

The ‘equation’ of Pan-Africanism

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What is Pan-Africanism?

A political movement and ideology, with the objective of promoting and encouraging the practice of African solidarity everywhere. A social, cultural, political vision for the emancipation of African peoples.

The word “Pan-Africanism” appears in the end of 19th century (1900 the Pan African conference), with the ultimate objective to release the will of a political organization gathering all African Nations and Populations. Its principle is that Africa’s and Diaspora’s populations share a common history and destiny and their Social, Economic and Political progress is in relation with their Unity.

The history of Pan-Africanism can be traced all the way back to the time of the slave trade (1788) and eventual colonization of the African continent. It was a movement and reaction to oppression and racial exploitation. But it took also a dimension of Human Rights, as there were black people as well as white people convinced that it was a “violation” of Human Rights.

The Pan-Africanism movement raised to serve initially advocacy against the enslavement of black people to evolve, after the resistance with Edward W. Blyden (Panaf. Theorician), Anténor Firmin (Political Action) and in the second phase with the London Pan-African conference, 1900, into an organized movement with cultural and political claims. After the Second World War it took a continental dimension and came out to represent the will and the quest for continental unity, prosperity and independence.

Following the first Pan-African conference in 1900, W. E. B DuBois convened a series of Pan-African congresses (1919 1945).

Kwame Nkurumah said about Pan-Africanism and Human Rights: “...*Now that we in Africa are marching towards the complete emancipation of this Continent, our independent status will help in no small measure their efforts to attain full human rights and human dignity as citizens of their country.*”

And more deep was what Dr. DuBois said before him (an address entitled “The future of Africa” by Dr. DuBois, which was delivered by his wife on his behalf, among others observed that): “*If Africa unites, it will be because each part, each nation, each tribe gives up a part of the heritage for the good of the whole. That is what union means; that is what Pan Africa-means: When the child is born into the tribe the price of his*

growing up is giving a part of his freedom to the tribe. This he soon learns or dies. When the tribe becomes a union of tribes, the individual tribe surrenders some part of its freedom to the paramount tribe.”

Therein lie the reasons and the main objectives of the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), decolonization and African unity. And all African countries won their “independence” (theoretically at least).

Then comes the African Union “Institution” (2000 2002). But is Pan-Africanism born because of slave trade and with a lot of ambition, struggling and some Afrocentrism, available today? What’s its position against globalization? Did we understand the real Pan-Africanism that the fathers of this ideology and movement wanted to spread?

Pan-Africanism should be a motivator: as life is a circle, so peoples are somehow similar (dead or alive) when sharing the same principles.

And if we go back to the main principles and fundamentals of Pan-Africanism, and look at it in a way like an equation, we derive the following:

A: Genetic and anthropological evidence (migration...) prove that the origin of all Human beings is Africa (West Africa);

B: With Globalization we have today Human Citizens;

C: Pan-Africanism is a movement to unite African peoples in the continent and the African Diaspora (Diaspora: African descendants living outside Africa);

D: Pan-Africanism consider Africans and their descendants as a single united together.

Based on all these parameters:

- $A + B + D =$ Africans and their descendants means all Human beings Worldwide.

- $C + D =$ Pan-Africanism is a Global movement for Human beings’ unity, equality and peace.

What we need is a conscience, with the spirit of “Pan-Africanism” in its wider meaning.

Pan-Africanism doesn’t need Globalization because it is the origin of it. With Globalization we forget the values and the principles for full Human Rights and Human Dignity (what Pan-Africanism struggles for).

To end, let’s apply the previous equation on what Kwame Nkurumah said here: *“Long may the links between Africa and the peoples of African descent continue to hold us together in fraternity.”*

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