

AFRICA'S PATH IN HISTORY

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THE All African People's Conference in Accra formulated the only real and dynamic principal for the reconstruction of Africa—'Independence and Unity'. Although brief, this formula is nonetheless the only one with concrete historical motives and objectives. The unity which will be achieved after independence will not be a partial unity, based on the artificially conceived English, Belgian, French and Portuguese zones. It is to be a fundamental unity, which, starting from our similar needs and conditions, will set free vast economic, social and cultural potentials. It will activate an enormous section of humanity, enabling it to participate in the creative enterprises of the world and so increase the capacities and possibilities of all men.

"Mere pipe-dreams", proclaim those who are wrapped up in their personal egotism, their unjustifiable privileges and their fear of any undertaking in which the profits and benefits would be out of their personal reach. Are we to base our reasoning on the opinions of those who so heartily applaud inter-planetary travel, but refuse to allow that human society should now realize the limits of its possibilities on earth?

What is Africa in the context of the world? An immense continent peopled by more than 200 million men, in spite of the great demographic impoverishment which took place throughout the period of slavery. What are her resources? Proportionately much greater than those of the most highly-developed countries. These can only be estimated on the basis of very sparse prospecting, which has hardly peeled the crust off her incalculable riches.

It is when the manner of making use of these resources is approached, that the divergences and contradictions appear. Here two completely irreconcilable theories come into conflict with one another, two irremediably antagonistic concepts. On the one hand, we have the colonialist concept. The colonialist, after having appropriated the means of all production and exploitation, the control and profit of all distribution, claims to develop the African market according to the most correct principles of commerce. There is no need to point out that these principles are closely linked to a racist concept of the

world, and that they aim unswervingly at a vast 'proletarianisation' of the under-developed countries.

On the other hand, we have the anti-colonialism of the under-developed countries, which has crystallized the national forces of the African people. The political objective of the Ghana-Guinea Union, which has been taken up and expanded in the Union of Independent African States, is to co-ordinate and unify the national forces, to integrate them and make them into a 'power' at the service of the development and emancipation of Africa. It is quite apparent that this 'political' union will become, as soon as the necessary conditions exist, an economic and cultural union as well—in a word, a union animated by African thought and directed towards African objectives.

There is no doubt that the colonialist powers, in spite of their own often relatively poor natural resources, have sacrificed the development of the colonized countries in favour of their own development. This has considerably accentuated the initial disparity which existed between the colonizing and the colonized countries, and has resulted in an outstanding human and historical failure which Africa must face immediately if she is to survive.

Independence and Unity will be the tools of our development, the means of our emancipation. This development and emancipation will provide a contributory force, a complementary source of strength to be placed at the service of a world society which will bring about the real freedom of all men.

In concluding, we cannot do better than to quote passages from speeches made by President Sekou Touré on various political occasions in Guinea. These passages clearly explain the nature of the movement for the freedom and unification of the entire African continent.

The Political Field

"In building up our country to the requirements of contemporary history, we must build communally and not according to the perspectives or interests of any particular nations or powers. If the building does not take place communally, it will not take place at all; for there is not one of our fundamental problems which can be solved if we do not solve it together. That is why the fragmentary independence of Africa must contribute towards her full independence and serve as a basis for her unification.

“We must strengthen the natural links of solidarity which join us, maintaining unity of action and conceptual unity. We must have the same objectives and reach them by the same means. We must promote the generalized use of our best methods, mutual exchange of the results of our experiments and ever-increasing dynamism and vigilance.”

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“It is because we do not consider freedom and sovereignty to be ends in themselves, but the essential means of our emancipation and the tools best adapted to our development, that from October 2nd, 1958, we state that the independence of Guinea has been defined as being at the service of the independence of Africa. We are fully aware that sovereignty can in no way help our peoples when it is fragmented and isolated in an Africa of which parts are still under foreign domination. For this reason we have written into our Constitution that we abandon our right of sovereignty for the benefit of any larger group which might form in Africa.”

The Economic Field

“To take an example: independent Guinea produces coffee, bananas, palms, bauxite, iron ores, gold, diamonds, etc., thus exploiting the riches belonging to all of Africa. As we have said, however, Guinea alone, or Ghana alone, or Liberia alone, cannot influence the marketing of these products. Each country is at the mercy of the countries that buy from it. Now, let us suppose that there is an African common market for bauxite, iron, gold, diamonds, oil products, cocoa, coffee, and so on: the law of supply would be as effective as the law of demand; the inverse phenomenon would operate in trade relations, and the African common market would have considerable influence on the terms of demand. We should consider what a market of this scope could mean, in which the needs are as great as the resources.

The Cultural and Social Fields

“The basis for the participation of the black man in world culture is the African Personality. This cannot be validly reconstructed by the intervention of any will or force outside Africa, or outside the framework of the independence and unity on which the future of the Negro world depends. The cultural compromises resulting from domination and restriction necessi-

tate a complete reconversion on the part of the African man. Only in this way can he re-establish his real personality, his full possibilities, his unique values and the means of using his human resources."

"The future will comprise the sum total of the cultures and civilizations which are not too aware of their particular contribution and which are not absorbed in peddling their unique values. In order to attain greater achievements, it is not too much to expect that each should join his efforts to those of others, making his intellectual means, his scientific and technical knowledge available to the world. Because no people, no nation can change and grow except with and through others.

In the realm of thought man can claim to be the brain of the world, but on the concrete level of real life, where any occurrence will affect both the physical and spiritual being, the world is always the brain of man; because it is in the world that all the thinking forces can be found, the dynamic forces of development and perfectionism. It is there too that the fusion of energies takes place and where the full quantity of the intellectual capacities of man can be found. So who could claim to exclude any one school of thought, any one kind of thought, or any one human family, without by so doing excluding himself to some extent from the total society of man? The right to exist is established by presence, concept, expression and action. Any group which is denied this fundamental human right must be counted as a loss to the sum total of humanity."

"The science resulting from all human knowledge has no nationality. The ridiculous disputes about the origin of such and such a discovery do not interest us since they add nothing to the value of the discovery.

It can therefore be said that African unity offers the world a new humanism, essentially founded on universal solidarity and co-operation between peoples, without any racial and cultural antagonisms and without narrow egotism and privilege.

This is above and beyond the problems of West Africa and as far removed from the quarrels which divide the highly-developed countries as are the conditions and the aspirations of the African people."