PAN AFRICANISM - A SUSPENDED REALITY

Padmore, Nkrumah, C L R James and the Ideology of Pan Africanism

This paper looks at the genesis and development of Pan Africanism as a Political Ideology and the causes of its current suspension within the realities of African political movements. The title of the paper is deliberately provocative in order to call attention to the need to revitalize this African heritage, which although in a state of suspended reality is still relevant and necessary for the continuing struggle for the full emancipation of the peoples of Africa and of African descent.

The paper surveys the ideas of the canonical works of C L R James, George Padmore, and Kwame Nkrumah and the contribution of the three giants towards the development of the ideology of Pan Africanism and the nationalist movements that emanated from the influence of this ideology. Reference will also be made to the contributions of other Pan Africanists such as W E Du Bios, Blaise Diagne, Leopold Senghore and Franz Fanon, to enrich the debate on the content and meaning of Pan Africanism from the various philosophical and ideological approaches.

The paper is divided into the following:

Pan Africanism- The genesis of an ideology

This section is largely devoted to a historical survey of the ideology of Pan Africanism. It includes a description and discussion on the key contributions made by Africans in the Diaspora and from the Continent of Africa itself. It also examines the development of the concept and its use as a tool for mobilization towards national independence and liberation. Special attention is placed on Pan Africanism as a movement ideology, with significant national, continental and global consequences.

Pan Africanism and Nationalism in Africa.

This section examines the relationship between Pan Africanism and African Nationalism. It focuses on the impact of Pan Africanism and the rising tide of nationalism in Africa and in the African Diaspora from the 1940s onwards towards national independence. The section also discusses the impact of the rise of the nation states on the ideology of Pan Africanism, particularly on the decline of the latter as state politics developed.

Pan Africanism- An Ideology in Retreat

This section critically examines the causes of the ideological retreat of Pan Africanism in Africa's Political development. Besides nationalism and statehood, what are the other factors that are responsible for this retreat or dormant state of the ideology? What are the reasons for the growing intellectual inhibition to promote Pan Africanism? Why is it in a state of suspended reality. These questions are profoundly dealt with in this section.

Relevance of Pan Africanism Today
This section deals with the relevance of Pan Africanism today within the context of regional and continental integration in the face of globalisation. It also examines the character and manifestations of the "new imperialism" and its attendant "neo-colonial features. Attempt is made to demonstrate the challenges that face Pan Africanism as a continental African peoples ideology and movement in the face of a growing uni-polar world.

Finally current violent conflicts in Africa are also examined within the context of the failure of the state and the absence of a Pan African spirit, towards continental unit. The paper concludes as an advocacy for the revival of the Pan African Spirit