S. G. Ikoku, a Nigerian Pan-Africanist and a former lecturer at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, states at the launching of Consciencism at the University of Ghana that ‘Basing itself squarely on dialectical materialism and on its moral and social theory, outlined above, Consciencism has evolved a political theory of its own.’

In our previous series we explain that Dialectical Materialism is the philosophy of Marxism applied by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in his construction of Consciencism. The citation above is one more confirmation of Consciencism being founded on Marxism. Once again, we state that any successful disproof of Dialectical Materialism also destroys Consciencism automatically.

Some uninformed persons (hiding under nicknames) make every effort to remove this Marxist philosophical foundation from underneath Consciencism. Interestingly, where they find themselves nailed to the wall they make a claim that dialectical materialism or “dialectics”, for short, should not be attributed to Marxism (Karl Marx) but to African sources in the person of Ibn Khaldun.

In particular, they refer to Ibn Khaldun’s book *The Muqaddimah*. Our study of the book, however, shows that it does not have anything whatsoever to do with dialectical materialism. And even more devastatingly, it has nothing to do with dialectics as conceived in the formulation of Marxism’s Dialectical Materialism. In that book, it only means *dialogue* as opposed to its usage as the play of contradictions in human history and nature.

Those uninformed persons, in their anxiety to make of Consciencism a pure African construction, wonder why it should be given a European origination in order to prove acceptable to the neo-colonized African mind. This disregard for the universality of knowledge and its concrete manifestations as particularities in different national or social milieus can be said to be the child of philosophical innocence if not a racist aberration.

No wonder that from such innocent circles we now hear a reference to ‘puritanical Nkruamaists’. Such jaundiced Nkruamaism bleaches out of that ideological system its Marxist premises. It bleeds it white and renders it meaningless. In spite of this frantic fruitless attempt by these innocents to de-Europeanize Consciencism, which is surely an African particularization of a universal philosophy, European sources like Albert Einstein and his General Theory of Relativity are employed correctly and gbeyeciously to authenticate premises of Consciencism’s categorial conversion, though amateurishly. What kind of puritanism is this version of Nkruamaism?
Certainly, Consciencism has a need to fight for its survival against such inconsistent puritanism being introduced into its abdomen by infiltrators destined on an impossible paralyzing journey against the philosophy and ideology of the African Revolution – Marxism-Nkrumaism. In this respect, S. G. Ikoku cannot say it better when in the following speech extract he states that:

With the launching of Consciencism, Ghana has become the nursery of a new school of thought in modern philosophy. The new philosophy has to be carefully tended. But, and this is important, this new philosophy must be exposed to the rigours of the elements. No plant ever grows robust and hardy if tended in hot houses. Consciencism must get out into the streets and the villages; it must go among the people and attain maturity by fighting for its very existence among hostile and rival ideas.

Marxism-Nkrumaism was recently declared dead by these puritanical Nkrumaists born in the conditions of racial and racist oppression in the United States of America (USA). In spite of Dr. Nkrumah’s insistence on appreciation of racism and racial oppression from a class but not a racist perspective, as outlined in his pamphlet The Spectre of Black Power, the said puritanical Nkrumaists insist on the reverse. Such revisionism!

For sure, the fight for the survival of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s ideological and philosophical thought system as an application of Marxism (also referred to inadequately but understandably as scientific socialism) starts on the day of the launching of Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-colonisation. S. G. Ikoku gives us the light in this regard with his immortal speech On the Application of Consciencism in Ghana and Africa in 1964.

We reproduce that speech here in a PDF format to lay bare an authentic voice of the thought and practice of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah – Marxism-Nkrumaism.*

*Footnote: In a recent outburst on Facebook timelines, Marxism-Nkrumaism is not only declared dead but our reference to it in June Milne’s report (in the form of notes) at p. 196 of her book as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s usage is also declared ‘a lie’. In that report on pp. 195-196, June Milne informs us on what transpires in some discussion she had with Dr. Nkrumah on Nkrumaism but not how she categorizes his thought and practice.

Effectively, she reports Dr. Nkrumah to have referred to his thought and practice as ‘Marxism-Nkrumaism’ and as different from Marxism-Leninism. Only a veritably jaundiced reading of Milne’s notes on that discussion can render it as an exposition of an alien coinage being imposed by ‘a white’ lady to direct the African Revolution. June Milne works as Dr. Nkrumah’s own appointed literary executrix before and after the 1966 coup d’état.

The English language used on those pages and other boxed pages should not normally present special difficulties in comprehension unless one chooses to teach us how to misunderstand sentences written in English.
ON THE APPLICATION OF CONSCIENCISM IN GHANA AND AFRICA

By

S.G. IKOKU

The viewpoint of Consciencism is that philosophy arises from and operates within the context of a given society. This viewpoint asserts that “philosophy always arose from social milieu and that a social contention is always present in it”. We are here concerned with the second aspect of the assertion, namely, the “social contention” of the new philosophy. We should try to see how philosophical consciencism seeks to affect its social milieu which is Ghana in particular and Africa in general.

It is necessary at the outset to clear up what seems, to the lay mind, a confusion of terms and isms. Here in Ghana, we have all heard of scientific socialism. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah himself has stated openly that “Ghana has taken the road of scientific socialism”. We have also heard of Nkrumaism; and only recently this term was defined as the ideology for the new Africa. And now Dr. Nkrumah, in his new work, gives the world the philosophy of Consciencism.

Superficially this seems to be some confusion. But, on closer examination, there is in fact no confusion at all.

Ghana has embraced the ideology of socialism and to Dr. Nkrumah there is only one socialism, namely scientific socialism. And this is correct. Nkrumaism is the application of this scientific socialism to the historical conditions and aspirations of Africa. Consciencism, on its part, is the philosophical or theoretical basis of Nkrumaism. Consciencism is thus the intellectual tool of the ideology for the new Africa, very much as mathematics often serves as the tool of physics or statistics as a tool of economics, or religion as a tool of ethics. Thus, Consciencism serves Nkrumaism and Nkrumaism is the particularisation of scientific socialism to emergent Africa.

The “social contention” of Consciencism in Ghana and in Africa can be said to be the evolution of a body of principles, which, by guiding the thinking and actions of all Africans, will establish a common range of behaviour for all. This range of behaviour becomes the foundation of social cohesion in Ghana and Africa. It sets out the moral, social and political values to which all the cultural strands in present-day African society should conform.

Ghanaian society is a microcosm of African society today. In it the three layers of present-day African society are to be found. These are the strands of traditional Africa, of Islamic Africa and of Euro Christian Africa. Consciencism sets out to provide a set of values (a body of coherent principles) which can provide a rational rallying point for the best in each of these three components of present-day Africa.

In this grand effort to provide a rational harmony out of the three Africas, consciencism has to fight on at least three planes, everywhere applying
uncompromisingly the test of reality. Reality is objective and is discovered through practical struggle. Active struggle is thus the means and the test of all knowledge.

Consciencism has to fight in the field of philosophy. It has to fight in the field of moral and social theory. And it has to fight in the field of political theory and practice. Put in another way, Consciencism has its philosophy, its moral and social theory, and arising from these, a political theory. The practical application of consciencism in Ghana and Africa involves a sustained struggle in all three categories of thought.

Consciencism's philosophy is based on the following principles:

1. that matter is the source of all knowledge; 2. that matter is a “plenum of forces in tension”; 3. that because it is a plenum of forces in tension, matter is capable of self-induced motion; 4. that the motion of matter is both unilinear and in leaps, that is to say, change in matter is both quantitative and qualitative; 5. that mind has a distinct existence even though it is a product of matter; 6. that there is interaction between matter and mind but that matter is primary; 7. that in this interaction of matter and mind, assumptions, theories and conclusions are permissible but that such assumptions, theories and conclusions are valid only when confirmed in practice.

This philosophy is materialist in content. Its approach is rational. Its touch-stone is practice.

When we turn to the practical application of this philosophy the first step is to clear our individual thinking of the cobwebs of irrationality, half-truths, unproved assertions and superstitions. We have to subject the ideas floating about in our individual minds to the test of rationality and above all to the test of practice. We have to reject all ideas and notions that can neither be verified nor confirmed by practice.

As regards the thinking of the community, Consciencism enjoins that we wage a relentless war against mysticism, magic and all those views which postulate the supernatural in an attempt to explain phenomena and events around us. If there is any phenomenon which we cannot explain, then this must be due to the fact that our knowledge is still limited. We cannot go by way of claiming that the phenomenon is supernatural and hence inexplicable in terms of human reason. It is here that Consciencism will perhaps have to fight its fiercest battles. For the primitive (i.e. uncultivated) African mind has a propensity towards mysticism and supernaturalism. (Incidentally this is a feature of primitive minds everywhere). The liberation of the African mind from such severe limitations is a social objective or mission of Consciencism. And this mission will be achieved to the extent that we can fish out, grapple with and vanquish all unprovable or unverifiable assertions, theories, ideas and beliefs. In philosophical terms, Consciencism has to do battle with idealism and its hand-maiden metaphysics. A little reflection will show what immense gains the African will make once he liberates himself and his society from the crippling mental cogs of mysticism and superstition. A little reflection also will show how much more successful the African will be in transforming his environment once he enthrones action (i.e.
practice) as the touch-stone of knowledge in place of metaphysics (i.e. abstruse reasoning).

Consciencism has its moral and social theory. Its principal tenets are:-

1. that all men are equal; 2. that each man is an end in himself and not just the means to an end; 3. that the group is responsible for the individual; 4. that the free development of the group is the condition for the free development of the individual.

Here again, the student of Consciencism has got to come to grips with other moral and social theories. For example, he simply cannot tolerate a moral or social theory which preaches racial discrimination as in South Africa, and racial superiority as in Central America and the USA, or racial supremacy as under fascism. Nor can Consciencism accommodate social theories that support a caste system whether this is based on religion as in India, or on the colour of the skin as in South Africa and the Southern States of the USA., or on birth as under feudalism or on the control of the means of production as under capitalism. These systems are either founded upon or have come to accept the inequality of man. They are opposed to the view that the group is responsible for the individual and that the activity of the individual must conduce to the well-being of the group. Consciencism condemns and rejects that development of the individual which results in the cramping or stunted growth of other individuals.

Again, the moral theory of Consciencism will have a great effect on religious values. Consciencism does not quarrel with religion which it recognises as a necessary instrument for spreading moral values in any community. But Consciencism is vitally interested in the moral values disseminated by religions. Because they uphold the system of apartheid, the teachings of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, for example, are antithetical to Consciencism. Nor can Consciencism reconcile itself either with that practice of Islamic religion that supports slavery or with that form of paganism which endorses human sacrifice. These values, though shrouded under the cloak of religion, are harmful, wrong and repugnant to Consciencism because they violate the dignity of man and negate the principle of the equality of man. The principal significance of Consciencism in the field of religion lies in this fact, namely, that it compels a re-examination and re-evaluation of the moral values upheld by every religion. The aim of such a re-evaluation must be to enthrone the view of man set out at the beginning of this section.

Other fields in which the moral and social theory of Consciencism must go to war include social institutions (i.e. marriage, chieftaincy) culture, folklore, traditions and customs (e.g. childcare and inheritance). These must be thoroughly investigated in order to discover whether they support or negate the consciencist view of man. Do they uphold the equality of man or the reverse? Do they reflect the concern of all for each or do they support sectional interest and privileges at the expense of the whole community? These are the yardstick by which all existing institutions, traditions, customs, folklore and culture generally are to be measured. To the extent that they support this egalitarian view of man as an end in himself, to that extent are these institutions, folklore, customs and traditions in keeping with Consciencism and hence could be categorised as positive.
Basing itself squarely on dialectical materialism and on its moral and social theory, outlined above, Consciencism has evolved a political theory of its own. The State is the instrument for establishing and defending “definite ranges of behaviour” without which social cohesion or the “dynamic unity” which society implies is impossible. The State accepts man as an end in himself. It accepts the equality of men. It sets out to regulate men and things in such a way that the “responsibility of the many for one” is established and the “development of all is the condition for the development of each”. It holds that this view of man which is basic to socialism is the very essence of traditional African society. Thus in socialism the essence of traditional Africa comes into its full glory.

Right through history, the control of the means of production has been the decisive factor in regulating the social life of men. This has become even more so in the modern society where sophisticated methods of production, once left uncontrolled, have given birth to small exploiting classes wielding concentrated economic power over the rest of society. And the existence of such classes, in whose hands economic power is concentrated, means in practice the destruction of the equality of man. It negates the responsibility of the many for each. And the development of all as the condition for the development of each is turned upside down.

The political theory of Consciencism, therefore, enjoins a collective (that is, State) control of the means of production. Hence socialism.

Once again, in this field of political theory and practice, the key to development is action. All actions that support the socialist ideology and its African particularity, namely Nkrumaism, are classified as positive. Those that oppose it are classified negative. The strategy of development is to maximise positive action, to ensure that pa is greater than na and that pa grows while na decreases. Action here must be defined as much more than deeds. It includes ideas and thinking. Maximising positive action, therefore, involves multiplying deeds that pull in the right direction as well as making generally acceptable only those ideas, beliefs and process of thinking that pull in the same direction. Of course, it also involves doing the reverse to negative deeds, ideas, beliefs and thought processes.

We have seen that the nature of modern technology and the social cleavages it can engender, if left in the hands of individuals, have compelled the centralised control of the means of production. But the principle of the fullest development of all enjoins a maximum expansion of production as well as a fair distribution of the fruits of labour.

The solution to the production problem (namely a manifold expansion of output) on which the fullest development of all hinges demands two conditions:

1. the use of the most up-to-date technology; and 2. an optimum area of development.

The social condition is consequential on the first, for the fullest development of modern industrial technology cannot be achieved until an optimum area within which development can be self-induced is assured.

This optimum area of self-induced development must necessarily be a vast land mass with a big population. The vast land mass is required because a wide variety
of geographical regions and rock formations is needed to yield all the agricultural and mineral products on which modern industrialism depends. These are coal (both bituminous and anthracite), petroleum, hydro-electric potential, waterways, iron, non-ferrous metals (like aluminium, uranium zinc, lead, copper), diamonds, gold, nitrates, phosphates, oil and the wide variety of agricultural raw materials which go into the manufacture of consumer goods. A big population is needed in order to provide the various types of labour skills in the quantity required. Even more important is the need for a vast and expanding market internal and external for the mass-produced goods of a highly technical industrial system.

These conditions are not satisfied within any existing African State. Hence, there must be a coming together of many African states to satisfy these requirements. And judging from the historical experiences of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and now People’s China, it is obvious that the optimum area of self-induced development, in our case, must be the entire African continent.

We may summarise the chain of argument in this section. Consciencism, in its insistence on the fullest development of each individual, leads logically to the fullest utilisation of up-to-date technology and modern science. The fullest utilisation of technologies and science in turn demands an optimum area if development is to be self-induced and must be the case once we are serious about maintaining and consolidating our independence. Lastly, the necessity of an optimum area of self-induced development leads inexorably to the continental unity of Africa.

Let us now turn to consider how to maximise positive action; that is how to maximise deeds and ideas that lead to the triumph of the ideology of socialism and its African particularity Nkrumaism. Consciencism enjoins two methods which are mutually supporting. These are:-

1. a mass political party armed with the ideology of Nkrumaism; 2. constant education inside and outside of the mass party.

The mass party is the vehicle for spreading positive action among the broad masses. In this process it has to draw heavily on those social and economic forces which stand to gain most by the victory of Nkrumaism. Simultaneously the level of political understanding of the members of the mass party will have to be raised by constant ideological education.

This mass party, therefore, becomes the instrument of ideological mobilisation. Its aim is to maximise positive action and minimise negative action. For, as soon as the stage pa greater than na is reached, there is a dialectic change in society. The road is open for a rapid advance to socialism.

In terms of present day Africa, Consciencism teaches a revolutionary break from colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. And once this break is achieved, we can reach out into socialism wherein the essence of traditional African life rediscovers itself in modern surroundings.

It is important to note here that the role of the mass party is not confined to Ghana. It does its job on a continental scale. Accordingly we are invited to recognise the continental mass party emphasizing the socialist ideology of Nkrumaism as the
means by which we can approach continental African unity with surer and steadier strives.

With the launching of Consciencism, Ghana has become the nursery of a new school of thought in modern philosophy. The new philosophy has to be carefully tended. But, and this is important, this new philosophy must be exposed to the rigours of the elements. No plant ever grows robust and hardy if tended in hot houses. Consciencism must get out into the streets and the villages; it must go among the people and attain maturity by fighting for its very existence among hostile and rival ideas.

Clearly, therefore, there is need for the springing up all over this country and throughout Africa circles of consciencists which study the tenets of Consciencism and spread them among our people, more especially among the intelligentsia. The circles of consciencists should be nurtured through a steady stream of lectures, discussions, seminars, symposiums organised jointly by the Departments of Philosophy, Science and Government in our universities, the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute and the Education Department of the Party. There will be need to liaise with the Committees for Education in Citizenship.

The most effective instrument for co-ordinating and guiding the work of these circles of consciencists is a philosophical journal. Such a journal will discuss all ideas, beliefs, theories, social institutions, customs and traditions in contemporary Africa in the light of Consciencism.

In this way a robust new school of thought which is linked with world knowledge but distinctively African will emerge. The result is bound to be of great significance to the evolution of the New Africa and a real contribution to the enrichment of world thought.