trial or subjected to endless police harassment, in the name of national philosophy, then the philosophy of development is not less than repressive, unrealistic and irrelevant.

Naturally, when the national philosophy becomes repressive, its other aspects also become equally repressive. Consequently, its social utility in a fair and equal development becomes blurred, retrogressive, valueless and wasteful of the national philosophical resources. In the circumstance, even philosophical reflection is made the subject of censorship and may even be construed as non-conformity or treasonable depending on the whims

and mood of the more formidable social forces.

We, therefore, strongly assert that the resolution of the shortcomings of the national philosophy should be gauged at three levels. Firstly, it should be realized that the national philosophy should not be imposed; it must be the product of the justifiable and self-evident historical and cultural traditions. It is illusory to think that matters of reason are irrelevant to the construction of an authentic national philosophy. This is the fallacy of pragmatic approach to the national philosophy. The evident suggested to us by our considerations of African Socialism, "Harambee" and "Nyayoism" is self-evident. The choice of African Socialism was a matter of political expediency rather than justifiable reason. One cannot, therefore, contemplate an appropriate national philosophy to emerge without philosophical rehabilitation of the initial blunders.

This claim is already borne out by the fact that the claims to African Socialism have only helped to create conditions more favourable to intermediary philosophical dispositions. The new nationalism has radically departed from the overriding philosophical questions pertaining to the national destiny. This explains why the corpus of the national philosophy reveals that the idea of man and the future of all the citizens were only vaguely alluded to in a way that would not really arouse philosophical, social and political consciousness..

Secondly, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers were crazy about immediate results and not the painstaking and systematic political education necessary for rational philosophical articulation of development. This reduced the citizens to mere means to an end rather than ends in themselves thereby removing most people to the periphery of social activities where they would hardly engage in coherent philosophical reflections and actions. It is, therefore, our strong stance that the pragmatic approach to development and the obsession with immediate results negated the national realities and priorities and rendered the morale and the consciousness associated with philosophical reflections and practices relatively passive. Pragmatic outlook substantially reduced the essence and functions of the new nationalism to the exclusive concern with the well-being of the political leaders and their precarious prestige in the international scene instead of working out new concepts and creating a philosophically liberated citizenry.

Thirdly and finally, a viable and most relevant philosophy of development and the national philosophy specifically cannot, without a contradiction, isolate its sole beneficiaries from active participation in the real development process. As a matter of fact, true development is inseparable from the very social consciousness and social environment of man. Without philosophical knowledge and comprehensive awareness, one simply

engages in development activities haphazardly. This is a remarkable historical blunder.

### 3.7 The National Philosophy And the District Focus<sup>29</sup>

In July, 1983, as part of the implementation of the "Nyayo" philosophy, a new development strategy was launched to facilitate rural development. According to the 1984/1988 Development Plan, the new strategy would hence be the primary vehicle for planning and implementing the rural development projects. This meant that operational aspects of specific district rural development projects were to be delegated to the districts. According to Simeon Nyachae, the then Head of Civil Service and Secretary to the Cabinet, one of the principal aims of the strategy was the equitable distribution of development resources to the districts. Yet ironically, he added that different districts would be allocated different amounts for what according to "The Weekly Review" he called "good reasons"<sup>30</sup>

Other aims notwithstanding, the primary objective was to involve majority of the rural people in the development process in order to complement the Government's efforts in development problems identification, resource mobilisation and project implementation at the rural setting. The new approach to rural development

would be headed by District Commissioners as chairmen of the District Development Committees assigned the tasks of planning, co-ordination and implementing the development projects.

since its introduction, however, more people have significantly been involved in the development initiatives more than in the previous centralized approach although their participation is still circumscribed by ignorance, illiteracy and superstition, the greatest obstacles to conscious participation in development. However, already, the strategy is beset with ideological biases and philosophical poverty. "The Weekly Review" of 14 October, 1988 made this observation:

Whether by design or default, it now appears that district strategy is perhaps turning out to be just as much of a political strategy as it is developmental and financial<sup>31</sup>

Historically, colonialism paved the road to lop-sided development by over-concentration in regions which were economically more viable. By time independence was attained, the country was divided into economic and non-economic zones consistent with colonial objectives. Incidentally, the same colonial biases were inherited and continued in the aftermath of independence when centralized approach to development was adopted. Thus, a national philosophy that meaningfully focuses on the rural areas should be given all the necessary support. Its success aside, the very decision to attempt to correct the rural-urban disparities and district imbalances and provide socio-economic

infrastructures to improve the general standard of living cannot be dismissed as ignoble. In a fast developing country like Kenya, this should be one of the central objects of the national philosophy.

The usual handicap, however, is the ugly head of the ideological permanently lurking in the visible background and consciousness of the professionals and the non-professionals charged with various development tasks. It is, for instance, becoming increasingly clear that although the rural people are becoming more and more willing to actively be involved in the development process and are showing enormous interests in what is going on in their respective areas, there is mounting evidence to the effect that the novel development strategy is to, a large extent, determined by the power and influences of the local politicians who will be vigilant enough to ensure that allocations are not returned to the treasury on the flimsy excuses that the local people are "unable to identify projects". This has been twice the case in Siaya District. But there is another danger involving the unlawful appropriation of the funds by unpatriotic, unscrupulous and inconsiderate district administrators and even the local politicians. Apart from misusing the funds for development, they may also help divert projects from one region to another as the whims of powerful politicians might dictate.

Thus, as long as there is little concern with democratic ideals



and acceptable moral values in the conduct of the public officers, the strategy might hit endless stages. Moreover, it is important to realize that the casualness with which contemporary Kenyans view philosophy cannot guarantee an impressive performance in a sea of intense tribalism. It is our view that the success of the District Focus will not necessarily depend on what the "Nyayo" philosophy states as its fundamental principles. Nor will it depend on what the politicians say and want; essentially, running it is a super-task which requires not only competent and efficient leadership in all sectors but also scrupulously scientific and philosophic approaches. At both levels: official and non-official, it demands of everyone involved to be aware of his rights in addition to being patriotic, nationalistic and democratic irrespective of ideological, regional and tribalistic differences. In other words, there should be a higher sense of moral integrity, truth, love, justice, freedom and equality. Everyone must fully appreciate the structural inequalities, regional imbalances and levels of social development. Incidentally, most of these qualities are far from being met by most Kenyans leave alone the politicians and bureaucrats who sit at the District Development Committees. For instance, no single factor makes the national cohesion more difficult to achieve than the class camouflaged as tribalist interests. The most threatening problem today is how to overcome to an acceptable degree the ever growing differences among the Kenya tribes and regions. When these are added to the

typical class stratification, there is no way principles, reason and standards cannot be readily compromised for sectarian interests.

In a multi-tribal setting like Kenya, development can be fair and just if and only if it is predicted on the moral values; truth and justice. Without this, the problem of tribalism for instance, cannot be adapted to the reality of the national peace, love and unity. This claim need not be misunderstood. In a genuine democracy, majority will always have its way but that way must necessarily be located as to ensure the continued existence of the nation as a single entity. The interests of the minority, like those of the majority, need to be adequately identified, catered for and protected. Thus, although we are aware of the origins and development of tribalism, it is a fact that if we are committed to national unity, peace and love, then independent Kenya should not promote tribalistic hostility and suspicions that the District Focus approach now seems to be engendering. For instance, in the educational sphere, students can no longer engage in a national union of students except in District Associations whose outlooks are parochial, tribalistic and provincial. National harmony and cohesion among the youth are now things of the past.

How philosophical is such an approach to national development?

Essentially, one major hurdle of our time is to effect the

"Nyayo" philosophy without turning it up-side down especially if the District Focus is to fully and justly utilize the resource allocations. From this viewpoint, it can be anticipated that the District Focus will not realize optimum success without the reactivation of the national philosophical consciousness and political awareness. Without doing this, the good strategy for development could very easily lead to a philosophical cul-de-sac and a political blind alley.

The District Focus strategy needs to be purged of retrogression! narrowmindedness, prachialism and glib thinking which now seem to be the characteristic feature of the public servants charged with the implementation of the development programmes. "Nyayo" philosophy could be a great springboard for fair and even development if every citizen became consciously committed to real peace, love and unity. But this cannot be attained in the present structure because the Kenyans, including some outstanding philosophers, have seemingly internalized various unphilosophical complexes which can only be thrashed out by an appeal to a sound philosophical principle supported by a very strong political will, humane purpose and moral authority.

### 3.8 Critical Remarks

The above discussion has suggested that the philosophical life in

independent Kenya has been greatly circumscribed by three main problems. Firstly, the poor philosophical heritage bequeathed to Kenya by colonialism and institutionalized by the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers who replaced the sages. Secondly, philosophy has mostly been seen and interpreted in terms of ideological interests of the exclusive few. Thirdly, the external factors operating as crude and subtle forms of neo-colonialism have not only pre-empted the formation of a historically relevant national philosophy but have also resulted in a preponderance of anti-social activities and practices which essentially deny the philosophical to prevail at the expense of encouraging the ideological. In the process, philosophical nationalism has been enhanced into what seems to be formidable ideology and philosophy commanding a lot of respect and loyalty.

When the national philosophy is operationally reduced to an ideology, obviously, it cannot be a lever in the understanding and interpretation of development; it simply becomes an instrument to maintain and preserve the interests of the dominant ideological forces. Philosophy essentially deals with truth; once it is reduced to mere ideology, there is no way it can play both the philosophical and ideological. In practice, such a philosophy cannot only find it impossible to wriggle out of the dross of its own dilemma but will also be quite harmful if used as the primary basis for national development.

Indeed, it is sheer romantic speculation to think that a nation can simply solve its ever multiplying development problems and challenges without active involvement of sound and relevant national philosophy. Whatever we do, however we do it, for whatever reason, it stands to reason that if genuine philosophical approach is not adopted in all aspects of national development bottlenecks which now threaten the cohesion of this society.

### Notes

1. See Min-Hong, C., A Modern History of Korean Philosophy (Seoul: Song Moonsa, 1980), p. 10.
2. Ibid., p.9.
3. Extracted from Scheffler, I., "Preface" to A Critical Introduction to Pierce, James, Mead and Dewey, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. ix.
4. This was the first major policy document after the K.A.N.U Manifesto of 1963. It was aimed at consolidating the positions of the liberal nationalist-ideological Philosophers, anti-Marxism and capitalism. It was prepared by Professor O'Edgar, and American then attached to the Treasury in collaboration with the late Tom Mboya.  
see Onuoha, B.m The Elements of African Socialism, (London: Andrew Deutsch, 1965), p. 30.  
see Jitendra Moha, "Varieties of African Socialism: in Raliph Milband and John Saville, (Ed.), The Socialist

- Registrar, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966), p. 228.
7. In Nyerere, J.K., Ujamaa: Essays On Socialism, (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 12.
8. From Morag, B.m Contemporary Africa, (London: Longman, 1986), p. 117.
9. see Republic of Kenya., Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965: African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya, (Nairobi: Government Printer, 1965), p. 14.
10. Part of the Kenya Peoples' Union's Manifesto quoted in Gertzreel, C.J., et al., (Ed.), Government and Politics in Kenya, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), p. 150.
11. see Leys, C., Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism, (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1975), p. 221.
12. Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965: African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya, op. cit., p. 6.
13. see Mbithi, M.P., and Rasmusson, R., Self-Reliance: The Case of Harambee, (Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1977), p. 13.
14. Daily Nation, (Nairobi: December, 12, 1989), p. 20.
15. Ibid.
16. see Republic of Kenya, Development Plan, 1970-1974, (Nairobi: Government Printer, 1970), p.182.
17. Development Plan, 1979-19833, op. cit., p. 185.

18. Extract from Musyoki, R., "Socio-Economic Status of Families and Social Participation: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Commitment and Alienation in Rural Areas", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, (Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi, 1976), p. 170.
19. Pastoral Letter by the Catholic Bishops. It was published by Society, Issue No. 12, (Nairobi: August, 1990), p. 22.
20. Ibid.
21. see Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles, op. cit., p. 25.
22. From Understanding Nyayo: Principles and Policies in Contemporary Kenya, op. viy., p. 11.
23. see the Editorial of The Nairobi Law Monthly, (Nairobi February, 1991).
24. see The Standard, (Nairobi: March 1, 1991), p. 1.
25. The debate on multiparty has raged since 1990.
26. see Marx, K., A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, (Chicago: English transl., Charles H. Kerr and Co., 1913), pp. 11-12.
27. Ibid., p. 12.
28. see Daily Nation, (April, 15, 1991), p. 32.
29. This is the new decentralized approach to rural development. It is popularly believed to be in keeping with "Nyayo" philosophy.
30. see The Weekly Review, (Nairobi: October, 14, 1988), p. 60.
31. Ibid., p. 59

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ATTITUDES OF THE NATIONAL PHILOSOPHERS IN DEVELOPMENT

4. I. Introduction

This chapter discusses the philosophical attitudes of the various categories of the national philosophers and how they relate to national development. It substantiates the decline of philosophical nationalism; the hostility among the national philosophers; monopolism of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers; discrimination against women and youth and the hysterical fear of progressive philosophical stances by the national philosophers. Finally, it draws attention to the challenge posed by the new national and international political thinking to the philosophical practices.

As a national entity, contemporary Kenya has the duty to create a well defined moral order, political culture and a philosophical framework necessary for maintaining law, order, discipline, nationalism, patriotism and stability absolutely necessary for the construction of an egalitarian socio-economic and political system. While doing this, however, it must be understood that man is part and parcel of reality; he neither makes reality nor can he wish it away. He can only adapt it. Everyone wants to believe



in the importance of his humanity, his existence and therefore needs the political power, will, freedom and the moral authority to decide on the individual direction and destiny which do not conflict with the national development. In other words, everyone needs to freely participate in the development process without being unnecessarily thwarted by artificial inhibitions. This is not a small matter as such; it needs rational interpretation of the place and role of the individual in the process of development in as much as it needs its own development to be interpreted, understood and guided in the skills to do this than the national philosophers in general and the professional national philosophers in particular.

In developing countries, however, the role of the national philosophers may be recognized and protected or disregarded and abused due to the over-emphasis on the ideological rather than philosophical matters. In young and fragile polities like the Kenyan, political expediency rather than reason usually steals the limelight. When this becomes institutionalized, the politicians are tempted to develop allergy for truth and reason which may pose some threats to their hegemonies. They may become so ruthless, vicious and selfish to the extent that the rest of society might shrink in fear up to the point of thinking that to effectively participate in national issues is the domain of the incumbent politicians. In an atmosphere of this kind, philosophy is rendered vindictive and the national philosophers can hardly

meaningfully co-ordinate the national philosophical activities which may be necessary for the interpretation of national development.

One other obstacle which may undermine the functions of the national philosophers is neo-colonialism which reproduces itself and creates multiple divisions within the nation. Where there are competing social forces, each social class will be erroneously looking at and interpreting reality from its own peculiar perspectives with very little regard or respect for other perspectives at all. For instance, in deliberating on critical national questions, politicians from the ruling party will usually pose to be knowing everything and having answers to every national problem as has already been noted. In such a situation, it is more likely that the political will be forced to overshadow the philosophical thereby depriving the genuine national philosophers the rein to free philosophization on national questions.

In principle, therefore, we would define the national philosophers as the individual citizens who publicly address themselves to national questions by a systematic and committed appeal to philosophy in both the narrow and the popular senses. Apart from exposing their thoughts in writing, public lectures, seminars, conferences, national politics, researches, debates and "baraza" the purport of which is to practically and

theoretically contribute to national development in the most rational way possible, they also enter dialogue with everyone who seeks to really philosophize on the essential national and international questions impinging on development in order to appeal to society to actively and rationally be engaged in philosophical thinking and practices so vital to a meaningful national development.

#### 4. 2. Philosophical Practice of The National Philosophers

In independent Kenya, four categories of the national philosophers may be identified. We shall closely rely on Professor Odera Oruka's<sup>2</sup> categorization of the African Philosophers which is quite relevant for our quest. His four categories of the four trends in African Philosophy include: Ethno-philosophy (a term borrowed from Professor Paulin Hountondji<sup>3</sup> by which the latter implies that in Africa, philosophical thought is a folk or communal philosophy. But according to Professor Oruka, Ethno-philosophy is a description of collective philosophy or thought of a community. He states:

By this I mean beliefs which a people treat as imperishable truths and which everyone of them is expected to respect without question. Such beliefs characterize the religions, legends, folk tales, myths and superstitions of a community. (...) Most of those works or books on the subject of philosophical thought in African which purport to portray a world outlook or a thought system of a particular African community or the whole of African people belong to ethno-philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

His second category is Nationalist-Ideological philosophy which

consists of political, social and ethical theories popularly believed to be derivative of the Traditional African Society. In some attempts to clarify the meaning of this philosophy, professor Oruka states:

It is usually assumed in this literature that there is a cardinal ethical principle in traditional Africa from which modern nationalism or ideology for African independence and liberation should derive its basic tenets. This cardinal ethical principle of communalism. It is then argued that the social values and institutions in traditional Africa were based on a philosophical outlook that can rightly be described as communalistic: the individual and society had the rights and obligations with respect to each other in such a way that no individual could prosper at the expense of the society and no society could ignore the stagnation of any its members.<sup>5</sup>

The third category falls under professional philosophy which consists of works and debates of the professionally trained students and teachers of philosophy in Africa. He says:

In the professional philosophy, African philosophical thought is seen as a whole which includes, among others, all that African thinkers (traditional and modern) have produced in any branch of philosophical thought in the exact sense<sup>6</sup>

His fourth category is sagacity: Here, the philosophers are the traditional thinkers popularly called the sages. He says:

"They are critical independent thinkers who guide their thoughts and judgement by the power of reason and inborn wisdom rather than by the authority of the communal outlook or foreign innovations. They are able to take a problem or an issue and offer a philosophic or sagacious analysis of it making clear where they agree or disagree with the established or communal judgement on the matter<sup>7</sup>

Of these four categories, however, the nationalist ideological philosophy has specially carried the day in independent Kenya due to the fact that the sages were eclipsed by the colonialism and their remnants are no longer effective. Both the professional philosophers and the sages remaining have hitherto been

overshadowed by the nationalists-ideological philosophers, who since independence have been the main policy makers, legislators and in fact, official national philosophers who enjoy state power, prestige and protection. Domineering and monopolistic in attitudes and practices, this category of the national philosophers has dominated the philosophical scene and wielded ideological influences as if the other national philosophers were non-existent. Consequently, their counterparts, the professional philosophers and the radical nationalist-ideological philosophers (note that there are three sub-categories of the nationalist-ideological philosophers: the liberal nationalist-ideological; the radical nationalist-ideological; and the leftist-nationalist-ideological philosophers), have been forced to the periphery where they haphazardly philosophize.

Thus, in discussing the role of the philosophy in development, more consideration must be given to the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers who have significantly dominated and even personified the national philosophical practice. But we shall also critically assess the factors which have hitherto undermined the free and fuller participation of all the national philosophers.

Historically, the most active philosophers were the sages who dominated the scene in the pre-colonial days. However,

colonialism eclipsed them and replaced them with the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers, who quickly rose to powerful positions of philosophical influence as they became the new interpreters of the whole process of the national life by virtue of their political positions.

In 1965, however, a philosophical landmark was reached when the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers declared the African Socialism as the philosophy of independent Kenya. With an unusual gusto and overenthusiasm, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers began to appeal to the Traditional African Society as their philosophical point of reference. This brought them almost close to ethno-philosophers as they uncritically popularised the "Virtuousness" and "Innocence" of the "glorious" past. Since they were doing this from positions of immense authority and since they did not envisage nor accept alternative philosophizing, they soon grew into what Plato would call in the Republic the "Philosopher Kings."

Within only two years of independence, however, two schools of philosophical trends had emerged when the nationalist-ideological philosophers split into the liberals and the radicals both at philosophical and ideological levels. The liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers were led by the late, President Jomo Kenyatta and Thomas Joseph Mboya while the radical nationalist-ideological ones were led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, who had just

resigned his post of the first Vice-President and formed a left-leaning Opposition Party. While Kenyatta and Mboya were so convinced that African Socialism was the natural philosophy for independent Kenya and even hurried to give it an official baptism as the Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965: African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya. Oginga Odinga and his entourage, broke away from the Kenyatta-Mboya continuum and consolidated their philosophical and ideological stances in the Manifesto of their party, namely, the Kenya People's Union, (K.P.U.), which essentially opposed the claims to African Socialism dismissing it as a mere ploy to hoodwink the Kenyans with a view to fully Africanising and Kenyanising the Western philosophies and ideologies of capitalism.

Today, (1991) the philosophical views of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers can be found in official speeches of presidents, ministers, members of Parliament, policy documents, party manifesto and a few books like Jomo Kenyatta's Suffering Without Bitterness, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), which gives his modern political and philosophical treatises; and President Daniel arap Moi's Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles. (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1986), which spells out the substance of "Nyayo" philosophy which is a typical example of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophy. On the contrary, the radical nationalist-ideological philosophy has mostly been articulated in Oginga

Odinga's Not Yet Uhuru. (London: Heinemann, 1967), the K.P.U. Manifesto, Press Conferences, Open Letters to President Moi and more recently, in the manifesto of the proposed but still-born National Democratic Party of the pro-democracy politicians, nationalists and thinkers from all walks of the national life.

Although the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers have been more felt because of their decisive political positions since independence, there is evidence that the national life, political and even philosophical trends have been influenced by the two schools of thinking. However, the liberal nationalist-ideological school has had more effect. . Perhaps it is important to note that initially, the radical nationalist-ideological philosophers were more emphatic on the leftist or materialist interpretation of history and sought to consolidate independence and development along socialism proper, while the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers opted for capitalism without much ado. However, recently, (1990), while the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers have remained committed capitalists, the radical nationalist-ideological philosophers have radically changed their position from leftist outlook to pluralist democracy and a democratically guided free-enterprise model of development.

After banning of K.P.U. and the detention of its entire leadership in 1969, the radical and the leftist nationalist philosophical outlooks were declared illegal and their advocates



seen as "anti-development" or even "personae non grata". Thus the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers emerged to be extremely powerful, almost unchallengeable. This period witnessed an increasing decline in philosophical nationalism with the undeterred emergence of more powerful economic and commercial classes which were less and less interested in philosophical approach to national development.

The liberal nationalist-ideological philosophy dominated the development scene without much challenge until the late seventies when a hotchpotch group of the leftist nationalist-ideological philosophers emerged. Mostly left-leaning intellectuals, workers and politicians, they were mostly found in the national university of Nairobi, the then Kenyatta College, Parliament and private sector. Among the left-leaning intellectuals who were well known were the exiled Ngugi Wa Thiong'o because of his prolific writing of the leftist novels, essays and plays and Maina Wa Kinyatti whose controversial works on Mau Mau had very much incensed the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers who apparently were quite uncomfortable with the political, philosophical and ideological undercurrents substantiated by both Ngugi and Maina's works. In parliament, there were pockets of radical legislators being seen as representing the resurgence of the philosophy that the liberals thought had been buried. Nevertheless, this category of Kenyans typically qualified as

authentic national philosophers in view of the fact that they had a very clear vision of man and society they thought would be more viable for an egalitarian development.

Among other things, they categorically opposed capitalism, neo-colonialism and a socialist path to development as a dialectical response to the excesses of neo-colonialism which they correctly argued had led to the stagnation of the national economy and the blatant violation of human rights and undemocratic practices. Unfortunately, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers would not vouch for their philosophical and ideological claims. Since that time, the leftist nationalist-ideological philosophers have been lumped together with the radical nationalist-ideological philosophers as "misguided", "unpatriotic" and "dissident". This suggests that since independence, the national philosophers have worked at cross-purposes as it has been visibly impossible for them to freely engage in philosophical discourses for the benefit of the nation irrespective of their ideological differences. Consequently, the disadvantaged national philosophers have been forced to engage in serious philosophical thoughts and practices with regard to national development either clandestinely or publicly or away from home at their own risk.

It is this reason their full impact has not been felt on the development issues. It is our view that it is quite harmful in the long-run to simply disregard something of philosophic value

because it is originated and advocated by your "enemy". In a nation like Kenya, it is a grave error to think that a healthy national development can be forged without the incorporation of dissenting philosophical views. offers quite questionable tendencies. For instance, while we may understand the hostility towards the radical and leftist national philosophers, one fails to vividly understand why the liberal professional philosophers found in the colleges, schools and universities have been passive and reluctant to come out as full-fledged national philosophers. Nothing could be further from the truth; their passivity seems to be the product of overself-censorship of their thoughts, the inevitable result of the unconducive climate for independent and free philosophizing on development issues. Apparently, the monopolistic tendencies of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers and the recent evolution of Nyayoism have confined most of the liberal professional philosophers to lecture theatres, seminar rooms and conferences which do not directly bear on the philosophical approaches to serious national issues.

But there is another technical difficulty that many people experience with the professional philosophers. This is the difficult language of philosophy. Although some of them have collectively or individually conducted and even authored some very impressive works, the undoing of these works is that the philosophical language is difficult and confined to English language alone. Moreover, some of the philosophers have not been

able to rise above the classical philosophical approaches to public issues. This has greatly blurred the noble intention of some honest professional philosophers. Although some of the professional philosophers have been trying to make some astute "intrusion" in order to make a stop to development excesses, their impact is still negligible. Nevertheless, since 1980, even the most conservative professional philosophers have begun to philosophize and publish their works as school texts. It appears that apart from the desire to supplement their meagre income, they seem to have realised that their counterparts, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers, have increasingly become more ideological than philosophical and might very easily lead to the development of the state apparatuses for ideological interests than national development proper. In fact, it is more likely that the intensity of social decay occasioned by illegitimate violence, social vices: tribalism, corruption, bribery, lies, dishonesty, greed, etc., might have reactivated and motivated the professional philosophers who were already sharing observable utter unease about the prospective future of philosophy in general and the national philosophy in particular.

Indeed, the preponderance of philosophical works in the 1980s and 1990s already underscores the reactivation of the positive functions of philosophy in development. Even radio programmes on ethical issues have been instituted. In society where there is little room for free and serious philosophizing on critical

national questions, one promising alternative would be to pluck courage and put the prescriptive and provocative ideas in writing. This way, a much bigger audience or readership may be reached. Perhaps what the professional philosophers need to do is to simplify their works without of course changing the philosophic content of substance. In addition, it is time they translated philosophical works into local languages which everyone may easily grasp. If the youth, institutions of learning, the politicians, the legislators, the bureaucrats and everyone were to be philosophically inspired and equipped for national philosophical participation, there is no doubting the fact that the subsequent philosophical approach to development would be typical and this would greatly help this society to purge itself of available social constraints.

While it is a fact that the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers have exerted some undue pressures on the rest of the national philosophers, perhaps it would be quite palatable to remember that the genuine national philosophers cannot shy away from the progressive philosophical ideas without contradicting their positions. For instance, it is wrong and unethical for genuine philosophers to see criticism as non-conformity; there can be no philosophy in general and the national philosophy in particular without the philosophers practically being involved in self-criticism as a philosophical way of enriching national development. As Professor J.G. Donders would say:

Every criticism of society is a criticism of its science, and every criticism of science is a criticism of the type of society it produced <sup>10</sup>

By espousing progressive ideas which include constructive criticism, there is no way the national philosophers can destabilise the political system. If the role of the national philosophers is to constantly but progressively enrich the vision of a humane society, then there is no way this can be achieved through being passive, suspicious, cynical or non-committal. All national philosophers worth their salt must adopt a scientific and philosophical outlook to national life. Without this, there is no way the national philosophers can come to terms with local, national, regional and international politics which has become an inseparable ingredient of the development of Mankind.

In developing countries, Kenya included, genuine national philosophers usually suffer untold injustices or deprivations at the hands of more powerful philosophers or even pseudo-national philosophers. Whatever the case maybe, in our view, it is a contradiction for genuine philosophers to identify with falsehood instead of truth and still maintain that they are genuine philosophers worth respecting! Like other developing countries, independent Kenya has not given adequate security and immunity to the national philosophers as really ought to have been the case. As a result, majority of the national philosophers other than the liberal nationalist - ideological philosophers are constantly feeling threatened and insecure. Most of them have been reluctant

to make their philosophical voices heard except when they are absolutely sure what they are advocating is necessarily consistent with the established official "truths". If this is accurate as we strongly believe it is, then it is reasonable to conclude that the ~~impactt~~ of the national philosophers in development is not only minimal but also poorly coordinated. Thus, the national philosophers have not contributed and are not contributing as adequately as they ought to toward a better understanding of development and this suggests a very poor philosophical approach to national development.

The previous sections have illustrated that since independence, there has been no free and mutual exchange of philosophical views, ideas and experience in a way that could really have enriched and humanised the national development process. Essentially, the domination of the national life by the liberal nationalist - ideological philosophers as policy - makers, legislators, and bureaucrats over the years has meant that development has been more ideologized than philosophized. In the process of ideologizing almost everything within their control, the liberal nationalist - ideological philosophers have conspicuously neutralised the performance of all the rest of the national philosophers including the professional national philosophers in the institutions of learning.

Another feature of the national philosophers is that while the

ideological differences , the in- built mutual distrust and misunderstanding may easily be resolved for utilitarian purposes. In consequence and as a matter of consideration, philosophy will cease to be the monopoly of just a few people in a nation. Knowledge belongs to a whole of mankind and should not be underutilised when it is available; it should be shared for the benefit of all. In this respect, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers would do this society a great service if they opened up and began to think and act more philosophically than ideologically. Similarly, the rest of the national philosophers should neither be passive nor complacent nor timid; they should act as genuine philosophers capable of rising above parochialism, illusions, sectionalism and abstract approach to philosophical issues. Neither should they expose their thoughts through the usually erudite and learned periodicals or journals beyond the reach of policy-makers, politicians and the masses. Like the clergymen, especially those among them who have grasped the need to philosophise with and not for the masses, they should come down to earth and help the people to really live philosophically inspired and instructed life. Without this, the national philosophers will continue to be misused , underutilised or simply wasted for several decades to come. As a matter of policy and urgency, all the national philosophers should cut a niche for themselves.

#### 4.3 National Philosophers and Social Development



It is our view that since independence, philosophy and the national philosophers have not made any impact on the social sphere of development despite some of the impressive achievements which might have been realised. For our illustration purposes, we have selected the cultural and educational spheres for consideration. It is our contention that these are the best indicators for social development.

Generally, not much philosophy has been used in matters of culture. Indeed, there seems to be a cultural stagnation in the sense that one cannot, strictly speaking, talk of the Kenyan national culture despite the twenty eight years of independence. According to Frantz Fanon, culture is :

...the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence...II

If we were to go by this definition, then the national culture would be a sum total of all the ways of national life which distinguish the nation as a nation. In this same definition, artistic activities like dancing, singing, drama folk songs would be the aspects of culture which, however, do not adequately describe the whole culture. In this sense, a mere rhetorical or nostalgic identification with some unspecified past or wishful thinking to return to the past only serves the injustice or being culturally unrealistic. It was probably in recognition of this

that Frantz Fanon asserted that:

Culture has never been the translucidity of customs; it abhors all simplification. In essence it is opposed to custom, for custom is always the deterioration of culture. The desire to attach oneself to tradition of bring abandoned traditions to life again does not only mean going against the current culture of history but also opposing one's own people<sup>12</sup>

It appears that the definition of culture is nebulous and prone to expedient use. However, Amilcar Cabral appears to have suggested a more articulate definition of culture when he said that:

Like history or because it is history, culture has as its material base the level of productive forces and the mode of production . Culture plunges its roots into the humus of material reality of the environment in which it develops, and it reflects the organic nature of the society, which may be more or less influenced by external factors.(...) Culture enables us to know what dynamic syntheses have been formed and set by social awareness in order to resolve these conflicts at each stage of evolution of that society, in the search for survival and progress<sup>13</sup>

Culture, then, is the product of several factors : values, beliefs, attitudes, emotions and historical experiences of a people . It has to be dynamic. Without the quality of dynamism, it cannot, whatever the claims may be, respond to the historical needs generated from within the social system or imparted or imposed from outside.

Since independence, the Government has not come up with a comprehensive cultural policy that would really see to the progressive development of a meaningful national culture. In our

view, the national culture should be the sum total of historical experiences, past and present; values like moral perspectives, intellectual capacities, beliefs and emotional attitudes which are transmitted from one generation to another within the national boundaries. In this sense one gets the impression that functionally, it is the whole body of the national culture that would provide the national framework for harmonising all the values of the diverse social groups in order to give meaning to the national development process which should be the ultimate object of every sane society.

Right from independence in 1963, the nascent liberal ideological philosophers began to romanticise the national culture and were unable to poignantly and meaningfully address themselves to the philosophical roots of culture and the need to develop the national culture on the basis of rationality. Unfortunately, the ideological tendencies prevailed even in the cultural sphere thereby depriving the formation and development of the national culture on any serious and relevant philosophical foundations. Since that time, what would really constitute the national culture has not been associated with philosophy in any way.

It is a fact that despite our independence, strictly speaking, there is no cultural framework that would essentially act as the real carrier of the moral, aesthetic, ethical and even philosophical values that national development essentially needs.

What is most observable is that the cultural practices have been vulnerable to domestic ideological and class biases and external economic forces . In a society where the economy is predominantly foreign- controlled , directly or indirectly, even its culture must be foreign controlled, directly or indirectly. Unequal economic relationship leads to cultural dependence and alienation which are a negation of development of the national culture. Like oppression , unequal economic relationship is one of the greatest scourges in cultural reconstruction and development. It divests and pollutes the best energies of men struggling to create their national culture.

A focus on language, drama, music and the teaching of literature in schools, colleges and even universities indicates very little regard for philosophy. While progressive plays critical of anti-social excesses like corruption, abuse of power, authoritarianism are usually censored and are never staged at the so-called National Theatre, plays which overpraise the regime abound. The situation is more grotesque in the sphere of language where foreign languages: English, German and French are given more attention than the local languages which essentially carry the national values. In this respect, however, one readily shares what Ngugi wa Thiong'o claimed when he said:

There is a total neglect of the languages of the nationalities which make Kenya. (...) This tendency has the adverse effect of excluding the majority of Kenyans from effectively participating in literature<sup>14</sup>

This situation has now been compounded by the arrival of a new morality, the technological morality, a one-dimensional-culture which is geared only to technological innovations rather than sound moral principles and values. This morality is not only a threat to the national culture but it also affects the philosophical outlook to life. This can today be seen among the youth and even some adults who are increasingly being misled to erroneously think that what is technologically attractive is also morally and philosophically permissible. They see the latest electronic devices as the most valuable things that should be pursued in addition to money. This suggests utter lack of philosophy in the new cultural outlook. Professor Odera Oruka correctly underscored the utter lack of philosophy in the Kenyan cultural practices when he said:

In Kenya today it is becoming more and more acceptable that to be good or beautiful is to be with technological fashion. A beautiful girl is not she who relies only on her natural build; she is one who decorates her innocent body with trappings of cosmetics. And the handsome man is he who has money and owns what the latest technology has to show. To him certain women are attracted as flies are attracted to a rotten body<sup>15</sup>

The technological morality is pulling the Kenyan society towards a one-dimensional approach to life where philosophy seems to be of little relevance.

Although the politicians never tire of frequently calling for the preservation of the national culture, to most of them, the

national culture is more than epic songs, folk songs, inter-tribal dances and funeral dirges. No attempts have even been made to provide the philosophical justification for the traditions which they deceptively treat as the national culture. For instance, in the conduct of professional musicians who now think and act as if there was only one use of music, namely, political use. Most of the musicians tend to think that music can only be used to overpraise political leaders and popularise the "virtuousness" of the regime. In a commentary I wrote to the "Daily Nation" newspaper captioned "Music Must Have Truthful Message," I made the following observations:

In my view, the professional musicians in Kenya have long ceased to be as creative as one would really expect them to be. The reason is the obsession with the political use of music which they also abuse for material greed and favour<sup>16</sup>

When the role of music is narrowed to the needs of the incumbent politicians alone, creativity is misused and the very essence of music is utterly depreciated. While music can be an effective tool for political socialisation, patriotism, nationalism and change as such, when it is not philosophically guided, it stands the risk of serving sectional interests rather than the whole nation. Many more examples could be cited, however, the point we want to emphasise is that the attempts in the cultural sphere to make heroes out of nothing by a distortion of culture is an insult to the conscience and historical prescience of the whole nation. This is the height of aphilosophy.

The cultural practices have rapidly retreated from the realms of social realities to the realms of cheap and hackneyed lies and dismal performances which are inimical to the construction and development of the national culture. The ideologically determined culture has inexorably dissociated the social realities from the concrete historical experiences of the nation and cannot be relied upon to guarantee guidelines which may convincingly elucidate the dynamics of the real national culture.

Philosophy is absolutely vital for the construction and development of an authentic national culture. If it is disregarded, then the culture that will emerge will be a culture of subservience repression or deception and lies. Such a culture would neither have the legitimacy nor the historical justification for its existence at all. The national culture should neither be casually treated nor divorced from reality. Moreso, in a neo-colonial situation, it should offer the opportunity for becoming fuller human beings who are unwilling to condone dehumanising and indignifying life. It must also be incompatible with stereotypes and complexes which breed uncertainty, insecurity, inferiority and a sense of fear and doubt. In other words, it must help its practitioners steer off the possibilities of being trapped in a vicious circle of alienation where their notions of reality is turned upside down. In this sense, it is more than true that reason is absolutely necessary for the recognition of the positive and negative

cultural values.

It is, therefore, absolutely appropriate for the nation to discard looking at culture as a piece of museum artifact which can be thrown away as conveniences dictate. Since independence, the cultural policy in Kenya does not seem to have been influenced by an appeal to reason at all. Indeed, philosophy has generally been disregarded in the cultural sphere that is why culture has been merely reduced to drama, dancing and singing. Unless cultural creativity and performance is philosophically guided, no triumphant birth of a real national culture can be envisaged in the foreseeable future.

Close to the problem of culture is education. Without a national culture, even education becomes enfeebled. Since independence, Kenyans have invariably looked upon education as the most effective means for actively participating in productive life; raising both the skills and spirit of the people and progressively improving the quality of individual and national life. Generally, the national philosophy of education has been relatively progressive relating to the needs of real life.

However, since the introduction of the 8-4-4 System of Education in 1985, for the "Jua Kali" Sector,<sup>17</sup> there is an increasing disillusionment about education casting doubts about its philosophic content. This is basically due to the methods of its implementation; they are a little less humanistic. We agree with



G.M. Ishumi when he argues that sound education should entail:

promotion of moral and emotional security in the individual through the promises of an integrated and secure physical and emotional atmosphere; strengthening the social, cultural and moral base of the individual, all individuals, in the context of the society and culture in which they belong; encouraging and heightening a sense of belonging and togetherness, a spirit that moves man from a position of privation and estrangement to secure position in which he views himself in terms of others and others in terms of him; engendering, encouraging and fostering a sense of wholeness among members of the community, which will enable them to see themselves as persons and not objects of manipulation and exploitation<sup>18</sup>

Although justification has been given by the powers-that-be for the introduction of the 8:4:4 System of Education, namely, the need for self-employment, the approach was not based on a sound philosophical rationale.

In retrospect, the 8:4:4 system of education was launched without the philosophical endorsement by the professional educationists leave alone the approval of the whole society that would be required to implement it. This was carried out by the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers who apparently sought to introduce a system of education that would, among other things, help effectively to disincline the bulk of students from active political participation.

It was not debated, discussed sufficiently, criticised or evaluated by the professional educationists on the basis of

reality and the capacity of the nation to shoulder it. In short, serious philosophical considerations were disregarded. We opted to change an education system the same way we normally change our clothes little remembering that the transformation of an education system implies the transformation of the whole society and that without a conscious application of reason to educational changes, the whole architecture, principles, ethics, policies and object of education simply become vindictive.

As it stands today, the 8:4:4 seems to be preparing the youth for a highly trivialised and marginalised life of mediocrity. Given the lack of proper facilities: laboratories, workshops and equipment in majority of the national institutions, no equal, coherent and beneficial education can really be disseminated. This lack of relevant facilities and unequal distribution of the available ones is a pointer to the undeniable fact that this society is generally unprepared for shouldering an education that appears bent on producing typically unschooled artisans and philosophically deformed youth.

The declining standards in national education are reasons enough to conclude that the philosophical dimension of education is agape. This has recently been recognised even by the international community. It is on record that since the introduction of the 8:4:4 system of education in 1985, some foreign universities have been reluctant to recognise it on the

grounds being philosophically deficient, substandard and poorly equipped to prepare its recipients for serious intellectual pursuits.

Inadequate philosophical approach to education can also be seen in the unphilosophical attitudes towards the teachers, the motor for educational undertakings. As opposed to colonial days, the most threatened, abused and neglected workers are the primary and secondary school teachers. Their terms and conditions of service aside, many teachers are increasingly being forced to abandon the would be but now abused noble profession due to unequal distribution of physical facilities in schools yet they are expected to prepare their students for the same national examinations. Instead of working under demoralising and frustrating conditions favourable for blatant violation of ethics of sound education, most of the teachers whose conscience are still intact prefer to use the profession only as a stepping stone to other areas where appeal to philosophy is possible.

The 8:4:4 system greatly affects creativity. The curriculum is so crowded that teachers are so easily worn out and can hardly engage in productive work without the deterioration of their physical health. Least of all, educational researches. This poor disposition is reinforced by the infinite desire for material wealth. In a society where the social worth of human beings is measured in terms of material possession, property, money and how

crafty one is, respect for intellect which may not immediately be converted into material possession is virtually non-existent. Since teachers are aware that intellect and creativity are utterly trivialised, they discreetly steer off the path of ethically approved undertakings and professional discipline in favour of what will yield material gains to augment their meagre resources. In the circumstance, appeal to reason is more of a burden than a relief to teachers. This generally affects the whole process of education as the abuse of reason must reproduce itself.

#### 4.4 National Philosophers and Moral Development

Morality refers to what is good or bad. Moral development is primarily concerned with the cultivation of moral values (things that are morally good) like truth, love, justice, equality, honesty, kindness, etc., and the elimination of vices like lies, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, greed, etc. But in the process, there should be no confusion between the moral values and the non-moral values (wealth, property, etc.) which are of course functionally good for human life. Under normal circumstances, however, they should not be aspired for or sought at the expense of the moral values. Where the pursuit of the non-moral values becomes supreme, the cardinal moral values and ideals will be suppressed and the result cannot be moral development but moral indifference manifested by blatant violation of human, democratic

and constitutional rights, coupled with a complex of anti-social practices.

In every society, philosophers are needed to assist in the understanding of moral values, moral principles and how they relate or should relate to the non-moral values in the common object of ensuring the well-being of man. Although every society has the right and the duty to be moral, there is always the need for constant reminders who will facilitate the exercising of the moral fairness, moral principles and the use of reason as the basis of moral conduct. In this sense, a society that is morally developing must demonstrate the willingness and the principled will to do the morally right things despite the obstacles. Apart from being aware that all members are in the final analysis, equal before the law, society must show respect for the individual autonomy and liberty in the knowledge that if their humanity is justified and dignified, its own dignity will equally be enhanced. It, therefore, needs no emphasis to state that if a society is morally developing in the right direction, its members will unambiguously love truth, reason and justice and will consistently struggle to keep clear conscience always.

Since independence, moral decay has been noticeable. Even the Government has officially admitted and confirmed its awareness of the moral decay. Firstly, it has admitted that there is corruption and other malpractices of no less magnitude (note the

resolutions of the Leaders' Conference at the Kenya Institute of Administration, Kabete, in January, 1978 and July, 1980 respectively). Moreover, today, the malpractices have become more prevalent even in the Government departments. For instance, it is an open secret that many parastatals are either being run by commissions or are being probed or are facing dissolution as a result of mismanagement and malpractices. Secondly, such selfish and obnoxious acts as smuggling of essential commodities and the hoarding of essential commodities for super profits are instances of greed, graft and moral decay.

No one can deny that since independence, individualism, personal greed, dishonesty, official dishonesty, sexual promiscuity, exploitation and the illegitimate use of illegitimate violence have become the commonest features of the Kenyan nation.

Motivated by personal aggrandisement, power and prestige, most of the "have-gots" have no respect for the moral values. On the contrary, demoralised by the intensity of material deprivations as a result of poverty, most of the "have-nots" also do not care much about moral values. This is best exemplified in the ever increasing hostility to truth, justice, freedom, equality and democracy at all levels of society. While most of the "have-nots" think they are lesser human beings or the curse of nature, the "have-gots" think they are fuller and better human beings because they are properly fed! Philosophers have apparently done very little in the moral and ethical development of Kenya due to the

fact that like the rest of society, they are equally the perpetrators of unethical practices. They have increasingly been accused of corruption, nepotism, tribalism, dishonesty and abuse of human and democratic rights of fellow citizens. This suggests little or haphazard appeal to reason or good morals in national life. This claim can further be underscored by the fact that since 1963, the members of this society whose consciences have insisted on pointing out the cancerous vices have increasingly become the targets of official scorn, police harassment, economic frustration and political isolation. This is the best explanatory variable between the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers and the radical and leftist nationalist-ideological ones. It also explains the phenomenon of antagonism between the state and specific clergymen like the late Bishop Alexander Muge, Bishop Henry Okullu, Bishop David Gitari, Archbishop Manasses Kuria and Rev. Timothy Njoya. Further, a study of the Pastoral Letters released by the Catholic bishops in the 1980s might help to substantiate the steady moral decay and lack of respect for human and democratic rights. The harassment and abuses to which some of the clergymen have been subjected for raising their voices against graft, greed and calling for transformation of the nation for the well-being of all attest to very little use of moral principles in the national life in the sense that in majority of cases, the powers-that-be have admitted that vices do exist but would not wish to see this pointed out by other philosophically minded voices!

The state has remained intransigent on immorality with some ministers even suggesting that vices like corruption cannot be stamped out. In fact, the abuse of reason attests to the adequate use of appropriate philosophy in the development process. If this society genuinely relied on strict reason and truth as the principles for national conduct, definitely, it would be less affected by the anti-social practices which today are seen as normal rather than abnormal practices which should be exterminated once and for all. It would practically show more respect for the human dignity than private property, unreason, falsehood or brute force which are a negation of fair and even national development.

#### **4.5 National Philosophers and Political Development**

Every society that boasts of political development should consider the capacity to guarantee human and democratic rights. Political development should not be seen as state of equilibrium as this simply contradicts even the nature of man which is supposed to be in a state of flux. Essentially, political development should be seen as the qualitative concern to create a just political system. In this respect, all political principles should be translated into practice with the approval of the whole society through a consensus of opinion or a public referendum guided by the nationally approved philosophers capable of rising above trivialities and unbetrayed by ideological interests. Thus,



in political development, the national philosophers have a great task. In the legal sphere for instance, they have the task of interpreting to the nation such things as the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, the relationship between the state and the individual and the functions of all freedoms in the process of development. In brief, the national philosophers should have the task of ensuring that the nation adopts a rational approach to politics. This should be done in the recognition of the fact that there can be no political development if the citizens are not even aware of their rights.

Since independence, there are many instances which suggest little appeal to philosophy in the domain of politics. While the courts have increasingly been accused of not respecting the rule of law and the Independence of the judiciary (working of the courts without undue pressures from any quarters), the police have been accused of arbitrary arrests, illegal detention in police custody, police torture and trumped-up charges without any legal or moral justification. As a matter of fact, the politics of rights has been apparently incompatible with the post-independence politics. Almost everyday, there have been revelations in the newspapers suggesting little respect for the rule of law and political justice. In fact, many people today think that the courts are meant for protecting the interests of the incumbent powerful politicians to harass their opponents. Perhaps they are right. For instance, after the 1982 coup

attempt, it was the courts which were systematically used to "silence" the "dissidents" mostly in the interests of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers working in collaboration with the pro-establishment bureaucrats.

Even the 1982 constitutional amendment which made Kenya into a "de jure" one-party system amidst protests illustrates this claim. Moreover, the subsequent removal of the powers of the Attorney-General, the Controller and Auditor-General and the tenure of judges are illustrative of the claim. These examples argue strongly for the fact that ideological considerations have precluded free participation of other national philosophers in national politics and by extension in national development. Indeed, the politics which revolve around personalities rather than issues has developed the danger of personality cult which has significantly undermined philosophical approach to politics.

#### **4.6 National Philosophers and Economic Development**

The economic destiny of this country has been mainly shaped by the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers who right from independence opted for capitalist mode of development. Since that time, independent Kenya has simply been locked, like other neo-colonies elsewhere in Africa, into a subordinate role where it has been almost impossible to develop a typically independent national Kenyan economy. Instead, corporate capitalism has

flourished while the whole country has inseparably become the subject of manipulation of the international economic forces which include the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the transnational corporations usually more powerful than the national economy. The mechanisms of these bodies are so powerful and so complicated that a fragile dependent economy like the Kenyan one can only helplessly service them in the name of "partners in development." The African independence proves beyond any reasonable doubts that most of the economic policies are never originated in Africa but in London, Bonn, Brussels, Washington, Paris and Tokyo. This has made it very difficult for African countries to philosophically tackle their economic problems because they have to compromise local interests in favour of the donors.

For instance, in independent Kenya, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers and pro-establishment politicians and bureaucrats have been so pragmatic that hitherto, they have implemented the usually bitter pills prescribed by the International Monetary Fund almost fanatically. While the benefits of this cannot be dismissed as such, a vicious circle of economic dependency has been created and maintained up to the point of institutionalising inequalities. The main concern of the politicians in particular and the whole nation at large has been to create conditions necessary for the well-being of foreign investments as a matter of priority and the citizens second in

the hierarchy of priorities. Since independence, the state has been so much against ideas and tendencies which might be in disfavour of or frighten away foreign investors. The scorched-earth policy used to destroy Muoroto and Kibagare<sup>19</sup> villages in Nairobi in 1990 should be understood along this reasoning.

#### 4.7 Women As Ineffective National Philosophers

The most unheard of are the Kenyan female philosophers. We strongly believe that since philosophy is human, there are as many women philosophers as there are their male counterparts. Probably the only difference is that men have hitherto been favoured to articulate their philosophical knowledge than women. Essentially, the involvement of a greater number of men in national politics has greatly sharpened men's philosophical outlooks and practices. In fact, the socio-economic and political environment has been more favourable to men than women since independence.

While men have directly identified with or attempted to tackle public philosophical issues like independence, freedom, justice, socialism, democracy and equality, to mention only a few, most women have quietly identified with private philosophical issues to the degree that one could be tempted to claim that in Kenya, women generally prefer to philosophise in the background.

Nevertheless, history illustrates that although men have comparatively been involved in discussing a considerable number of philosophical questions, they have literally been the stumbling block to the free philosophical participation of majority of women through the bizarre conduct of the vicious male-chauvinism. In addition to this, however, the bulk of the Kenyan women has been the subject of some other four fundamental problems of historical and structural nature with respect to philosophical participation in development.

Firstly, like men, they have been the unfortunate victims of the poor perception of philosophy bequeathed to Kenya by colonialism. Under colonialism, all the colonised were expected to be philosophically dependent on the colonial philosophies irrespective of their distortion of reality. In the process, however, philosophy was neither treated as human nor an intellectual process but a means of justifying and inculcating the colonial ideology in the colonised. As a result, it became quite difficult for the uncritical to really distinguish between philosophy and ideology.

Secondly, in the post-colonial era, there has been more orchestrated official overemphasis on ideology than on philosophy up to the point of erroneously using philosophy and ideology as if they were synonymous. This has confused and created many problems for philosophical conduct and participation for

everyone.

Thirdly, due to prominence being given to matters of ideology, logically, ideological reflections have not only been confused with serious philosophical reflections but have also been falsely seen as superior to philosophical stances and values in the whole corpus of national life.

Fourthly, the confusion between philosophy and ideology has led to philosophy being publicly dominated by the politicians who rightly or wrongly see themselves as the real national philosophers. However, since the number of women politicians is negligible, they have simply been disregarded by their counterparts, the male philosophers.

Philosophically, the situation of women in general and the rural ones in particular is uneviable. In the rural areas, women are vulnerable to ignorance, illiteracy, superstitions and unphilosophical conduct of the ruthless husbands and arrogant and intransigent public administrators. Apart from children, the rural women are the most oppressed and exploited sector of the Kenyan society. They are exploited as mothers, wives, peasants and workers. Silenced by the combination of haphazard political knowledge, ignorance of their constitutional, democratic and human rights, sexist discrimination and philosophical unawareness

in a male-dominated and directed nation, women are only casually treated. They are called into active politics during "harambee" fund-raisings and electioneering but are sooner relegated to the insignificant political limbo pending further abuse of their rights.

Consequently, most women are ill-equipped to actively participate in the development process leave alone appealing to philosophy in matters of development. No one doubts that in the rural areas, most women are misinformed, uninformed or disinformed. More often than not, they are forced to succumb to one injustice after another by the masculine machinations without ever philosophically standing up to assert their rights as citizens and human beings. As a result, most women are simply misused. The magnitude of their ignorance, low levels of political, educational and philosophical awareness usually render most of them helpless, dependent, unenthusiastic and very conservative and hostile to progressive ideas. Although some are already awakening, majority are still mesmerised and overwhelmed by the fear that their difficulties arise from inherent natural human failures and inadequacies rather than artificial creation of the male-dominated society.

During the struggle for independence, women played quite an impressive and heroic role side by side with men. However, in the aftermath of independence, they were quickly side-lined when

nationalism declined and the ugly head of male-chauvinism began to show its horrors in politics being associated with property. Being relatively poorer than men, majority of the women were systematically removed to the periphery of national politics, national development and national philosophical tasks. These deprivations can still be felt in the conspicuous reluctance of women, even the enlightened ones, to fully identify with fundamental issues impinge on justice, democracy, human rights, L which truth and equality. Indeed, majority of women still suffer many injustices which cannot allow them to fully participate in national development as actively as possible. This suggests lop-sided development.

Where development is lop-sided, even the use of reason and truth is questionable. Only the value of reason can lead to just development. Women should neither fear philosophy nor be hostile to it nor consider philosophical discourses on national questions the monopoly of the esoteric few. If philosophy simply became reductionist, technocratic or even sexist, there would be no way of avoiding the growth of a sick society which is a negation of development. Such a society would not only bar the road to imagination and creativity but might also create devastating injustices, inhumanities and bestialities.

Therefore unless women are philosophically reactivated and politically educated to accept and practice free philosophical



approach to life, there is no way their efforts in development will meaningfully benefit them. This will no doubt succeed if and only if philosophical practice of the nation is politically, economically and morally supported. If women are philosophically inspired through a meaningful political education and philosophical practice, the entire quality of participation in the national development process will impressively improve as they will hence recognise the value and necessity of reason in development. This will be for the good of everyone given that women are the majority in our country.

#### **4.8 The Youth As Forgotten National Philosophers**

Hitherto, our history indicates that the role of the youth in the development process has increasingly been abused if not disregarded. The society in general and the less philosophical politicians in particular have been more instrumental in encouraging this through some organised political and philosophical missocialisation. Although there are claims that the youth are being prepared for future leadership, there are pieces of evidence which show that they are usually prone to numerous abuses. For instance, whenever, there is something to be experimented, our history shows that the youth are usually the guinea pig in this connection. However, this seems to be more frequent in the field of education. For instance, since 1965, the

education curriculum has been the subject of abrupt changes about four times. In 1965, the Ominde Commission recommended the "Integrated Approach to Primary Education" within the rubric of the old colonial system inherited from the just ended colonialism. In 1968, the Metric System inspired by the Canadians, who were apparently carrying out an experiment, was imposed on the youth. Later in the late seventies, apparently when the experiment was over, the system was abruptly dropped to give way to the old system. Come 1985, an entirely new system, the grandiose and ambitious 8:4:4 was introduced despite the nation's unpreparedness for it. Since that time, the novel system has haphazardly been implemented amidst protests against lack of facilities, inequalities, overworking both the students and teachers alike, overcrowded curriculum and overtaxing the parents but in vain. In the process, many young Kenyans have lost interest in education seeing it as a punitive rather than a development enterprise. In fact, one of the tragic results of experimenting with the youth is that today, this society has produced a species of youth who are most inclined to defeat and destruction. Many of the Kenyans are increasingly becoming interested in anti-social acts apparently generated by the gap between theory and practice in the national philosophy.

In the institutions of learning, there have been mounting episodes of what one would term "militarisation" of the educational process. It is now common knowledge that while the

liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers are constantly "advising" the youth especially the students among them to keep off politics and concentrate on their studies irrespective of whether their fundamental rights are being violated, many educational administrators prefer to use force in sorting out their differences with students instead of reason or dialogue.

The frequent presence of security in whatever form in the institutions of learning cannot be a positive element in the socialisation of students into useful citizens, it makes them much more security-minded than intellectual-minded. Herein lies part of the ready appeal to emotions whenever they think they have been wronged. Although adolescence cannot be dismissed too, the general belief among many Kenyan students is that violence is far much superior in dealing with the respective administrations. Incidentally, this position has been reinforced by the Government which seems to have institutionalised the use of violence as a tool for conflict resolution. When one student at Egerton was interviewed about the use of violence by students in 1990, he said:

...there is no way you can withstand the psychological violence waged by the university dons. We are usually aware of the fact that we are dealing with equally violent, undemocratic, intransigent and undialogical authorities. Apart from being authoritarian, they are squarely omnipotent, wealthy and ready to be heard than us.<sup>20</sup>

What seems to be presumed is that when the youth are denied their rightful place in the process of the national development, they

will still evolve into some more accomplished citizens; they won't. Such deprivations slowly but surely render them hollow without confidence, purpose and the courage to face the realities of life as they unfold. As a matter of inevitability, the poorly socialised students in particular and the youth in general must lack a sense of national responsibilities, national purpose and the readiness to philosophically grapple with the development challenges.

Over the years, the youth have been taken for granted to an extent that most of them have been forced to design some aggressive, sly and irresponsible dispositions in responding to the challenge of life. It is absolutely necessary for the whole society to understand and appreciate the need to recognise and help utilise the untapped resources of the youth without unphilosophically allowing them to burst into futile acts of hooligans or various counterproductive activities. It is the duty of the society to ensure that the rights of the youth are genuinely and progressively considered in order to have them adequately philosophically formed.

Further, violence against the youth abound in prisons. Any visit to any prison will reveal that most of the prisoners in Kenya are basically the youth. According to official intention, these institution are supposed to help reform and rehabilitate the offenders in the best interests of the whole society and the

individuals affected. Incidentally, the prison system has been using methods which are not only inimical to the intended objects but also very much devoid of rationality. Essentially, the magnitude of torture imposed on the offenders can hardly be really part of the intended rehabilitation. The psychological and physical torture meted out usually demoralise the prison victims beyond human worth. Indeed, the unjust convict labour, the psychic rupture and the psychological impact predicated on unphilosophical attitudes towards prisoners have, in majority of cases, failed to guarantee the well-being of prison "graduates" when they resume normal life. Usually, with a few exceptions, the prisons instil complexes which completely remove the unsuspecting ex-prisoners from the socio-economic market of sane men and as such cannot fully participate in the development process.

Prisons rely on brute force rather than reason. In fact, philosophical approach to the theory and practice of punishment in independent Kenya still leaves a lot to be desired. In their present conditions, both the illiterate or semi-literate warders cannot be expected to be instruments of rehabilitation when they are ironically in dire need of criminality, they must use brute force since they do not understand that prisoners need cure rather than force. Thus, instead of positively rehabilitating, the prisons are typical punitive institutions better equipped to destroy than to genuinely rehabilitate.

Many times, innocent and inexperienced youth who find their way to the prisons come out more accomplished criminals. There is no doubting the fact that many criminal activities and criminal tendencies would be avoided if the prisons were to be strictly used as rehabilitation centres rather than sanctuaries where thousands of youth are knowingly ground into hopelessness or hardened to become professional criminals. Hitherto, the magnitude of violence waged by the prison staff has been responsible for the demoralisation and instilling of a sense of permanent protest against the civil society. This essentially raises fundamental question about the philosophy underlying the theory and practice of punishment.

In terms of the philosophical foundation, the theory and practice of punishment in Kenya is primarily influenced by John Locke's politico-philosophical thesis that the chief aim and end of all laws and governments is the preservation of private property and not the sanctity of human life and dignity. Essentially, the Lockean thesis that government or a supreme ruler can justifiably take away life of a subject without his consent but not his property was embraced by independent Kenya and has hitherto been treated as the prison bible. In the Kenyan prisons in their present setting, human life is basically subordinated to property; respect for human life is not a prison priority. It seems to be a priori policy in all the prisons that the aim of punishing is to kill not to save life. This is dilemma of youth

in the prisons.

#### 4.9 The Intelligentsia As Shy National Philosophers

The unabridged edition of Webster's Third International Dictionary gives a definition of intelligentsia which appears adequate for our quest. It defines it as:

...a class of well educated, articulate persons, constituting a distinct, recognised and conscious social stratum within a nation, and claiming or assuming for itself the guiding role of an intellectual, social or political vanguard; a class of persons devoted to matters of the mind, especially to the arts and letters; a class of given study, reflection and speculation especially concerning large, profound or abstract issues; a class of persons engaged inactivity requiring pre-eminently the use of the intellect; a class of persons engaged in mental as distinguished from manual labour... <sup>21</sup>

By this definition, the university professors, lecturers, researchers, the teachers, lawyers, engineers, doctors, professional clergymen, bureaucrats, scholars and reasonably educated nationals would qualify to be members of the intelligentsia. However, it should be noted that in terms of class stratification, the intellectuals may belong to quite different classes due to definite positions that they occupy in the relations of economic production. Since independence, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers have ideologically affected the intellectual metamorphosis of this society in some very visible ways. The ideological tendencies have induced a very strange code of conduct among the intelligentsia. This can be

seen in the fear and double standards and the desire to be identified with the "winning" political side even if this means sacrificing one's conscience, intellectual honesty and truth.

Generally, the intelligentsia can be divided into four categories. Firstly, there are the conservative lot that faithfully supports the socio-economic and political establishment as it is irrespective of the implications of its policies. In turn, the state rewards them by bestowing various favours on them. The second group are the intellectuals who are basically liberal. Although they support the state, they only support its progressive policies and moral conduct. Their most welcome attribute is that they support progressive change, democratic ideals and the respect for moral values and human rights. The state is ever suspicious of their intent. The third category are intellectuals who are basically cynical; they are the ones who feel frustrated, demoralised and disoriented as a result of the impact of the restrictions and pressures meted out to them by the social system, coupled with their own sense of irresponsibility and fear of both freedom and asserting their rights. Most of them are victims of anti-social practices like drug-abuse, alcoholism, etc. However, they do not matter much in the eyes of the state. The last category is the group of the radical left-leaning intellectuals who do not really see eye to eye with the state because of their categorical stance on the call for the radical democratisation of all aspects of national



development.

In the recent past, the state has embarked on a policy of incorporating the loyal intellectuals as its allies. While this has set the stage for stiff competition among conservative and liberal intellectuals seeking to win state favour, the radical intelligentsia have increasingly been seen as a thorn in the neck of the state. This kind of atmosphere has engendered fear, suspicion and rivalry bordering on witch-hunting which have greatly undermined the appeal to reason. In fact, between 1975 and 1990, a lot of intellectual resources have been wasted in ideological struggles although the gap now seems to be narrowing with the leftists and the liberalists having found a common ground in the agitation for popular democracy.

However, most intellectuals still feel that the climate is yet to be made suitable for free intellectual growth and development. Some of them privately claim that they are living in bonded bliss where the phobia of fear has taken its undiminishing toll on intellectual honesty and love of truth and reason. Face to face with the lethal consequences of identifying with popular truth, progressive ideas and reason, many of the intellectuals find it quite difficult to be intellectually responsible, accountable and effective in the development process. Aware of the Government stance on progressive ideas, the intellectuals who do not want to "incur the wrath" of the state have simply become

ally, conscienceless and dishonest as safer strategies. In the process, intellectual and moral obligation to acquire, disseminate and protect the truth is merely seen as a secondary or incidental practice. Most of the intelligentsia believe that since the individual is prior to the nation, individual rather than national development is more important. Therefore, they argue, there is no justification whatsoever for intellectual honesty which does not seem to facilitate material acquisition at all.

Since the late seventies, however, overself-censorship has caused intellectual decay, regression and dishonesty which naturally undermine overall development performance. For instance, the last decade has increasingly witnessed the militarisation of the educational process by the state in its efforts to monitor which ideas are in favour of the stability of the socio-economic and political establishment. The general feeling among the intelligentsia is that most of the public places especially institutions of learning are strategically dotted with secret police agents some of whom could be the very intelligentsia running the institutions. As a result of this, many of the intelligentsia found in such institutions have become more security-minded than intellectual or development-minded. Whether true or not, the fear of secret police agents in most of the institutions has had devastating academic atmosphere in the whole country.

In schools, colleges and universities, many teachers, tutors and lecturers spend a lot of time scheming how best to escape security traps for progressive thinking inconsistent with the state. This calls for overself-censorship of their thoughts in order to avoid being blacklisted. Today, most intellectuals do not trust one another. In a casual talk with a Maseno University College Professor over the new role of the national philosophers and the intelligentsia today, he simply shrugged:

These days, those of us who used to be extroverts have become reluctant introverts. We are the curse of history. Reason is beautiful but at the moment, it is a lethal poison that may kill. Truth is unnecessary. Fear is the new master. Most of us masquerade as thinkers but committed security operatives.<sup>22</sup> L are

This was a very honest observation of the intellectual climate as it really is. There is no doubt that the hysterical fear of the secret police is stifling the real flourishing of reason and truth. If we were to go by the above claim, then one would strongly argue that free intellectual association and discourses have been estranged with the national intellectual industry degenerating as the matters of security weigh the intellectuals down.

#### 4.10 The National Philosophers and The New Political Thinking

In the light of the economic, political and philosophical re-organisation of the world, it is our strong view that the national philosophers should not take refuge in hypocritical and contradictory stances laced with philosophy of neutrality. They must equally engage in arduous search for the meeting point with the new political thinking aimed at removing the violation of human rights as an obstacle to the flowering of humanity. This is a history's gift for the Third World (poor, dependent or neo-colonial) countries where the violations of human rights and socio-economic deprivations abound and continue unabated. Most of these countries have been the subject of repression, economic exploitation and uncultured political practices which have induced a sense of paralysing fear, insecurity and uncertainty which have never allowed their peoples to fulfil their most basic philosophical desires as human beings.

Over the years, most of the repressive Third World countries and their leaders have little been interested in philosophy as the basis of just human development. In most cases, their leaders and the privileged classes or tribes or elites as the case may be, have seen even ignorance and passivity of the rest of their respective societies as things to be exploited in favour of their own self-gratification purposes. This inhuman conduct has meant that human rights must be flagrantly violated to an extent that some Third World countries have simply been reduced to prisons or concentration camps usually camouflaged as democracies.

In many countries, the founder nationalists set their nations on perilous philosophical courses where violations of human rights have hitherto been seen as attractions rather than horrors of "democracy," "socialism" and "development." As a result, stagnation followed as nationalism, patriotism and genuine philosophical practices were muzzled in order to promote vices most suitable for the unthinking and culturally uncouth. Since that time, pages of history graphically show that most citizens of these countries have, despite independence, remained indifferent to serious and relevant philosophical approaches to national development. In most cases, the political leaders have unduly forced some of the intelligentsia to behave in a way that suggests that despite their awareness of the import of philosophy, they are virtually divorced from the people and completely alienated from the realities of the nation. In philosophical terms, they are oblivious of the real national necessities.

It is in this light that we should understand the absolute necessity for the reactivation of the philosophy of human rights which will make an appeal to reason in development a compulsion. Like many African states, the Kenyan nation must adopt an active participation in the global agitation for political and philosophical changes by positively responding to the important import of reason in development. The new political thinking is already evident enough in Kenya; the national philosophers, who

appear to be at crossroads or in a dilemma, will find it impossible to seek a way out through philosophical gimmicks, illusion or speculation without inviting more complicated problems for the national philosophy.

As a developing country, Kenya cannot close herself to the realities of the contiguous world. Thus, the most intelligent option for the national philosophers who think that rationality should be given priority in matters of development should unambiguously appreciate and understand without ever romanticising the move towards the philosophy of human rights and democracy. As we move to the next century, humanity must purge itself of the complex of all unbecoming practices which may unjustly continue to denigrate life. It is an incontestable reality that this society is undergoing a "Perestroika" test. This "Perestroika," however, seems to be having as many advocates and supporters as it has adversaries and detractors. What will it come to? Our thesis is that the national philosophers worth their salt must show the way by pointing towards the most rational choice irrespective of ideological differences and the usual material gains. If history does not immediately reward them, they should neither curse nor complain but should be content with the moral satisfaction therein. This position should critically be understood and appreciated for truth, justice and humanity. It is a formidable task no easier than winning political independence from colonialism and establishing a democratic national

Independence that respects truth and reason.

The national philosophers should promote progressive philosophical conduct far removed from falsifying reality and fostering fantasies and what is only close to utopian schemes. National philosophers who accept no challenges, national, international, can hardly be of use to the ever changing dialectics of development. To transform society for just development, everyone needs a correct philosophical insight with which to interpret realities and accordingly respond to them. In other words, there is need to lay bare the objective world. Thus instead of imposing their views on society, the national philosophers should make philosophy problem-solving, democratic and necessary and ready to facilitate development in the best interests of human dignity.

At individual level, every philosophy will be characteristic of biases and arrogance which may be harmful to the greatest possible good and just development. However, collectively, it is much easier to recognise the false and true philosophical acts. For instance, in a democracy, the human dignity will be enhanced while in an undemocratic setting, man's historical and ontological vocation will certainly be abused. Thus for the good and the future of this society, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers, who seem to be all omnipotent should, clearly shun their rigidity and insistence on the brink of

collapse or disaster. It is unphilosophical to dominate the present, romanticize the "glorious" past and wish that these will automatically reproduce themselves unaltered for the future. The future is never pre-established, historical reality changes all the time. It is, therefore, quite dangerous for any category of the national philosophers to think that it can make its own truth different from the reality we really know.

National development cannot occur gratuitously; it must consciously be created by common act. It can be made more rational if everyone is made to acquire a critical awareness through philosophical democracy. In this sense, the national philosophy must assume a pedagogical character. This is one way to avoid populist approach to philosophy where it is reduced to ideological slogans. If the Kenyan philosophers treat ideology as ideology and philosophy as philosophy, they may philosophise for Mankind rather than for transient regime. The most important pre-occupation of the genuine national philosophers should be to ensure that philosophy and its essential functions are not relegated to a situation where philosophy is equated to aphilosophy.

Lastly, all the national philosophers in particular and the whole nation in general should realise that Mankind is one great family with a common destiny. In essence, the history of all peoples is partly the history of a people. Whatever we do, whenever we do



it, however we do it, for whatever reasons, we are in the final analysis, accountable to our nations in as much as we are accountable to the rest of humanity. By the same token, however, it is a fact that even philosophical reflections and actions cannot be isolated from the rest of the world. Therefore all the Kenyan philosophers should encourage progressive openness to the world and to progressive ideas and practices as a priori principle of human development while at the same time repudiating passivity, misplaced arrogance, complacency, opportunism and temporal neutrality.

Although it is a fact that we have our own way of life shaped by specific historical conditions, the primary laws governing human development are common to all. Our philosophical practices should not be isolated from the significant philosophical changes in the rest of the world.

#### **4.11 Critical Remarks**

At any historical juncture, lack of philosophical democracy in every society is as much of an intractable problem in Kenya as it is elsewhere in Africa. It has imposed some inhibitive influences on free and useful philosophical undertakings without much leeway. Essentially, one gets the impression that the injustices suffered by both philosophy and development are direct off-shoots of the pressure: unleashed by gaps between democratic ideals, the

historical realities, political theory and practices. Whereas it requires enormous courage, patriotism, knowledge and conscience and power to create and recreate in order to correct abuses hurled at philosophy in the development process, it must be appreciated that without an unequivocal stance against undemocratic practices in all their guises, no adequate amount of reason will ever be entertained in the development process.

### Notes

1. Philosophical nationalism refers in this context to the committed appeal to reason (philosophy) in the conduct of all national affairs.
2. Part of the "Four Trends in Current African Philosophy," a paper that Professor Odera Oruka presented at the Conference on the Commemoration of Dr. William Amo, (Accra: July 24th-29th, 1978), pp.3-5.
3. See Professor Paulin Hountondji's article, "African Philosophy: Myth and Reality," in Odera Oruka (Ed.), Thought and Practice; A Journal of the philosophical Association of Kenya, Vol. 1 No. 2, 1974), pp. 1-16.
4. Conference on the Commemoration of Dr. William Amo, op. cit., p. 2.

5. *ibid.*, p. 3.
6. *ibid.*, p. 7.
7. *ibid.*, p. 8.
8. "Perestroika" is a Russian term for restructuring. "Glasnost" is also a Russian term meaning openness. Since 1985 when were they introduced by President Mikhail Gorbachev to signify new political thinking (revolutionary reforms and restructuring) towards pluralist democracy, their impact have been felt throughout the world especially in Eastern Europe and Africa. In Africa, Kenya included, the agitation for multiparty democracy is top at the agenda of politics.
9. These were basically the radical and the leftist nationalist-ideological philosophers and intellectuals.
10. See Donders, J.G., Don't Fence Us, In, The Liberating Role of Philosophy, (Nairobi: Eleventh Inaugral Lecture, University of Nairobi, 1977), pp. 19-20.
11. From The Wretched of The Earth, op. cit., p. 188.
12. *ibid.*, p. 180.

13. See Cabral, A., Unity and Struggle (London: Heinemann, 1980), p. 142.
14. Writers in Politics, op. cit., p. 43.
15. Research Proposal, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
16. In Daily Nation, (Nairobi: November 20, 1990), p. 16. ---
17. Is a Kiswahili term for "hot sun." Today, it is popularly used to refer to the "Informal Sector" of the economy in Kenya.
18. Extracted from Ishumi, G.M., Education and Development, (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1976), pp. 12-13.
19. Until July 7, Muoroto was one of the slums directly opposite Muthurwa Estate on Jogoo Road in Nairobi. After a showdown between security and the multiparty agitators, it was indiscriminately razed to the ground in what resulted in official 20 deaths and unnumbered casualties. In a similar fashion, the State used scorched-earth policy to liquidate Kibagare, a slum near Kangemi in Northern Nairobi, irrespective of its 30,000 residents. This was in November, 1990.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, we have examined the various functions of philosophy in general and in specific Kenyan development process. There is no claim of an exhaustive coverage of the subject. However, we have made a very honest and serious attempt to render a very intricate and politically sensitive topic more comprehensible. In the course of the inquiry, we analysed the essential relationship between philosophy and development in independent Kenya. In the process, we exposed the fundamental and remote problems which have caused the underutilisation of philosophy, the national philosophers and the wastage of enormous philosophical resources in the development process.

Throughout the study, however, we categorically stated our position and suggested measures which might help resolve the anomalies and paradoxes. It was established that philosophy has minimally been appealed to in the process of development. Moreover, the political system has provided room for only one category of the national philosophers, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers. Incidentally, they also happen to be politically more powerful and advantaged. Over the years, they have played the national

philosophers making identification with reason and truth a risky undertaking in the development process.

This chapter basically summarises the study. In the process, however, we state our findings and how philosophical approach to national development can be re-humanised and popularised. This culminates in development policy implications for the national planning purposes; and recommendations for both scholars and future researchers in the realm of philosophy and its essential relationship with other social aspects of national life. Finally, we give our last word and provide a complete bibliography of our sources.

## 5.2 Summary of The Study

Initially, this study took off by providing an expository and theoretical background to the role of philosophy in the development process since independence. This was to help construct a working theoretical model. The study maintained that since independence in 1963, like all independent African States, Kenya had been exhibiting tendencies and practices which suggested that philosophy was little being appealed to in determining development objectives, policies, priorities and strategies. To a large extent, it was apparent that philosophical approach to various aspects of social life and activities especially development were increasingly being abused by the powers-that-be and a good percentage of the citizenry. The causes included a conspiracy of deprivations unleashed by external economic

forces; class stratification; tribalism; ideological interests and stresses; hostile political climate and its vindictive culture; hostility, fear and mistrust among the national philosophers and the masses. While more attention was being given to ideology, philosophy was vulnerable to lip-service by the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers who had increasingly made it difficult for majority of the people to adopt philosophical approach to national issues like development.

In recognition of such pitfalls and given the rapidly changing philosophical terrain of the world, it was absolutely necessary to re-assess both the roles of the national philosophers in the essential development activities. Indeed, there were some strong indications that apart from being used as a means to some unspecified end rather than ends in themselves, the Kenyans were becoming more and more allergic to truth, reason and criticism and worryingly receptive to unphilosophical practices like dishonesty, greed, lies, corruption or social decadence as such. It was also observable that despite the serious philosophical developments and "tremors" arising from the new political thinking, the Kenyan national philosophers did not really appear to be affected yet the very new thinking was progressively opening avenues for the world to rethink its development objectives and priorities. Was Kenya no longer part of the active world? Obviously a retrogressive culture had enveloped Kenya and had not only numbed the philosophic sensibilities of the national thinkers and philosophers but had substantially alienated

the rest of the nation from genuine philosophical approaches in all spheres of national life. Therefore there was an urgent need to adopt a philosophical approach to national life in general by setting the stage for serious philosophical debates.

We proceeded from the tentative hypothesis that: Philosophy in general and the Kenyan national philosophy in particular had been increasingly underutilised in the national development process due to unphilosophical subordination of philosophy to ideological interests and imperatives by the privileged few.

The study was aimed at everyone involved in development tasks especially the planners at the national level who really need to know the absolute values and functions of philosophy in the development process. It was also aimed at the national philosophers, politicians, bureaucrats, various professionals, women, the youth, scholars and researchers who should know how the underutilisation of the national philosophical resources greatly affects the overall national development performance including active participation in international affairs. We believed it was time the national philosophers and the nation in general should rise above narrow ideological interests and philosophically enrich the national development activities.

Prior to the study, we defined our research problem; the scope of the inquiry; the tentative hypothesis; the justification for the topic



and the primary purpose of the study. We also conducted a brief literature review to augment our theoretical basis. The method we used in the inquiry, namely, the dialectical-conceptual analysis was explained and justified as the most suitable for the inquiry. Therefore the following pages clearly synthesise what has been established about each of the themes investigated throughout the study and suggest some prescriptive proposals for future possibilities.

### 5.3 Major Findings of The Study

The hypothesis we started with has been validated. The study has principally established that the essential functions of philosophy in the development process have been minimal due to ideologically determined and influenced factors. They are stated here below:

#### a) Poor Philosophical Heritage

Independent Kenya inherited a poor philosophical approach to social reality from colonialism. Colonialism had led to ontological shock and confusion which had rendered most of the colonised more submissive to foreign philosophic models the social fabric of the traditional African Society having been utterly supplanted. Consequently, the predetermined models of philosophy and development frameworks created a situation in which the Kenyans were virtually alienated from their history and free conscious participation in

effective development activities. The situation was worsened when the colonially originated pragmatic approach that had clearly contradicted the basic realities and needs of the Kenyans was re-adopted as the basis for development. Among other things, however, the results were the evolution of false world views, illusions about development practices, distorted consciousness and a misperceived notion of development. Most of the institutions whose philosophical foundations were basically foreign like the judiciary, the police, the prisons and the entire civil service still suffer serious hang-over which is most unsuitable for free philosophical practice necessary for essential development.

**b) Ideological Interests**

The dynamics of ideological interests and forces have gravely affected the functions of philosophy in development. Since independence, the liberal national-ideological philosophers who have the monopoly of the political power have completely ideologized the national philosophy in their favour. In the process, their claims to the national philosophy have literally acquired the character of their dominant class interests and ideological biases. While committedly determined to remain at the apex of both political power, they have personalised the national philosophy to an extent that the functions of the national philosophy cannot be understood outside their class and ideological interests. Forced by the primacy of their ideological interests, the liberal nationalist-ideological

philosophers have no alternative but to expediently reduce the national philosophy to some very idle and insubstantial rhetorics and populist utterances in favour of their exclusive interests. In the event of doing this, however, they have been extremely hostile to the rest of the national philosophers. Consequently, all potential and genuine national philosophers have been forced to unwillingly keep aloof, become cynical or utterly disinterested while the majority of the Kenyans have lost interest in philosophy or developed a very low regard for it and ultimately withdrawn to the back seat away from the paralysing influences of the dominant philosophers.

Another feature of independent Kenya is that paradoxically, some of the politicians who pose as national philosophers par excellence are essentially victims of philosophical dilettantism and will hysterically baptise anything or any act philosophical as long as it promises to protect their ideological or sectional interests. This has had diminutive effects on the essential functions of the national philosophy in development.

#### c) **Inadequate Criterion of The National Philosophy**

Closely allied to the ideological interests is the philosophical ambiguity. Motivated by narrow selfish interests and curiosities, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers have both subtly and crudely subordinated philosophy to abuse, perversion, reductionism and abstractionism which suggest that to most, if not all of them,

the national philosophy need not be part of reality. The ambiguity that has characterised the national philosophy has hardly been resolved; in fact, no attempts have been made to resolve it. As a matter of fact, no nation can have three distinct philosophies without philosophy being merely presumed and ultimately depreciated. In this connection, it is our conclusion that the varying references to African Socialism, "Harambee" and "Nyayoism" have created a sense of confusion which has led to the majority of the unsuspecting Kenyans to see nothing so sacred about the national philosophy.

Further, it was noted that material wealth, property and money are more revered in independent Kenya than human worth. Indeed, the "sine qua non" for human worth is material well-being and possession of property irrespective of how it is acquired. To many Kenyans, there is no respect for truth, intellect, reason and knowledge; life is strictly understood in strict economic terms with only a few citizens with the historical prescience of mind and conscience left to mind basic philosophical practices. With or without philosophy, as the popular saying now goes in Kenya, life is the same! In addition to the unphilosophical tendencies of the Government at practical level, the value of philosophy in general and the national philosophy in particular have significantly declined to the detriment of national development.

d) **Class Stratification**

Independent Kenya is class-structured. Although different social classes do exist, today, they can be reduced only to two broad ones: the rich and the poor. The functions of philosophy have been class-influenced. As has been shown, the national philosophy has been ideologically adulterated by the more politically and economically powerful, usually the rich. To the greatest disadvantages of the poor, the national philosophy has been articulated in such a way that it has been more favourable to the rich rather than the poor. In fact, the deliberate relegation of the national philosophy to an ideology has squarely concealed some of the most salient factors about the national development. Essentially, some of the sterile stereotypes neither reflect the social conditions of the poor nor promise them any better future.

Today, the class interests are being camouflaged as tribalism, a scourge which negates philosophical approach to national development. As loyalty to the tribe is stronger, the nation becomes subsidiary or even non-essential. Consequently, the free and reasonable appeal to philosophical principles in the development process are null and void. Thus, all deceptive efforts at philosophisation on development must be coached within a rigid framework where the essential functions of philosophy have to be reactionary and repressive rather than progressive and liberative.

e) **Discrimination Against Women**

Although women are vulnerable to many problems, namely, haphazard political education, poor perception of philosophy, ignorance, superstition and male-chauvinism, their participation in the development process has been undermined by the male-dominated national politics, coupled with the monopolism of the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers of whom women are a negligible number. Women are so disadvantaged that their philosophical participation in national issues is quite minimal.

f) **Discrimination Against The Youth**

Despite the fashionable but over-emphasis of the future leadership of the youth, the Kenyan youth are systematically being underphilosophised. As a result, they are increasingly becoming more comfortable with the resort to violence rather than reason in the conduct of public issues.

g) **The Phobia of Fear | The Intelligentsia** Among

A good percentage of the intelligentsia is reluctant to fully identify with truth and reason for fear of being the victims of the all powerful and dominant "philosophers" who control the State apparatuses of coercion. Their fear seems to be founded on concrete basis given the real tendencies of the liberal nationalist-ideological national philosophers who do not tolerate alternative philosophising at all. Thus most of the national philosophers can

neither freely associate nor collectively engage in collective national philosophical activities in a way that would make philosophy a shield and a sword in the national development process. paradoxically, there is virtually no visible mutual understanding, trust and co-operation among the national philosophers due partly to ideological differences, political beliefs and philosophical convictions. Ironically, the Kenyan national philosophers have been unable to rise above even some very parochial differences in the interests of national development.

h) **External Economic Aid and Pressures**

Like the rest of independent cum neo-colonial Africa, independent cum neo-colonial Kenya is typically overdependent upon economic aid from Europe, America and Japan. Since independence, the economic policies have completely re-integrated the national economy into the international capitalist economic system where the country is forced to participate not as an equal partner but as an unequal partner for this is the reality of neo-colonial economic transactions. All developing countries always have to succumb to some conditions imposed by the donor countries in a way that is not essentially in favour of the national well-being. In a situation like that, however attractive the basic tenets of the national philosophy may be, like ours, the very national philosophy can hardly assert itself and react to the unphilosophical pressures concomitant with the conditions of foreign "aid." Essentially, the pragmatic character of the national

philosophy is really self-defeating; it can hardly call for philosophical approach to national development within the very womb of the vicious neo-colonial inhibitions. The greatest dilemma here is that while independent Kenya cannot do without foreign "aid," the externally originated economic forces cannot facilitate the social praxis needed to instruct the national development. Yet it stands to reason that only the national philosophy located in the material realities of the whole nation can truly influence an egalitarian national development.

i) **The Problem of Philosophy is Political**

The essential functions of philosophy need a strong political will and moral authority in order to be effected. In a society where ideological considerations are inconsistent with philosophical principles in addition to the confusion between philosophy and ideology and the hostility among the national philosophers, it is very easy to look for excuses for unphilosophical approaches to life in human nature. This is quite misleading. The functions of philosophy occur within a specific social milieu, specific political culture, specific historical conditions and at a particular time in history. Therefore without a fundamental decision on the necessity for genuine philosophical approach to national life and development alike, philosophical praxis and activities supporting the essential functions of philosophy will never see light of day.



#### 5.4 Conclusions

This study has clearly demonstrated that since independence, philosophy has been seen as an ideology and as something that can easily be dispensed with in development. This tendency has had two devastative effects. Firstly, it has led to the emergence of political slogans being baptised authentic philosophies. Ultimately, this has highly reduced the values and functions of philosophy in development. Secondly, philosophy has been erroneously associated with more powerful politicians. As a result, majority of the Kenyans have increasingly turned away from philosophy in the light of political practices and the everwidening gap between philosophical claims and their translation into practice. Today, many Kenyans do not respect philosophical approach to life.

Throughout independence, the liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers have equally had very low regard for philosophy. This has been seen in their efforts to contrive philosophy little realising that when philosophy is contrived, it blurs reality and falsifies philosophy; becomes grossly self-defeating, self-contradictory and qualifies for something close to pseudo-philosophy. Consequently, the national philosophy rests on an inadequate criterion which can hardly allow it to have a positive impact on the national realities and development necessities. This is demonstrated by the withdrawal of the nation into philosophical passivity including philosophers who have been pushed against the wall by the

conditions set by the more powerful and privileged liberal nationalist-ideological philosophers who ironically are unable to identify with philosophy in practice.

Philosophers should not be afraid of philosophy. Yet, this is the predicament of the national philosophers in independent Kenya. Few, if any, of the national philosophers have been willing to identify with the critical philosophical questions regarding for instance, tribalism, the disregard for philosophy and even the new political thinking that has today led to re-organization of many nations throughout the world. There is no way the national philosophy can develop without being enriched if all the philosophers shied away from serious and absolutely necessary philosophical issues without which development cannot be of much use. Thus, it is our view that unless the national philosophers shun fear, mistrust, a sense of irresponsibility and uncertainty and pluck sufficient courage to categorically call for democratic philosophical debates and dialogues, irrespective of their ideological positions and philosophical convictions, the schism among them will continue to widen and no meaningful philosophical praxis will ever be realised.

Moreover, philosophy deals with truths. However, if the national philosophers cannot really be philosophical in their conduct and outlook, then, it suffices to state that there is no way the national philosophy can be purged of unphilosophical tendencies and

rehumanised to help interpret the historical realities on the basis of reality.

After what we believe has been an objective analysis of the functions of philosophy in the development process and after exposing the pitfalls, it is our hope that our greatest contributions should be seen in the light of our honest and well-intentioned exposition of the obstacles against the adequate appeal to philosophy in the process of development, coupled with the categorical prescriptive suggestions. We have objectively exposed the misconceptions associated with both philosophy and development on one hand and the national philosophers and philosophy on the other. Throughout the inquiry, however, we have successfully applied the dialectical-conceptual method. Therefore if this sensitive and provocative work opens avenues for more serious discussions, debates and researchers on philosophical aspects of the broad spectrum of life in this nation, it will have met its most cherished objectives. Here below, we state the prescriptive recommendations we could not avoid.

## 5. 5. Recommendations

This study has been emphatic on the fact that although philosophy is a very powerful factor in human life in general and development in particular, in independent Kenya, it has hitherto been presumed, disregarded, abused and haphazardly applied. It is, therefore, our hope that this work, which was essentially policy-relevant, should stimulate more useful debates and researchers on philosophy and its relevance to other aspects of socio-economic and political life of the nation. Its exposure to the whole nation in general and the policy-makers, legislators, bureaucrats, professionals, universities, scholars, researchers and the national philosophers in particular might inspire more rewarding philosophical reflections and positive actions towards the reactivation and popularisation of philosophy and its use in national development. In the long-run, we believe, our recommendations might handsomely pay.

### (a) Recommendations For The National Government

Under the present philosophical framework, the functions of philosophy in national life in general and development in particular have been circumscribed by structural, institutional, ideological and political constraints. If this society really seeks to attain an egalitarian society, then the whole philosophical life of the nation must be rehumanised. Thus, as a matter of urgency, philosophy in general and its functions in particular must be redefined,

repopularised and in fact, protected through statutory provisions. This will help reactivate the whole nation to recognise the pitfalls already encountered by defective philosophical practices.

In this respect, however, four fundamental things must be done. Firstly, it must be recognised that no just national developments can be achieved if reason and truth are simply ignored, depreciated or underutilized. Only rational approach can provide the objective basis for appreciating the essential values and essence of the nationals in the process of national development. Secondly, it is not enough to be content with claims to the national philosophy alone. In a developing country like Kenya, the national philosophy should be functionally humanising, liberating and reassuring of a brighter future. If anything, the national philosophy should be the last thing to castrate the noble efforts of the nation to respond to historical challenges and basic human needs and aspirations. Thirdly, the neo-colonial pressures can be neutralised if the whole nation decided to fully identify with the philosophy that would lead to the conscientization of the whole society. India, Brazil, South Korea, North Korea and Vietnam are already doing this irrespective of the domestic and international pressures. In fact, India has distinguished itself as a very unique developing country inspired by its own realities. And let us not forget Japan which is in a class of its own. Fourthly, the national philosophical processes should be genuinely democratised. This will lead to the reconstruction of a philosophical framework more responsive to national needs and

realities in addition to restoring confidence in philosophy and allowing the nation to see itself from a correct historical perspective. Hence, it will be possible to initiate a conscious act of useful revitalisation and enhancement of the national moral standards, sense of duty and historical mission.

In view of this, the Government should take quick steps to make statutory provisions for the establishment a National School of Philosophy aimed at rehabilitating the national philosophical practices, co-ordinating the philosophical activities and directly disseminating the virtues of philosophical approach to national life. Therefore, we here state and recommend:

- (a) that the Government provides funds, statutory provisions and political protection and support for the National School of Philosophy;
- (b) that this school be manned by people from all walks of the nation but led by distinguished professional national philosophers who should enjoy the kind of protection accorded the judges;
- (c) that the school should encourage research, evaluation, documentation and translation of philosophical works into local languages;
- (d) that this school should be authorised to supervise the teaching of philosophy in the national institutions; the use of

philosophy in public life and the professional national watchdog for the entire national philosophical life;

- (e) that the school should be actively involved in the national planning and policy-formulation and should be represented in all ministries and Government departments in charge of guidance and counselling;
- (f) that the school should work out penalties for the violation of philosophical principles and practices.

(b) **Recommendations For Scholars**

Majority of the scholars in general and the professional national philosophers mostly at the national universities have not fully delved into philosophical aspects of development in an exhaustive form. In practice, some of them still see philosophy as an abstract activity for the esoteric few. However, it is our strongest conviction that they have the professional skills, which with the assistance of the Government, could be used to mobilise and guide the national philosophical activities for the common good of the whole nation. Thus, they should show the way by actively popularising the values and functions of philosophy in national life. Perhaps they could do this nation a great service if they desisted from being more involved in metaphysical philosophical activities and conducted researches on more concrete socio-economic and political questions of the present and the future. It is, therefore, our feeling that while appealing to the National Government to establish a National

School of Philosophy, as a preliminary to seriousness, the professional philosophers should:

- (a) immediately establish a National Association of the national philosophers; charged with the responsibilities of;
- (b) helping all Kenyans to come to terms with the genuine philosophical approach to life;
- (c) reactivating and reassuring and even protecting the national philosophers in their efforts to unambiguously but committedly spearhead the path to national philosophical dialogue and debates;
- (d) that the national philosophers should ensure that none of the categories of the national philosophers is neither underutilized nor allowed to unjustly control the national philosophical life;
- (e) that the national philosophers should freely pool their philosophical resources together irrespective of their ideological differences, political convictions or philosophical persuasions so as to create mutual understanding and co-operation throughout the nation in general and among them in particular;
- (f) that the national philosophers should be able to co-ordinate philosophical activities at local, national, regional and international levels as a way of boosting the national development tasks and actively contributing to the international philosophical pool and fund of good will for humanity.



(c) **Recommendations For Future Researchers**

We hold strongly that if this national adhered to ethical philosophical principles in development, perhaps we would hardly need to waste enormous resources in fighting artificially induced social decadence and vices. Since most of the development bottlenecks are socially produced, the future researchers should work hand-in-hand with the national professional philosophers to research on:

- (a) interdisciplinary approach to national philosophical life;
- (b) monitoring the development and use of philosophy in public life;
- (c) ensuring that philosophy is given first order priority and importance at all levels of national life;
- (d) monitoring the progress of the uncompleted formation of the national philosophy; and
- (e) how philosophy can best be imparted to children as part of proper philosophical socialisation into more useful national and human values and practices aimed at cultivating principles necessary for the respect for the sanctity and dignity of human life, its fundamental essence and historical mission.

Although these recommendations are no less ambitious, if they are given objective consideration, they may open avenues to real philosophical approach to national life.

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