

Self-determination, Nationalism, Development and Pan-Africanism Stuck on the Runway: Are Intellectuals to be Blamed?

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Abstract

Rambling into history as a continent and nations of mysterious origin, Africa is a multiracial and multi-lingual conglomeration of tribes that underwent the most human destruction ever witnessed in the world. Independence was perceived as the first stage of a process of re-establishing the lost dignity and heritage of the people. Almost half-a-century after independence that aspiration of regaining lost human dignity seem stuck on the runway.

Africa has become synonymous with conflict, a failure of leadership, creating a false image of itself and unable to provide quality livelihood to the people. The continent prematurely lost its sense of direction, pride, unity and leadership. Africa finds itself buried in a tripple coffin.

The obvious and rightful question that comes to mind given the plethora of problems plaguing the continent are many and varied. First, does Africa want to develop? Second, what kind of independence did Africa get? Third, through which means must Africa address its problems? Fourth what has been the role of its intellectuals? Fifth, what are the responses of the international community, particularly that of the former colonial masters in structuring and influencing the destiny of the continent for good or bad. In short what is the trouble with Africa?

This paper looks at the litany of national deficiencies that gives the continent a bad image, unable to address the myriad of problems and provide quality living standard for the people. Why Africans have resign themselves to their existing peril? And why African governments must give content and meaning to the aspirations of the people under the canopy of the rising and unstoppable tide of globalisation and the information and communication technology age.

It props into issues of the dialectic of micro-nationalism, nationalism, development, globalisation and other issues which define the place of Africa within the world system as well as forcing a serious reflections on ways in which citizenship and development can be re-conceptualised beyond the mere confines of the existing nation-state order.

The paper addresses issues underpinning the struggles and the unity of the continent. It does so by probing into the role of intellectuals, leadership and habits which cripple the aspirations and inhibits the chances of Africa becoming a modern, democratic and attractive continent capable of transforming the lives of the poor and needy.

Adopting a multi-disciplinary analytical and discussion approach, by addressing ensures of the interface of self-determination (under)development, marginalisation, xenophobia and exclusion, the wanton and colossal destruction of national and human resources among others in the process of knowledge production. It looks at identify formation and the construction of

a sense of belonging as the take-off to sustainable development. The descent into mere anarchy must be halted and reversed if Africa is to be part of the 21st century and beyond

The conclusion is that Africa needs a new bold, constructive and ever encompassing road map of rethinking, rereading the past with a view of genuinely reconstructing the past, present and future within the true aspirations of the people to full realisation. Proactive strategic policy measures are advanced.