

## Social-political Order: The Onus of the Philosopher- Educator

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### Abstract

Global sociopolitical order in Africa as elsewhere is something that must worry any sane and sensitive mind. Sociopolitical disorder, anarchy, and chaos (which are antithetical to sociopolitical order), can give no person joy, peace, and rest. The urge to establish sociopolitical order, as it was in earliest centuries of rational man, is a serious concern for many who keenly follow the unfolding of events in the third millennium A. D. Just as this concern gave birth to Plato's conception and proposal of the philosopher-king as a panacea, so our earnest search for the conditions of global sociopolitical order has directed us to the necessity and responsibilities of the philosopher-educator before even the philosopher-king's role becomes germane. Consequently, this paper devotes attention to the examination of the concept and onus of the philosopher-educator in the third millennium A. D.

### Introduction

The third millennium A. D. is the period from the end of two thousand years of our Lord Jesus' (Emmanuel Christus') incarnation to the beginning of four thousand years after our Saviour's earthly existence. The beginning of this period in 2001 is characterized by tremendous global changes and challenges. The period, in view, promises to showcase unprecedented Divine manifestations in terrestrial domain. In the advent of this period, national and international politics have witnessed great upheavals, shifts in positions, ideologies and theories. In the first decade of this period, there were fantastic improvements in communication arts, technological developments and human scientific ingenuity. But concomitant to these giant strides and perfections in human terrestrial existence, there have been untold evil and danger that threaten man's life and his environment of existence. In one of Nigerian dailies—THE NATION, of Friday, June 18, 2010, it is observed that in 2005 the international community under the auspices of United Nations World Summit came together to address some senseless human tragedies, including ethnics cleansing, genocide, and civil wars in which innocent human beings are targeted" (Segun Gbadegesin 2010: 64). In this first decade, environmental sciences and researches have also revealed that there are great dangers in aquatic and forestry ecological systems, as well as threatening effects of ozone layer depletion.

It is at the background of these uncertain and threatening situations in the third millennium A. D. that the relevance of this article is situated. The article recognizes, as did Chief Obafemi Awolowo in *The People's Republic*, the dynamism in human nature in collaborating with Divinity for the solution of his existential predicaments. The article also recognizes, in line with Segun Gbadegesin, the importance of good education in turning around the affairs of human beings, and notes its centrality (education) also "to the challenges of any nation including that of violent disturbances that have overrun African nations since independence" (Segun Gbadegesin 2010: 64). As we noted in *Sparks of Wisdom, Vol. 1*, "When things begin to happen, wise men begin to think and think to act", so we also think that in this



period we need the services of the philosopher-educator (Nwankwor 1999: 64). It is in this respect that we congratulate Plato's innovation of the philosopher-king, but add that perhaps even before the function of the philosopher-King becomes germane for this generation, the role of the philosopher-educator is indispensable, for as Plato himself noted, majority of existential problems arise as a result of lack of limitations in knowledge necessitated by spatial-temporal deficiencies. Thus, we hereby elucidate the concept of the philosopher-educator as well as enlist his/her qualities and responsibilities/functions as a supplement to Plato's thesis for our contemporary age. Before that let us clarify other antecedent concepts: Sociopolitical, Order, and Sociopolitical Order.

### **Sociopolitical<sup>(1)</sup>**

The word "Sociopolitical" is the adjective of the compound words social and political, which in turn is derived from two nouns—"society" and "politics" respectively. "Society", as we intend to use it here, is an association of human beings and suggests the whole complex of the relations of man to his fellows. It consists of "the complicated network of groups and institutions expressing human association" (Appadorai 1975: 13). Thus, when we mean society here, we do not just mean the state (although it is not excluded), but we mean the entire gamut of man's relation with fellow man in his divine terrestrial domain. On the other hand, "**Politics**", as we use it here, is the art and science of managing and administering human affairs. It is as we noted elsewhere, "a science that deals with the intricacies and maneuverings in sociopolitical and economic existence and living", which by so doing "tries to find out the ideal structure of human-environmental sustenance" (Nwankwor 2006: 35). In politics, more than anywhere else, man is challenged to make optimum use of his God's-given rationality in solving or finding solutions to his existential questions and quandaries. That is why A. Appadorai defines politics as "the science concerned with the state and of the conditions essential to its existence and development", which also treats of "the foundations of the state and the principles of government" (Appadorai, 1975: 4). This paper shall dwell more on the foundations, principles and conditions essential for Sociopolitical Order, coherence and harmony.

### **Order**

The English word "Order", which has "Ordre" as its French equivalent, is rooted to the Latin "Ordo,—Ordinis" (Kirkpatrick 1983: 890). In English, Order has many connotative meanings including, inter alia: Arrangement, sequence, disposition, due condition, the condition of normal or due functioning, a regular or suitable arrangement, a method, a system, a restrained or undisturbed condition, a practice: grade, degree, rank or position, especially in a hierarchy (Kirkpatrick 1983: 890). In this write-up, we shall be considering "order" from the perspective of "arrangement" or "due condition" or position of things. We shall take "Order" as the due process or normal functioning of a system, establishment, institution, organization, or even hierarchy in existence and essence. Sometimes also, we shall use it (Order) as the method or due procedure of functioning of a system, establishment, or institution.

### **Sociopolitical order**

By Sociopolitical Order we mean the due process or right functioning of social and political issues and affairs. Behind this conception is the assumption or pre-supposition that there is essentially a method or procedure everything or creature is expected to act or function.



Orderliness, whether in sociopolitical affairs or otherwise, pre-supposes or disposes the mind to think of the “Orderer” or the efficient cause of its being and existence. Before we can meaningfully talk of “Orderliness”, we must be able to point at its originator, designer or the effective/efficient cause of its coming to be, in the first place. Searching for Sociopolitical Order or conditions of Sociopolitical Orderliness should essentially lead us to asking fundamental questions such as: Who is the ultimate cause or founder of sociopolitical institutions and establishments?; what is the essence and reason for sociopolitical foundations, establishments and institutions?; how should sociopolitical institutions, foundations, and establishments function to realize its ultimate and optimum success?; why do we need Sociopolitical Order and not its opposite?; who has the proper right or onus to direct or lead us to true Sociopolitical Order, etc.? We may quickly point out that the ambition of this paper is limited to pointing out, and perhaps, enunciating some (of the) onus or functions/duties or responsibilities of the bearer of these responsibilities.

### **The concept of the philosopher-educator <sup>(2)</sup>**

The philosopher-educator or an educator-philosopher is, as we noted elsewhere, a philosopher with difference. The philosopher-educator is a thorough going philosopher with in-depth knowledge of the logic and semantics of philosophy and education. He is a radical teacher who teaches in all ramifications with different signs, symbols and instruments of imparting knowledge, wisdom and understanding. The philosopher-educator or an Educator-philosopher (used interchangeably here) knows and has the knowledge of the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, political, economic, cultural, etc. needs of an age and the geographical pendulum of the generations past, present and future. The philosopher-educator, as we reasoned also, has a Divine direction and dimension in teaching the society, in that real teaching necessitates wisdom, knowledge, understanding, courage, persistence, perseverance, patience, meekness, impeccable discipline, as well as infinite docility to the sparks of the spirit.

Existentially speaking, the philosopher-educator has a Divine mission and humanly-concerned projects for execution. As history is doubly-directed (Divinely-human and humanly-Divine), the responsibility of the philosopher-educator is dual: earthly and transcendentally. Consequently, the soul, mind, heart and spirit of the philosopher-educator have both physical and spiritual expansions and contractions depending on the gravitational pull or force of an epoch. The philosopher-educator, by linguistic qualifications, has an integral perception of reality qua reality. He knows and understands the generational root of the problems of an age and generations. With his wealth of knowledge, wisdom and understanding, the philosopher-educator ventures into the realm of “finitude” and “infinity” in order to enable him address the problems, difficulties, predicaments and the stresses and strains of that age or people or society. It should be emphasized that the philosopher-educator (unlike educationist) is hard to find because it takes the totality of a being to perceive the dimension of the problems of an age or epoch.

Finally, as we indicated also, the onus of the philosopher-educator includes preparation of a solid foundation and ground for pure wisdom, true knowledge and sound philosophical insights, intellectual riches, academic wealth and physical treasures to emerge. As a “teacher qua teacher,” The philosopher-educator helps in scaling off the shackles of ignorance that

because ages, generations, histories and societies. The philosopher-educator sanctifies an epoch by bringing it face-to-face with reality as such “the Really Real”. It is by this sanctification of an age with sagacious water (sparks), that the philosopher-educator makes that age gain relevance and importance in history, past, present and future. This is the glorious role of the philosopher-educator which venerable Plato saw in glimpses as those of the philosopher-king. But just as Plato tries to chart the course for the philosopher-king, the function of the philosopher-educator is best understood in our generation in the different crisis in leadership and citizenship across the globe. However, a philosopher-educator may not do in globalized society. We need many of them in different fields of endeavor to sanitize the human society and environment to reminiscent its Divine prerogatives and mandates. The function of this paper, however, is to highlight the necessity of leadership re-orientation and the importance of the search for the philosopher-educator(s) in our age, just as Plato pointed at the philosopher-king(s) as the answer to the quandaries of his society.

### **The functions of the philosopher-educator**

First and foremost, the philosopher-educator gives the whole endeavor in and of education ultimate grounding and finality. The function of the philosopher-educator completes the entire task of education in an epoch. This is because, as we said before, the philosopher-educator is very much at home, with the entire gamut and terrain of education. The philosopher-educator knows the “why” or reason of education and the “what”, or “quiddity”, or “essence” of education, as well as the “how” or best procedure/tool/instrument or method to use in order to achieve the aim, end, goal, objectives or purpose of a particular educational programme. It is in this respect that we consider Emmanuel Christos coming as that of the Philosopher-educator’s. But he, Emmanuel Christos, also promised to send us an advocate, a paraklete, a guardian and teacher who will lead us to the complete knowledge of the truth since human education needs programming and spacing to enable the intellect, finite as it is, grasp the profundity of the expanse of wisdom. Secondly, the philosopher-educator teaches with authority and finality because his teaching is the “terminus a quo” as well as the “terminus ad quem” (the point of beginning and the point of end). His teaching is most authoritative and final and he teaches the truth most truthful and impeccable, as truth from truth, for truth and in truth. He knows the truth and the ways of the truth. When the truth comes, darkness vanishes because everything is put in the light and lives in the light, which is life indeed. In the field of education, there is no better authority than he who is in love with wisdom, knows wisdom and can share wisdom in experiences and situations. The philosopher-educator possesses these attributes and qualifications “in se et per se” by definition and analysis.

Furthermore, the philosopher-educator endows education with a special light which, in itself, education does not possess. Education without proper philosophy is somehow baseless, aimless, goalless, visionless, and ultimately without essence and substance. That is why Prof. C. B. Okolo noted that “unless educators are philosophers, education itself would be blind in its basic thrust” (Okolo 1989: 73). Sterling M. McMurrin has earlier ON THE MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION written that “... in its present condition of tension and excitement, education quite desperately needs the insight and clarity of thought which philosophic discussion should provide” (McMurrin in Okolo 1989: 73). So, the philosopher-educator throws better light into what educators or educationists without philosophical blending are doing or claiming to be doing. Moreover, it is the proper function of the philosopher-



educator to speculate and articulate, reflect and contemplate on the best method or relevant procedure to handle a particular issue/matter, debate/puzzle, problem/challenge, which very often crop up for educational consideration. From his bank of tools/instruments/methods, the philosopher-educator, in full knowledge of these (tools or theories) and their proper use, chooses the best method/procedure out of or the best of the principles and axioms in his (Philosopher-educator's) store-house which can properly or conveniently be galvanized into a useful set or theory to take care of the aforementioned matter, challenge, situation or circumstance. When sets of principles or axioms are properly grouped, they form impeccable procedure/method or theory for solving problems/questions arriving from same root and anchor on or are interrelated to it (the roots). So, the function of determining the way or method is properly that of the philosopher-educator. Finally, we note, as did Segun Gbadesegin, that "educational goals reflect the political vision of a society and that political transformations impact on educational development of a people" (Gbadesegin 2010: vol. 5, no. 1429).

Based on this fact, we suggest that since the function of the philosopher-educator is germane for our period or indeed any other period, it be facilitated by political actions, even at the grassroots, so that the glorious dawn we await will not elude us longer. The philosopher must then combine his ingenuity with that of the educator or educationist to be able to impact meaningfully on the sociopolitical substructures and superstructures of existence. It is at this point that Karl Marx's saying that "philosophers have interpreted the world, what remain is to change it", will start to bear fruit. True Sociopolitical Order will thus start with real action of the Philosopher-educator or the educator (educationist) turned philosopher, who would have undergone mental mentanoia (radical sea change) and practical re-orientation from the debris of the society.

### **The philosopher-educator and sociopolitical order**

The philosopher-educator is indispensable in sociopolitical order because good actions presuppose true knowledge which he, by definition, possesses. Plato expresses this view in his saying that "knowledge is virtue, or virtue is knowledge". In other words, good action(s) is/are not just "happen stance", it/they are habit(s) or repeated performance(s) which, as it were, has/have become part and parcel of an individual's way of life or culture of behavior, which presuppose solid ontological foundations and epistemological orientation. However, knowledge of the proper order of things or the right cause of actions or decisions to make/follow is a privilege of he who is at home with wisdom, knowledge and understanding. The Holy writ puts it succinctly: A wise ruler will educate his people, and his government will be orderly. All the officials and all the citizens will be like their ruler. An uneducated king will ruin his people, but a government will grow strong if its rulers are wise. The Lord sees to the government of the world and brings the right person to power at the right time. The success of that person is in the Lord's hands. The Lord is the source of the honor given to any official (Sirach 10:1-5).

It may not be strongly disputed that God, as the creator and originator of the universe, created it in orderliness (as against the views of some who maintain that the state of nature was chaotic) and wants it to function in some specific mode. The existence of human society (ies) and their concomitant freedom has, inadvertently, altered this order of things. It is for this purpose that the philosopher-**educator**, who is a lover of wisdom (which is the foundation of all

things), one who is properly knowledgeable about the essences of things and their proper goals, and one who is courageous enough to lead people out of choking ignorance, is necessary in the proper organization, arrangement, management and administration of affairs in sociopolitical and other spheres. This beleaguered function of sociopolitical ordering is specifically the philosopher's who is in tune with education and its prerogatives. That was exactly what the sage, Aristotle, tried to experiment, though without much success, in his mentoring of Alexander the Great, son of king Philip of Macedon.

From our definition and the authority of the Holy writ, the philosopher-**educator**, no doubt, is eminently suited for putting things in their proper perspectives and engendering sociopolitical order. Foremost among the responsibilities of **the philosopher-educator in sociopolitical order** is the guidance of the citizenry towards the recognition, knowledge and acknowledgement of God as the Supreme Orderer and Designer of existence, who holds the ultimate reason of beings, as well as the authority par excellence of sociopolitical affairs. This primary education will lead to the true knowledge of the hierarchical structure of beings in existence and their due and proper respects, which in turn, will ignite deserved attention to all individuals, things, occasions, events, situations and circumstances. When all individuals and things get proper and due attention, the steps to sociopolitical order, environmental harmony, existential successes and prosperity will have been climbed. The preparation and initiation/introduction of the journey is that of the **philosopher-educator**. Secondly, apart from leading to the knowledge of the proper order in sociopolitical sphere, the philosopher-**educator** teaches and leads to the essentials of sociopolitical orderliness.

The principles of sociopolitical orderliness such as: love, forgiveness, justice, peace, unity, altruism, truthfulness, understanding, concern, and accountability, are issues that he brings to proper focus and rightful elucidations. The **philosopher-educator** in teaching these principles through personal examples, experimentations, and praxis, brings to bear their (principles) urgency and pre-eminence in a society of conflicting, contending and interlocking practical and theoretical tendencies. The fruits of his significance flower in this practical-theoretical relevance. Moreover, the philosopher-**educator** champions sociopolitical order/orderliness by balancing the wheel of **authority and freedom** in any epoch. As we noted in Volume three of **Sparks of Wisdom**: "The condition of peace and progress in a nation rests on the balance between authority and freedom in that habitat/nation" (Nwankwor 2008: 71, Cat. 3, No. 385), the consummate (Kpim) responsibility of the **philosopher-educator** in sociopolitical sphere is this order or peace.

The determination of the scope and limits of authority, whether properly constituted (de jure) or unlawfully assumed (de facto) is the onus of the philosopher-**educator** who is versed in this field. From his wealth and treasures of knowledge and instruments of education (as we observed before), the **philosopher-educator** fixes the theoretical and practical exigencies of authority so that it does not turn into a tyrannical, dictatorial, autocratic, or totalitarian system. Likewise, he (**philosopher-educator**) carefully gleans through the different contentions of freedom so as to situate it properly to avoid its turning to non-liberalism, anarchy, chaos or doom. He has the capacity of these functions because he is deeply associated with wisdom and the nuances thereof. This **balancing of the excesses of authority and freedom** in any epoch requires the credentials such as the **philosopher-educator** possesses.

Furthermore, the role of the philosopher-educator in socio-political order include the fostering and furthering of Emmanuel-Christus' (our Lord Jesus Christ's) teaching on love as



the basis of true and impeccable morality. There is no gainsaying the fact that true, unconditional, self-sacrificing **love** meets all expectations of goodness in social interaction, be that political, economic, educational, cultural, or what have you. This ethics of love taught by the greatest **Sage of sages** is unparalleled in its universal acceptability and effectiveness in solving and resolving all conflicts arising from inter-personal and social relationships. The principles and details of this **ethics of love or morality based on love**, as taught by Emmanuel Christus (the Philosopher and Educator of ages), are preserved by His disciples, especially in the Holy Writ (confer: John 13: 34-35; John 15: 13; John 8: 1-11; Luke 10: 27-37). The philosopher-educator, who can meet and supply the necessary and sufficient conditions for sociopolitical order must not only be versed in this ethics of love but be its worthy ambassador both in theory and practice. Unlike the concept of love in Joseph Fletcher's *Situation Ethics*, the love that is meant to be the basis of ethics for sociopolitical order, as taught and practiced by the philosopher-educator, is altruistic and agapaic, for all situations and events, and has universal application.

Again, the philosopher-educator fosters and furthers the reign of justice as a necessary condition for sociopolitical order. The sense in which justice is used here is not necessarily like John Rawls' "justice as fairness", nor as Platonic "justice as giving each man his own due", anymore is it used in the modern Feminist's sense of equality or jurists' and democrats' sense of equity. The true conception of justice that can guarantee true sociopolitical order is essentially justice based on righteousness, where righteousness is, in turn, based on truth and sanctity of action(s). Ultimately, this sense of justice is futile without a sense of Divinity.

Justice as righteousness does not place materialism as starting point or goal of sociopolitical action(s). While applying justice as a guide for sociopolitical actions and sociopolitical orderliness, the philosopher-educator gives prime priority to right reasoning and Divine prerogatives. It is right reasoning guided by right conscience, under the pruning of Divine principles that the philosopher-educator follows in the midwifery of true sociopolitical order. It is justice in the sense of righteousness or holiness of action(s) that can purvey real peace and prosperity which are the hallmarks of integral sociopolitical order. It is the philosopher-educator who knows and lives in the consciousness of true justice that can foster and further sociopolitical order. Moreover, the philosopher-educator, as we reasoned before, knows the quidity and essence of things in existence and reality in being. This essential knowledge emphasizes the unity of being which in turn encourages comprehensive appreciation of their inherent and integral goodness in the one Holy Divinity. As a matter of logical coherence, this unity of being in Divine goodness makes it possible for each being or existent to flower, blossom, and excel within its designate horizon and field of proclivity.

The philosopher-educator who possesses the wisdom of the essential connectedness of reality in being can, with keen insight, foresight, and hindsight, point the direction of progress in any social-related problematic. It is in following the direction(s) of wise and seasoned educator(s) that societies make their leap for social progress and prosperity. Thus, drawing the roadways for sociopolitical order and prosperity in any age is always the onus of the philosopher-educator. As in the days of Plato and Aristotle, through the days of Aquinas and John Locke to the times of Karl Marx and Globalized societies, the true philosopher is always the privileged educator in sociopolitical intricacies and quandaries. His (their) privileged

opinions and views, streaming from his (their) wealth and treasures of wisdom has (have) always guaranteed sociopolitical order. However, there are other responsibilities of the philosopher-educator, but we merely highlight these ones because we consider them most fundamental to the realization of sociopolitical order and orderliness.

### Summary and Conclusion

So far, we have examined the theoretical foundations and nature of **sociopolitical order**. We have seen that the Creator of all that there is wants for everything, including human beings, to follow some laid down laws and procedures in actions, praxis, and even in theorizing so as to arrive at their destined order or peace. We see that in sociopolitical field, disorderliness is engendered by freedom and unlimited authority which some rational creatures sometimes arrogate to themselves. To institute or re-establish order and orderliness needs the function of the Supreme Creator or the philosopher-**educator**, who is deeply connected to the wisdom in creation. We have so far attempted a modest elucidation of the concept of the philosopher-**educator**. We have stressed his responsibilities especially in the sociopolitical arena and particularly for our third millennium A. D. Although our examination could not be exhaustive, we attempted to outline the **most essential roles of the philosopher-educator for sociopolitical order**.

Finally, we would wish to conclude, as we held earlier, that the function of the philosopher-**educator** is very fundamental and ought to precede that of the philosopher-king. Moreover, as we tried to argue, true sociopolitical order will elude any society/community/individual that does not know and respect its/his onions and hierarchical structure in order of beings and existence. Consequently, in our third millennium A. D., more than in any other before, the role of the philosopher-**educator**, which may not necessarily be one individual, is germane and apodictic. His (their) wealth of knowledge and treasures of wisdom can affect and influence positively the society and sociopolitical order of things, especially in our own third millennium A. D.

### End notes

<sup>1</sup> This definition of **Sociopolitical** is a modified adaptation from our work: "Iroegbu on Ohacracy for Integral Sociopolitical True Existence" in **INTEGRATIVE HUMANISM JOURNAL**, cited below.

<sup>2</sup>This portion of the work: **The Concept of the philosopher-Educator** is a modified adaptation of part of our work published in **THE SOPHIA**, Vol. 10, No. 2, April 2008 and in **PHILOSOPHY & EDUCATION IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM A. D.**, Vol. 2, as cited below.

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