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## **Philosopher-Kings in Post-independent Africa: Myth or Reality!**

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### **Abstract**

Previous studies on the subject of leadership crisis among post independent African states, identified the likes of: Igwe, Ugwe, Lwanda, Birmingham, Olisa, Mwakikagile, and Sanders as some of the contemporary scholars who promoted arguments supporting the claims that Banda, Nkrumah and Azikiwe - all first Presidents of their various nations - should necessarily be ascribed the title of 'Philosopher-king', on account of their past achievements and contributions to their nation. However, a critical examination of the dispositions of the African leaders in question, identified some contradictions inherent in the above claims, especially when considered from the criteria stipulated for 'Philosopher-kings' by Plato in *The Republic*. While adopting conceptual and contextual analytical methods for synthesizing and analysing relevant literature, texts and archival materials on the subject of African Philosophy; African leadership styles; and leadership crisis generally, this study focused on analysing critically, the claims which ascribed 'Philosopher-king' titles to these post independent African leaders, with the view to affirming or negating the proposed claims by these contemporary scholars. The study observed that the earlier claims made about the post-independent African leaders under review, were largely erroneous, baseless, misleading, and unfounded. It is more of a myth than reality.

**Key Words:** African leaders, African Philosophy, Leadership Crisis, Philosopher-Kings, *Plato's Republic*, Post-independence

### **1. Introduction**

*Inasmuch as philosophers only are able to grasp the eternal and unchangeable, and those who wander in the region of the many and variable are not philosophers, I must ask you which of the two classes should be the rulers of our State...?*

**Socrates in the Republic in (Halsall, 2000).<sup>1</sup>**

This study is a sub-set of a broader study which focused on prescribing Plato's notions of politics and his Philosopher-Kings' theory as panacea to leadership crisis in a country like Nigeria. The study was guided by the thesis proposed by Plato which states that: '... human race will have no respite from evils until those who are really philosophers acquire political power or until, through some divine dispensation, those who rule and have political authority in the cities become real philosophers' (326a-326b).<sup>2,3,4</sup>

The trust of the argument in Plato's thesis above, corroborates with recent arguments which scholars like (Achebe<sup>5</sup>, Ebegbulem<sup>6</sup>, Ezirim<sup>7</sup>, and Agbor<sup>8</sup>, made about the cause of leadership crisis. They had argued in various texts and platforms that leadership crisis experienced in the world today is a function of the existence and the proliferation of bad and insensitive individuals who populate the leadership class, who by one means or the other, continued to emerge as winners of most elected office positions in the state. The emergence of these inexperienced and unqualified individuals into the positions of power, invariably results to the kind of scenario which Plato in the *Republic* described as situations where...

...human race will continue to have no respite from the evils arising from poor, inexperienced and ineffective leaders, until those who are really philosophers acquire political power or until, through some divine dispensation, those who rule and have political authority in the cities become real philosophers".<sup>9, 10.</sup>

The irony in the whole argument thus arise, where the contemporary scholars mentioned above had strongly ascribed the title of Philosopher-kings to most of the post-independent political leaders in Africa's short history, why are there present leadership crisis in countries like Nigeria, Malawi and Ghana etc., believed to be a consequence of the failed leadership styles and activities of post-independent African leaders?<sup>7, 8.</sup> The prevalence of leadership crisis in post independent Africa, in the presence of these acclaimed Philosopher-kings, is the reason why some contemporary scholars are questioning the caliber, qualification and experience of the individuals who emerged as political leaders in the early 1960's (Post-independent Africa).

The need to address this irony and to properly situate the root of leadership crisis in Africa necessitates and justifies the reason for writing this present article. Thus, this paper critically examines the lives, qualification and political activities of three past African leaders with the view to negating or affirming the 'Philosopher-kings' status ascribed to them by scholars like: Sanders<sup>11</sup>, William<sup>12</sup>, Igwe<sup>13</sup>, Lwanda<sup>14</sup>, Birmingham<sup>15</sup>, Olisa<sup>16</sup>, Ugowe<sup>17</sup>, andMwakikagile<sup>18</sup>. Attaining the objective of this study will go a long way to properly address the problem of identifying the root cause of leadership crisis in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Hence, the research question that guides this research simply states: Were there Philosopher-kings in post independent African?

## **2. Were there philosopher-kings in post independent African?**

To respond meaningfully to this research question, there will be need to make reference to two separate studies which are found in Bloom<sup>3</sup>. The first study is considered to be very germane for responding adequately to the research questions. It can be found in Book III of *Plato's Republic*'. In the study, Plato clearly outlined the specific requirement and stages which every aspiring leader must first undergo before qualifying as a suitable candidate for leading the state and its citizens. The second study in question can also be found in Bloom<sup>3</sup> and Wogu<sup>4</sup>. There in the text, Socrates is seen engaging Glaucon in a conversation about the qualities of who should rule the state and its citizens.

Socrates in these separate conversations concluded that, only individuals (Philosopher-kings) who have the ability to contemplate and understand reality, they are those who should qualify to rule the state and its citizens. The quotation which was presented at the beginning of this article is a clear example and indication of who Plato believed, should be ascribed the status of 'Philosopher-king'. In his own words: 'those who by virtue of intellectual prowess and sense of moral virtue, are able to grasp the eternal and unchangeable truths of reality, they are those who should rule the state'<sup>1</sup>. The section that follow examines the various factors that were considered to influenced the above mentioned scholar's decision to ascribe the title of 'Philosopher-king' to the African leaders under review. These factors are discussed under the following headings: Intellectual prowess, Institutions attended, degrees obtained from Ivy League Universities and the various political ideology espoused by these African leaders.

### ***2.1A case for intellectual prowess***

In responding to the research questions slated for this article, it is important to reiterate one of the major conditions spelt out by Socrates in *The Republic*, regarding the qualities and conditions of persons who should qualify to the status of Philosopher-kings and by proxy, leaders capable of leading or ruling the affairs of the state. For Socrates, one of the factors which should determine who should rule the affairs of states and their citizens, is the factor of 'intellectual prowess or wisdom'<sup>4</sup>. This in his opinion, can only be attained via a rigorous *leadership education* process. A process of intellectual training which individuals earmarked for leadership are exposed to for a period of about 50 years. This process of leadership education, Plato opines, affords apprentice leaders, the opportunity to acquire the requisite knowledge necessary for becoming 'Philosopher-kings' and for leading the state.<sup>3, 9 & 19</sup>. This perhaps may have accounted for some of the reasons why certain scholars argued that; 'since the African leaders "under review" were individuals distinguished from birth by the gift of high intellectual prowess and going by the track records of University degrees and certificates they acquired during their period of training in various institutions of learning abroad, and also considering the fact that they ended up as first Presidents of their newly independent countries, in the light of the period under review'. This perhaps justified why the likes Sanders<sup>11</sup>, William<sup>12</sup>, Igwe<sup>13</sup>, Lwanda<sup>14</sup>, Birmingham<sup>15</sup>, Olisa<sup>16</sup>, Ugowe<sup>17</sup>, and Mwakikagile<sup>18</sup> chose to ascribe the title of 'Philosopher-king' to the post-colonial leaders in question.

The feature of intellectual prowess no doubt, made the post-independent African leaders exceptional students during their early educational training. To buttress these points, specific references about the intellectual prowess of President Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and President Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria have been made in several literatures<sup>20, 21, 22</sup>. Records also showed that the three leaders in questions, were at one point or the other, sponsored to train abroad where they studied and acquired more than just one University Degree and several Master's Degrees each; as if to prove their intellectual proficiencies<sup>20, 21</sup>. The question however arise: should the fact of intellectual prowess alone be sufficient reason for ascribing the status of 'Philosopher-king' to the African leaders under review? Further studies in this regard will suffice at this point.

### ***2.2 The acquisition of relevant University degrees abroad***

They African leaders in question, all went ahead to pursue studies abroad, even up to the PhD level, although only Banda and Azikiwe eventually completed and acquired doctorate degrees in their field of endeavour. For Banda, he went ahead to acquire medical doctorates from both American and British Universities respectively. Another very important factor worthy of note is, the fact that all three post-independent African leaders under review - had at different points - touched base with some of the most outstanding institutions of learning in their time. It is on record that two of these three leaders under review: Nkrumah and Azikiwe, 'attended special training institutions synonymous with training aspiring leaders of the Black race from all over the world'<sup>20, 21</sup>.

Other institutions attended include: (Howards University in Washington DC, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh). It had been argued that their various exposures and extracurricular activities in these institutions of higher learning, was instrumental to their rise to positions of prominence and political power in their various countries. Perhaps, this may further explain why they were at some point, more favourably disposed to contest and run for the office of the number one citizen of their country, over and against their contemporaries and opponents from opposition parties, upon their return from studies abroad.

The exposure gotten from these great citadel of learning, perhaps, explains why scholars like Sanders<sup>11</sup>, William<sup>12</sup>, Igwe<sup>13</sup>, Lwanda<sup>14</sup>, Birmingham<sup>15</sup>, Olisa<sup>16</sup>, Ugowe<sup>17</sup>, andMwakikagile<sup>18</sup>naturally found ample reasons for dubbing these African leaders with the status of 'Philosopher-king', after the order of Plato's prescription of who Philosopher-Kings are in *The Republic*. The above suppositions notwithstanding, the question which this research poses at this point is: Are the reasons and arguments offered above (Intellectual prowess of past African leaders, acquiring relevant degrees from ivy-league Universities abroad) sufficient conditions for ascribing the status of 'Philosopher' and by proxy, the exalted position of 'Philosopher-kings' to the post-independent African leaders under review?

While deliberating on this question, perhaps, further analysis on the dispositions of these African leaders - in the light of the very salient conditions which Socrates himself gave as prerequisite conditions necessary for admittance into the class of philosophers/philosopher-kings – will suffice at this stage. It is the opinion of this researcher that, further analysis in this direction will enhance the degree and quality of the answers that are envisaged to emerge from this study. Finding these reasoned answers became the main focus and objective for this research henceforth.

### ***2.3 Socrates' criteria for Philosopher-Kings***

Getting acquainted with the dialogues which Socrates had with Glaucon in Bloom<sup>3</sup>, &Wogu<sup>22</sup>, on the features and characteristics that distinguishes philosopher-kings for the tasks of leadership is appropriate for this section of the study. In one of Socrates' dialogue, he stated in very clear terms, the features that distinguished philosophers or the guardian class *HoiPhylakes* (the ruling or the guardian class) from every other class of individuals in the society: the *Hoi Polloi* (the group that comprise of farmers, manufactures and the artisan class of citizens) and the *Hoi Epikouroi* (the classes of citizens that comprises of the solders or military, the police and the administrative class)<sup>3</sup>. Socrates argued that 'only individuals who are not just able to contemplate the "form of the beautiful" but are also able to

“see and participate” in it’. Only such people, by Socrates’ standards, are suitable and qualified to run the affairs of the state.<sup>3, 23</sup>.

Such persons in the mind of Socrates are ‘not dreaming’ but are wide awake to the realities of life. As such; they are the best candidates to qualify and graduate to the class of philosophers and by implication, viable candidates for political leadership and for ruling the state and its citizens. On the other hand, Socrates in the same dialogue, presented the picture of individuals who, though having some basic features similar to those of philosophers, yet cannot qualify to be ascribed with the title of Philosophers, nor can they be viable candidates for ruling the state and its citizens. Where such class of persons (*Hoi Polloi* or the *Hoi Epikouroi*) dabble into matters of the state and leadership, their actions and dispositions in political and state matters will only translate to ‘chaos, crisis and evils for the citizens and the state in general’<sup>9</sup>. Perhaps, a recap of the dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon will suffice at this point:

[Socrates:] "So, I draw this distinction: On one side are those you just now called lovers of sights, lovers of crafts, and practical people; on the other side are those we are now arguing about and whom one would alone call philosophers." [Glaucon:] "'How do you mean?" [Socrates:] "They are lovers of sights and sounds like beautiful sounds, colours, shapes, and everything fashioned out of them, but their thoughts are unable to see and embrace the nature of the beautiful itself." [Glaucon:] "That's for sure." [Socrates:] "In fact, there are very few people who would be able to reach the beautiful itself and see it by itself. Isn't that so?" [Glaucon:] "Certainly!" [Socrates:] "What about someone who believes in beautiful things, but doesn't believe in the beautiful itself and isn't able to follow anyone who could lead him to the knowledge of it? Don't you think he is living in a dream rather than a wakened state? Isn't this dreaming: whether asleep or awake, to think that a likeness is not a likeness but rather the thing itself that it is like?" [Glaucon:] "I certainly think that someone who does that is dreaming." [Socrates:] "But someone who, to take the opposite case, believes in the beautiful itself, can see both it and the things that participate in it and doesn't believe that the participants are it or that it itself is the participants--is he living in a dream or is he awake? Glaucon:] "He's very much awake"<sup>3, 23, 38</sup>.

From the above dialogue, Socrates made it clear that “those who wander in the region of the many, and are capricious in nature, are not philosophers,”<sup>1</sup>. In Glaucon’s own words, “they are dreaming”!

### **3. A critique of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana**

Reference is made of a passing comment made about Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, by a first-class Philosopher: A. J. Ayer (who was also his supervisor), while he was yet a candidate desiring to acquire a PhD degree from University College London, in the exalted discipline of Philosophy, in the area of ‘Logical Positivism’:

I liked him and enjoyed talking to him but he does not seem to me as one who has an analytical mind. He wanted answers too quickly. I think part of the trouble may have been that he wasn't concentrating very hard on his thesis. Staying in school to me, was a way of marking time until the opportunity came for him to return to Ghana.<sup>24</sup>.

From the above remark on Nkrumah, it can be inferred that this very salient observation made about Nkrumah largely explains why - not too long after he became the President and leader of his country – he was found to be unable to contemplate, nor thoroughly understand the reality and essence of the office of the President of his country, Ghana; that is, considering the kind of policies he enforced on assumption into office. One of such policies was the declarations of his country to be a one party state [his party: The Convention People's Party (CPP)]. In addition, he also declared himself "President for Life". Reports confirm that 'the declaration to become "President for Life" was facilitated by an amendment passed into law by a 99.91 percent votes from the parliament of his country, who affirmed Nkrumah's decision'<sup>25</sup>.

During Nkrumah's time in office, he enacted policies which reduced drastically, the political importance of the local chieftaincy title holders in Ghana (The Asante and Akan Chiefs who had initially enjoyed some degree of authority during the colonial rule). 'Acts passed in 1958 and 1959 gave the government more power to de-stool traditional chiefs directly, thus, he proclaimed government of stool land—and revenues'<sup>26</sup>. These new policies created a kind of alienations among the chiefs; consequently, they 'favorably looked forward to the overthrow of Nkrumah's government and his party'<sup>27</sup>. It is clear - from some of the instances cited above on Nkrumah - that policies emerging from his administration were inimical to the people and citizens of Ghana. Studies also reveal that some of the cited instances above, no doubt, were directly opposed to the first round of speeches he made to the people of Ghana, a day after their country gained independence. Some writers captured these comments thus:

As the fifth of March turned to the sixth, Nkrumah stood before tens of thousands of supporters and proclaimed, "Ghana will be free forever" ...to his new country's citizens. He added that "we have a duty to prove to the world that African can conduct their own affairs with efficiency and tolerance and through the exercise of democracy. We must set an example to all other African nations and the rest of the world"<sup>21, 28</sup>.

Nkrumah's policies, influenced by his political party (CPP) - against his comments and promises in the above quotation – 'paved the way for corruption and a *de facto* legal dictatorship/autocratic rule in his government where votes in the parliament were easily rigged to favour Nkrumah and his party'<sup>25</sup>The crisis arising from these policies were identified as not being people centered in Nkrumah's administration. This later led to several assassination attempts on the life of Nkrumah. The actions, reactions and leadership crisis arising from his method of leadership, culminated in an eventual overthrow of his government in a coup which took place on February 1966, some 9 years after he assumed office as the leader and first President of Ghana.

It is evident, from the above account, that the citizens of Ghana experiences untold hardship and crisis arising from the mass rallies and industrial actions which the people resorted to, especially when they could no longer bear the hardship arising from the policies enacted by Nkrumah. This situations further strengthens the proposed resolve and opinion of this paper that, when individuals who are not Philosopher-kings get into positions of leadership and power, as we have seen in the case of Nkrumah, their style of leadership is bound to become the reasons why states and their citizens suffer from 'the evil and chaos arising from wrong and poor policies which their leaders enact control the people and the state'<sup>9</sup>, a point which Plato had emphasized on in the famous quotation above.

#### 4. A critique of Kamuzu Banda of Malawi

Similar instances of anti-government decisions and inimical policies leading to cases and instances of fraud, corruption and leadership crisis, were also identified to exist in President Kamuzu Banda of Malawi's administration. Going by the criteria set aside by Plato for Philosopher-kings in *the Republic*, Banda's dispositions were seen to largely fall short of the expectations and conduct becoming of a true leader and a philosopher-king. From Plato's point of view, Banda was one of those individuals who, he had largely inferred, could from a distance, be assumed to have the capacity "to partake in the beautiful". In Plato's own words: '...each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many'<sup>3</sup>. In other words, these are the kind of leaders which Plato described as 'lovers of sights and sounds like beautiful sounds, colours, shapes, and everything fashioned out of them. However, despite their association with these realm and order of thoughts, their thoughts and understanding are unable to see and embrace totally, the nature of the beautiful itself' (Bloom, 1968 and Grube, 1992).<sup>3, 23</sup>

The research thus observes that while the leaders under review bore externally, the physical likeness and traits of philosophers, and by implication Philosopher-kings, they were not really 'able to contemplate the reality thereof'. As such, they could not understand the real essence for which they were called to the place and office of leadership, hence the rising spade of leadership crisis recorded in the countries where these individuals posed as leaders and rulers of states.

It is on record that President Kamuzu Banda, like his counterpart Kwame Nkrumah, before becoming the first President of his country, also criticized racial policies in Southern Rhodesia. He chanted nationalistic songs, for which he was imprisoned on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 1959. However, scholars like: Mcneil<sup>29</sup>, &Lwanda<sup>30</sup>, observed that when Banda finally became the leader and President of his country Malawi, 'his policies were discovered to be antisocial to the point that many ministers in his cabinet identified his style of leadership to be inimical to the furtherance of the life and welfare of the citizens in the state, hence they plotted against him and his government'. This however, was before he had - like his counterpart Kwame Nkrumah, 'declared his country a one party state'. 'He also declared himself "President for life" in 1971, with a warning that any who opposed him will become food for Crocodiles'<sup>12, 29</sup> Some of these factors explained why he remained in office for a period of 30 years.

Also worthy of note is the fact that Banda lived a very flamboyant and corrupt life style while in government, a feature which by Plato's standards, were in sharp contrast with the conduct and disposition typical of philosopher-kings as enunciated in *the Republic*. For instance, 'he kept five luxurious residents with a fleet of exquisite luxury British cars and a privet Jet, all to himself alone; in a poor country where the per-capita income was less than \$200 a year'<sup>29</sup>. Thirty years later when he was forcefully removed from office, he faced numerous corruption and murder charges in court<sup>30</sup>. This is one quality Plato believed, should not be associated with leaders who are strongly considered for joining the order of Philosopher-kings.

After a critical look at the picture painted here of Banda, this research is inclined to believe that his life and dispositions falls way below the expectations and criteria put in place by Plato in *the Republic* for choosing political

leaders. These criteria were discussed in his many dialogues in *the Republic* above. Further details and examples of such criteria and the quality of individuals worthy and capable of ruling the affairs of citizens in the state, can be found in Bloom<sup>3,23</sup>. Where persons who fall way below the criteria spelt out in *Plato's Republic*, find their way into the corridors of power and leadership positions, the resultant consequences described in one of Plato's famous quotations becomes the lot of the citizens and the states in question:

The human race will have no respite from evils until those who are really philosophers acquire political power or until, through some divine dispensation, those who rule and have political authority in the cities become real philosophers (326a-326b),<sup>9,3</sup>.

Malawi, a newly declared independent state under the leadership of Kamuzu Banda, for most parts of his 30 years reign, could not help but suffer from the evils and crisis which Plato suggested will become the lot of any state ruled by leaders who do not acquire philosophical training. This research thus argue that the reasons for the leadership crisis experienced in Malawi were largely a consequence of the kind of individuals these countries got as their first Presidents', individuals scholars have described as selfish, wasteful, self-centered, inhuman, manipulative, corrupt and unpatriotic to their host nation. This resultant consequences of the leadership styles of Banda in Malawi, went a long way to prove Plato's thesis about unqualified leaders, as indicated in the above quotation.

## **5. A Critique of NnamdiAzikiwe of Nigeria**

Current review of literature on NnamdiAzikiwe, the first President of Nigerian revealed that some scholars found convincing reasons to ascribe the title of 'Philosopher-king' alongside other numerous titles such as: the Owele of Onitsha and the father of the Nation to NnamdiAzikiwe. It is however, the view of this paper that the move to ascribe the title of 'Philosopher-king' was a wrong and mistaken assumption about the great man popularly known as Zik. This is because a close examination of his dispositions and conduct before, during and after his time in office as the first President of Nigeria, revealed that he too, fell short of the criteria spelt out by Plato as the conditions necessary and sufficient for ascribing the title of 'Philosopher-king' to apprentice or sitting leaders, as contained in *The Republic* and more specifically, in the criteria captured in one of the famous dialogues which transpired between Socrates and Glaucon,<sup>3,22</sup> as earlier indicated above.

Thus, even though Azikiwe, like his counterparts Banda and Nkrumah, had attended the same ivy league University for Black people - a University reputed for training personalities who were later identified as individuals destined to become future leaders of their nations, by virtue of the training and ideologies they pursued - in the United States of America<sup>20, 21</sup>, it was still not sufficient reasons enough, necessary for ascribing the title of 'Philosopher-king' to the likes of NnamdiAzikiwe.

The fact that Zik, like his friends and counterparts, had gone ahead to acquire more than one University degree, a couple of Master's degree and a PhD - just to prove his competence intellectually, - and even though he had also pursued his own nationalistic goals, for which he was once tried, convicted and sentenced to jail for a period of six months, on charges of sedition, one associated with the wrongful promotion of the political ideology he championed



via a Newspaper outlet where he was editor in chief <sup>31</sup> and even though he eventually rose - via his political and nationalistic activities - to become the first President of Nigeria, it is the opinion of this paper that the factors and qualities articulated here about Azikiwe, were not sufficient conditions enough for ascribing the title of 'Philosopher-king' to him.

Thus, the move to ascribe the title of 'Philosopher-king' to Azikiwe, this paper opines, 'will amount to committing a fallacy of hasty generalizations'<sup>4</sup>, an error in reasoning on the part of the scholars who held this assumption about Azikiwe. The arguments presented against these assumptions are further strengthened by the resolutions emphasized in the dialogues between Socrates and Glaucon, already discussed above <sup>3,22</sup>.

Many who oppose the idea of ascribing the title of 'Philosopher-king' to Azikiwe<sup>32,33</sup>, traced the source of their arguments to the point where Azikiwe's nationalistic activities for his country were identified to be questionable. For instance, his willingness to drop out of an organization (the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) which he co-founded with Herbert Macaulay in 1944, because he thought the party leaders were segregating among other party members, is one instance worthy of note. His resolve to disassociate himself from a party he co-founded, to go and found a regional party (group) constituting largely of *ndi* Igbos in the Eastern Region, studies revealed, Aluko<sup>34</sup>, Thomason<sup>35</sup>, Emakpo<sup>36</sup>, and Wogu, *et al*<sup>37</sup>, heralded the beginning of ethnic and regional politics in Nigeria, a problem which many believed, was instrumental and responsible for instigating the many cases of leadership crisis recorded in the country today. In addition, these scholars infer that 'the beginning of regional politics in Nigeria was responsible for keeping Nigeria divided along regional and ethnic lines till date'<sup>34,36</sup>.

It is for these reasons and more that this paper finds it most inappropriate, the move to ascribes the title of Philosopher-king to the sage NnamdiAzikiwe, since there are convincing evidence that ties him to the factors responsible for initiating regional politics in Nigeria and subsequently, the incessant cases of leadership crisis in the country. In all fairness, the paper is willing to accept ascribing the title of 'King' to the person of NnamdiAzikiwe, seeing that as a man, he rose to the exalted position of the first President and leader of his country by reason of hard work, intellectual prowess and his political activism. The paper however, finds the idea of ascribing to Azikiwe, the status of a 'Philosopher-King', an erroneous move and a falsehood that needs to be corrected. It is a misrepresentation of the criteria prescribed for philosophe-kings by Plato. In all fairness, it is also a misrepresentation of the person of NnamdiAzikiwe.

## 6. Conclusion

From the accounts and dispositions of the three post-independent African leaders discussed in the above passages, the arguments provided so far clearly indicated that the African leaders under review, fell short of the criteria and specifications stipulated in *Plato's Republic* for individuals who could attain the status of Philosopher-king. Their features and characteristics which these leaders displayed were typical of individuals who according to Socrates, "...were lovers of sights and sound etc..." "Their thoughts and minds" this research opines, "could not embrace the nature of the beautiful itself". Hence, where it may be permissible for some scholars to ascribed the 'Kingship' status to some of these African leaders discussed so far, by virtue of their ability to rise to the place of prominence

and leadership - on account of the individual ideologies they portrayed or championed (African Nationalism, Africanization & Socialism); and going by the various educational qualifications they were able to acquire from the Ivy league Universities they attended - it will be wrong and erroneous to ascribe the status of 'Philosopher-king' to either Banda, Nkrumah or Azikiwe, on account on the arguments and true dispositions of the African leaders systematically discussed and presented so far for in this paper.

It can therefore be concluded that those previous notions by scholars which ascribed the title of 'Philosopher-king' to past African leaders Sanders<sup>11</sup>, William<sup>12</sup>, Igwe<sup>13</sup>, Lwanda<sup>14</sup>, Birmingham<sup>15</sup>, Olisa<sup>16</sup>, Ugowe<sup>17</sup>, and Mwakikagile<sup>18</sup> were indeed, mistaken, unfounded and fallacious from several perspectives. The three African leaders under review may have qualified to be addressed as kings, seeing that they were able to rise to the points of becoming first presidents of their individual nations. These features however, as exalted as it may seem, are not sufficient reasons enough for scribing the status of 'Philosophers-king' to these African leaders. Matter of fact, the claims by these group of thinkers is more of a myth than a reality.

Allowing such misconception to continue will amount to discrediting the institution of philosophy and the philosophers whose ideas construed and formulated the thoughts and ideologies that have made the discipline one of the most revered discipline in the world today. Permitting such erroneous mistakes to continue will amount to contradicting the standards and ideals which Socrates and Plato in *The Republic* holds dear about the discipline of philosophy and various personalities of thinkers whose postulations on several issues in philosophy, are most of the reasons why the study of philosophy as a discipline, will continue to attract many who seek rational justifications for true knowledge at all times.

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