IS SLAVERY AND COLONIALISM TO BLAME FOR OUR FAILURE TO DEVELOP?

By

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W e cannot run away from the evident truth that slavery and colonialism have tremendously affected the African community both psychologically and culturally. This loss of identity and self-appreciation is something that we have to seriously deal with in our different sectors and communities, but that is another subject. It is of great importance to take into consideration that African history did not begin in chains and domination. The Europeans are not the architects of everything we may deem great and have come to adopt as Africans.

Not only have we had an external enemy as Africans but also to some degree we have been an enemy to ourselves, we have been our own colonialists and enslavers. Most countries have proved themselves that they can live and exist regardless the horrors of their experiences, while some have been the suicidal remedies of their own States. So should we blame colonialism and slavery for our failure to rise above our problems? Playing the 'blame-game' is an inevitable feature of every creature; we always have something and someone to blame for our failure to succeed, but that should not be the ideal reality. One's thorny background should not be the determinant of their latter success. A country such as Singapore experienced the very same tragedies as we did, but that particular country has proved itself far beyond reach.

Rwanda has faced the worst horrors ever, but they are proving themselves day by day, what then is the problem with other African states. Africans are the leading destroyers of their own territories, in the early days of gaining independence most African countries went straight into civil war, allowing themselves to self-destruct instead of showing their colonial masters that they are able to self-govern themselves. In the territories of South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, the Congo DR, Central

African Republic but to mention a few, the problem is purely an architect of the leaders.

When we first gained independence what we did not do, is to construct a mechanism that would work well with us as Africans. We did not construct our politics to suit the politics of our territory, we did not structure our legal system within the framework of our own system, and we did not restructure the education system to make it more African appealing. The colonial masters and the European dwellers had embedded it in our minds that we cannot function without them, and sorry to say but even in the 21st Century we are still a territory that is very dependent on an external hand doing the work for us. What Africa is lacking is the spirit of brotherhood, which it once had in the early days of fighting for African liberation, this is not the time to fight over issues of racism and whose more superior, our time now as Africans is to move as one and see how best we can make our territory self-dependent.

We need to start inventing our own technology because we have the resources, 80% of the world mineral that supports our technological system comes from Congo, this just speaks of the great potential we have in our hands that we are not capitalising and making use of. We need to move into a platform where our young people begin to have a mind-set of wanting to compete with global companies in the fields of sciences and technology. Let us not only be a community that is good to receive and never to give, good at being impacted and never impacting. We have the potential, and our leaders should lead us into this reality. They should create an environment where each one of us can make it regardless the status quo.

"Made in Africa" should be the tag of our fortune, and such we can achieve. We did not fight to be independent only for us to gain political

freedom, we need the economic freedom as well, and all this is in our hands. We need to value responsibility, we need to stop blaming anyone and start blaming ourselves, the European knows how great of a society we are, but that is not his duty to tell us, we have to discover and exploit that reality ourselves. We need to be a first rate version of ourselves as Africans, let us appreciate our supremacy and our African ancestors. Let us understand that we are now a multi-racial continent, we are no longer a society of black people only, but of Arabic people and of white people, and I believe there is beauty and strength in diversity. Where corruption exists, innovation can never exist. In the absence of freedom, there can never be development. African leaders should remember the freedom they never had during the colonial days to express themselves, why then should they inflict that very same negative sentiment on their people. Leaders ought not to intimidate but to inspire.

In the words of W.E.B Du Bois "Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime." While many look down on the potential that we have, I am one of the few people that believe we can achieve, and we shall, but we have to stop talking and start acting as a continent. The Africa we want should no longer be an abstract thought but should be converted into the ideal reality of truth and see bear fruit.

The colonialists left Africa 50 plus years ago, given the opportunity to prove our self-determination; we can no longer blame them for our woes. Slavery belongs to our painful past and we cannot change that, but we can change the future by silencing the wars, exterminating the

corruption, improving the African youth and creating an environment worthy of innovation and creativity. Africa is an article, and I believe in the script of this continent. When the African leaders better, their health system there will be no need for them seeking medical attention from outside the boundaries of Africa, when they better the African education system there will be no need for them sending their children to study from outside the continent of Africa. On the other hand, as Africans we need to reach a point where we start having faith in our continent and its people, for so long we have looked down on the supremacy of our identity, from the colour of our skin to the language that we speak. It is high time we held dear to our true self and identity if global greatness and recognition is what we seek. In my closing statement, I close with the words of Patrice Lumumba the Great "being a third world country is a state of the mind and until we change our attitude as Africans, if there is a fourth world, fifth and sixth world, we will be in it."

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