

BRAINWASHED AFRICANS: THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF IMPERIALISM

It must be admitted from the outset that Africa had lagged behind Europe politically, economically and technologically, which made her an easy prey of the latter. The stagnation, the disorientation and the moral paralysis of the African could be gleaned from her acquiescence to the enslavement of her fellow compatriots to foreigners for a mess of porridge i.e. whiskey, mirror and beads. The spiritual depth, which Africa had fallen, could only be imagined when she exerted her raw, brute force in haunting and kidnapping fellow human beings of the same ethnic/racial stock at the behest of strangers. This moral depravity, this senseless brutality, this callous indifference to the pains of fellow beings turned into commodity endured for nearly four centuries and would have lasted forever but for the economic logic which prevailed on the buyers to discontinue. This lack of affection for people of the same racial stock borders on depravity, insensibility and unpatriotism. The African leaders whether of yesterday or today enjoy being flattered by strangers and want to be worshipped by his fellow citizens because of the poverty of spiritual knowledge. The bulk of African leaders of two thousand years ago or those of today have no love of their fellow citizens, kingdoms, empires, ethnic groups, towns and countries. Their ranks are populated by saboteurs, bootlickers, stooges, tyrants and treacherous characters. That accounted for why the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Meroe, Kush, Great Zimbabwe, Benin, Ile-Ife and Axum became extinguished and vanished without the slightest chance of resurrection.

It had been estimated that over 12 million Africans were exported to Europe and Americas alive during the infamous slave trade and an equal number would have perished in the course of the voyage and warfare in Africa to capture the slaves. This led to the depopulation of African especially in East and Central Africa. These slaves toiled in the mines and plantations of the Europeans under an intolerable forced labour with barely enough food to survive the arduous task. It was through this means that the Western capitalists were able to accumulate vast capital that aided their industrial revolution. Industrial revolution presupposes the mechanization of means of production. Logically raw labour force became gradually dispensed with. Slave trade became anachronistic and had to be forcefully abolished by its originators, the West. They reasoned that

Africans should be left in Africa to produce cash crops needed for their industries. The era of cash crops encouraged internal slave holdings in Africa for the massive production of cash crops like palm oil, kernels, rubber, cocoa and cotton and the mining of gold, copper, tin, bauxite and diamonds in numerous parts of Africa. Africans were turned into robots by the Europeans, often remembered to do the odd jobs which other races found demeaning to perform. This had been the lot of Africans in their relationship with the Europeans and unfortunately they always find willing tools to do their bidding. The growth of industries in Europe and North America precipitated the scramble to acquire territories overseas for the exclusive dominance of the major industrial powers first as a source of raw materials and second, as market for the excess industrial products. This was the genesis of European imperialism in Africa. According to Walter Rodney:

Imperialism meant capitalist expansion. It meant that European (and North Americans and Japanese) capitalists were forced by the internal logic of their competitive system to seek abroad in less developed countries opportunities to control raw material supplies, to find markets, and to find profitable fields of investment.¹

Africa was not only underdeveloped; it was stagnant, weak and vulnerable to the ruthless machinations of the capitalists West - bent on total exploitation and domination of the continent. The rape of Africa was systematically undertaken especially after the German and Italian unifications of 1870-71 and the French desire to recover her losses in the Franco-Prussian war. Britain, Portugal, Belgium and Spain had been tearing away at the prostrate continent. The intensification continued and by the 1880s the scramble and partition of Africa was in full swing. The crises generated by the shameless competition of European "vultures" to share in the carcass of Africa nearly led to a major conflict, which was averted at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. They justified their unprovoked dismemberment of Africa on the following grounds: That European statesmen were prompted by consideration of the balance of power position in Europe and elsewhere to carve out sphere of influence in Africa. The major powers looked with envy at any increased power obtained by another. The new emergent powers of Italy and Germany wanted to prove that, as new states and great powers, they were also entitled to empires. They also posited the need for security in Africa. They claimed that in certain regions, savage and nomadic groups embarked

on raids or acts of pillage against their neighbours. To establish law and order, ensure stable government and secure trading conditions, the Europeans had to suppress these savages and restore normalcy.²

Other causes of European imperialist designs on Africa according to J.A. Hobson were principally economic considerations. V.I. Lenin propounded the theory of imperialism as the highest stage of Capitalism.³ Thus, imperialism stripped off its camouflage was a naked and ruthless exploitation of underdeveloped areas of the world particularly Africa. It was the quest to obtain cheap supplies of necessary and sometimes valuable commodities that were in short or non-existent supply at the metropolises that prodded them on. The abundance of gold, ivory, oil especially in North and West Africa and rubber in Belgian Congo led to the stampede for territories in Africa. Also, these African territories would serve as exclusive markets for surplus manufactured goods from the home government it was envisaged. The rivalries among the competing colonial powers led to the abandonment of free trade and the revival of high tariffs in Europe during the 1870s and the desire to carve out key trade areas. Further justifications for European imperialistic thrust in Africa were psychological. Some writers argued that a powerful nation was justified in seeking colonies so as to demonstrate its virility and strength. Herbert Spencer popularised the theory of "the survival of the fittest" which was an adaptation of the biological theories of Darwin to the struggles of man. Another writer Friedrich Nietzsche believed that brute force alone would help the nation in its struggle for life.⁴ The European conquerors of Africa employed their superior lethal power to devastate and overwhelm the African resisters. There is no doubt that without their superior fire power the colonial overlords would not have occupied any part of Africa. Ethiopia with a sizeable possession of arms and ammunition was able to humiliate Italy at the battle of Adowa in 1896. This is why any race or group should not ignore technological innovations going on around the world. The sense of superiority being felt by the West is because of their technological advancement and not due to any innate superior ability. Thus Africa must strive to bridge the technological and scientific gap between her and Europe if she must be treated as equal human beings with respect and dignity by other races.

What is more the desire of missionaries to spread the Christian faith and to encourage the philanthropists and humanitarians who wanted to abolish un-Christian customs in Africa such as human sacrifices propelled the scramble and imperial design of European nations. The most galling

of the justification for European imperialism, was the racial factors. The nineteenth century Europe witnessed some writers who advocated the notion of the innate superiority of the Teutonic, Anglo-Saxon or European race over all others. Some of them felt that the "white race" had a mandate to rule the "coloured races" of the world especially the black Africans. Racist ideas were quite popular in Britain and Germany during the period of the scramble and partition of Africa. In 1895, Joseph Chamberlin, Secretary of State for the Colonies, asserted that "the British race is the greatest of governing races that the world has ever seen." Also during the peak of British imperial dominion, in the period of 1885-1905, Rudyard Kipling claimed that it was the "white man's burden" to help educate and civilize the less fortunate elsewhere.⁵

Indeed, it was the white man's greed that had produced two world wars within one century, their insatiable acquisitiveness, ruthless exploitation and callous indifference to the feelings of others that have kept Africa perpetually underdeveloped and heightened tension around the world. It is easy to rationalize evil, to justify why European nations had to scramble for and partitioned the African continent, but it would be foolhardy to sweep under the carpet the heinous crime of their conquest, the greed and pillage that trailed it and the manipulation and exploitation of Africa ever since then. We are not here to heap the entire blame for Africa's bizarre performance on European slavery and colonialism but to emphasize the fact that the capture of African's minds and worldview remain the greatest obstacle to Africa's self-discovery, and self-renewal.

Patterns of Brainwashing

The rude and forceful penetration of European imperialism and subsequent colonial domination affected Africans fundamentally. The most pernicious damage was inflicted in the sphere of the denigration of our political institutions, cultures, and the consequent psychological effects have created a people who are not proud of their cultures and only feel fulfilled in life when they ape the West. These brainwashed Africans copy Western political institutions, economic system, language, fashion, music, religion, imported technology, foreign architectural designs, skin bleaching, dual citizenship for their children, stashing away looted public funds in foreign banks and brain drains among other havocs of neo-colonialism. This brainwashing has created personality conflict and imbalance among Africans. The African elite are guilty of this sheepish adherence to warped Western cultures and political ideas. The thrust of

this paper is to attempt an analysis of some of these slavish imitations of the European and American ways of life.

Political Institutions

Following the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, African continent was shared out to the major European colonial hawks like Britain, France, Portugal, Germany, Belgium and Spain. The African resisters were quickly crushed and the political face of Africa restructured to the convenience of the colonial powers. As A. Adu Boahen has noted:

In place of the hundreds of independent clan and lineage groups, city-states, kingdoms and empires, without any clearly marked boundaries, were now established fifty new states with, in most cases, fixed boundaries, and it is rather significant that the boundaries of the states as laid down during the colonial era have not undergone any changes since independence.⁶

The colonial rulers lumped ethnic groups that are not compatible, that had no history of mutual aid or support or strong economic and political relationships together for administrative purposes and under their autocratic regimes things appeared to be working normally. These conquistadors were adept at divide and conquer and they successfully played one ethnic group against the other. Even the new political shape of Africa was haphazardly executed as some of the boundaries of these new states cut across pre-existing ethnic groups, states and kingdoms and this has caused widespread social disruption and displacement. Few examples would buttress this point. The Bakongo are found divided by the boundaries of Angola, Belgian Congo (Congo DR), French Congo (Congo Brazaville) and Gabon. Some of the Ewe live in Ghana, some in Togo and some in Benin, the Somali are shared among Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti; the Senufo are found in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso.⁷ These examples can be multiplied. This situation has led to chronic border disputes that have plagued the relations between some independent African states, such as those between Sudan and Uganda, between Somali and Ethiopia; between Kenya and Somalia; between Ghana and Togo; and between Nigeria and Cameroon. Other shortcomings of the artificial and arbitrary partition of Africa was that the states that emerged were of different sizes with unequal natural resources and economic potentialities. Again, some of the states have very long stretches of seacoast; others such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Zambia,

Uganda and Malawi are landlocked. What is more some, such as the Gambia, have borders with only one state to police, others have four borders or more while Congo Democratic Republic has as many as ten, a situation which poses serious problems of ensuring national security and checking smuggling.⁸

It is sad to observe that since the 1960s when many African states became "independent" from their colonial masters, these artificial creations have not been adjusted through the well known process of referendum or plebiscite. Rather the Organization of African Unity (OAU/AU) embodied in its charter the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and the sanctity of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right to independent existence.⁹

It is surprising that although we tend to condemn the European partition of Africa, yet African elite that succeeded to the vacated thrones of the conquerors were prepared to defend this arbitrary contraption of European creation. First, it shows that African leaders lacked the initiatives, the iron-will and the forthrightness to confront these illegal creations of strangers. Second, the irredentism caused by the artificial splitting of ethnic groups into different nation-states has led to instability of many African countries. Thirdly, the loyalty of different ethnic groups forcefully merged into one country has remained a doubtful proposition. Thus, nationalism, the extreme pride in one's cultures and successes of the nation has continued to elude the emergent African nations. Most African leaders have remained to the disgust of their people Western lackeys. Because most of the ruling elite in Africa depended on their ex-colonial masters for survival in offices, they lack the courage to chart a new cause different from the dictates of imperialist overlord. It is in the interest of the Western capitalist that these antagonistic groups are held together so that their economic exploitation remained unhindered. It is an illusion fostered by Western propaganda and nourished by selfish African elite that the bigger the size and population of a country, the more highly rated such a country is in the comity of nations. The gross domestic product (GDP) per the population of Norway, which is used in measuring the standard of living of the citizenry shows that the people of Norway enjoy a higher standard of living than citizens of bigger nations like the USA, Britain, France, Germany and Italy. Yet Norway's population and landmass are far smaller than that of the Igbo and Yoruba of Nigeria and even the Kikuyu of Kenya. Unstable African countries like Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo Democratic Republic, Rwanda and Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone among others

should discard the notion of indivisibility of their nations and using referenda allow their citizens to decide whether they want to remain in the artificial creation of Europe or form a new nation - states of their choice through a transparent referendum supervised by the UN.

At the attainment of independence, each of the new emergent states of Africa adopted the political system of the departing colonial overlord, hook, line and sinker. Unfortunately, they inherited even the autocratic style and privileges, which these foreign rulers had exercised in their various dominions. The new African rulers became dictatorial, high-handed and tyrannical. Little wonder that the parliamentary democracy adopted by former British colonial dependencies also came to grief in less than a decade after independence. Almost the same situation prevailed in former French dependencies in Africa shortly after "paper" independence. Backward and poverty stricken colonial power like Portugal could not afford the luxury of granting independence to its territories thereby plunging those enclaves in a bitter liberation wars. With the onset of the cold war Africa became a battleground for the east and West. Communist East led by Soviet Russia and capitalist West headed by the U.S.A. competed for the soul of Africa. While Soviet Russia aided liberation movements in African territories still under colonial rule the U.S.A. supported the occupying Western powers including racist minority regime in South Africa even with their apartheid policy. Africa became ideologically polarised with one group believing that the solution to African's problems lies in a communist or socialist revolution while the other group, quite conservative felt that capitalism is a more natural economic order which must be followed. The brainwashing of Africans along this bipolar ideological world became intensified.

If the emergent African elites were not selfish and did not lapse into stooges that scurried to their former masters for further tutorial on the correct course of action to pursue to achieve rapid economic and social development of their peoples, they would have adapted the finest political, economic and social reforms from the various advance countries of the world after their independence while discarding useless colonial ideas imposed on them. The Japanese when their isolation from the rest of the world was rudely interrupted by the Americans and other European powers in the 1850s, with the forceful granting of extra-territorial rights to these powers, quickly adopted some of the new technological advances and political ideas without abandoning their core cultures including Shinto religion. With the fall of Tokugawa Shogunate and the accession of

Emperor Meiji in 1868, the Japanese adopted a new penal code and a code of criminal procedure on the French model in 1873. The Japanese modelled their navy after the British type with the assistance of British naval advisers. Their reformed army was based on the German model and German army officers drilled the new army.¹⁰ Ito Hirobumi, the head of Japan's delegation to Europe on political institutions was heartened by the lecture delivered by Rudolph Gneist, a German professor of jurisprudence who maintained that the constitution of any country should be based on its historical development.¹¹

Were the constitutions of independent African states based on their historical development? What happened was that the British version of parliamentary democracy was imposed on former British dependencies while the French constitution was thrust upon the former French colonies, the same way the Belgian, Portuguese and Spanish versions were imposed on their former colonies without the considerations to the people's historical developments and nuances. The outcome was a harvest of political instability, military coups d'état and violence in almost all the independent states of Africa. The departing colonial rulers did not bequeath any democratic culture in Africa. Their rule was autocratic, self-serving and overbearing. The police and other security agents were indoctrinated to protect those in office and suppress any genuine clamour and desires of the people. This was not the way democratic norms were practiced in Europe and America. Those in authorities in these advanced democracies served the people and not the other way round. The African successors to these departing foreigners most likely due to their brainwashing assumed that the people must serve them, used the security force to intimidate their political rivals and critics. What was worse the entire ethnic group of their political opponents could be branded subversive and treasonable felons and the armed forces unleashed on them. Such scenarios could not be democratic. It buttresses the fact that the so-called democratic constitutions did not emanate from the people's historical experiences. Otherwise, the rash of military dictatorship that swept through Africa would not have risen. It is only a jaundiced colonial orientation that would have enthroned tyrants like Idi Amin of Uganda, Bokasa of Central Africa Republic, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi and Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo Democratic Republic (former Zaire) among others. These were puppets specially groomed by the retreating colonial overlords to discredit Africans as not being ripe to rule themselves. Such sordid characters further diminished the quality of leadership in Africa and made

further aspirations for independence appear like a mockery. The African ruling elite have a duty to ensure that the artificial boundaries imposed by the imperialist forces are redressed to accommodate people of the same ethnic group under one government, evolve a home grown constitution that would enable every ethnic group exercise a considerable autonomy over its resources and its internal administration and even encourage ethnic groups that desire independence to actualise their dreams. Finally, the ruling elite must realize that the best form of leadership is an enduring service to the people and not being detached from them by colluding with imperialist agents to siphon their resources.

Economic System and Brain Drain

African economy has been determined by external stimuli. We produce what we don't consume and consume what we don't produce. This was a significant achievement of imperialism since our economic goals were determined by the needs of Western industrial complexes. Our economic policies are still distorted because of the exploitation of African's rich natural resources are not internally induced. Africa became producers of raw material and perishable goods which the West bought at give-away prices, thereafter these commodities are refined into finished products to be sold to Africans at exorbitant prices. Thus, the continent became a dumping ground for cheap mass-produced industrial products. The European imperialists and their African accomplices ensured that no significant industrial production took place in Africa. During the colonial era there was deliberate negligence or discouragement of industrialization and the processing of locally produced raw materials and agricultural products in most of the colonies. Even simple and basic items such as matches, candles, edible oil, lime and orange juice all of which could easily have been produced in Africa were imported¹². It was not only that the imperial masters neglected industrialization in Africa but such local industries and crafts as had existed in pre-colonial times were almost destroyed. The pre-colonial Africa virtually produced all her needs including building materials, soap, beads, iron tools, pottery and cloth. But these manufacturers were not encouraged and promoted through the modernization of productive techniques, as was done in India between 1920 and 1945. Had this been the case, Africa could not only have increased her output but could have steadily improved her technology. But these crafts and industries were initially killed through the deliberate importation of cheaply mass-produced commodities into Africa¹³. Under

colonialism, African economy was geared towards the production of cash crops for exportation to European and North America to the neglect of even the cultivation of staple crops. For instance, Ghana concentrated on the production of cocoa, Senegal and Gambia on groundnuts, cotton in Sudan, coffee and cotton in Uganda, coffee and sisal in Tanzania among others. Cultivation of basic foodstuffs were abandoned and this led to food crisis in some colonial territories. The Gambians were made to abandon the cultivation of rice in favour of the production of groundnuts, and rice had to be imported. Also in Guinea, Africans in the Futa Jallon area were compelled to produce rubber, which led to a shortage of rice in 1911. Rice had to be imported with money earned from rubber. Even Egypt which for centuries exported grains and foodstuffs, was compelled to import maize and wheat from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards owing to her excessive concentration on the production of cotton for export. The same thing happened in Ghana where cocoa production was so much emphasized that foodstuffs has to be imported¹⁴.

It needs to be emphasized that European imperialism is not being blamed for the present mess in Africa squarely. We are only attempting to trace the cause and effect of imperialism on the psyche of the African and why it is becoming difficult to pull ourselves from the firm grip of neo-colonialism. Since the attainment of independence most African nations still produce for export to the neglect of a thriving internal market. The argument of earning foreign exchange is misplaced. Before the twentieth century, the U.S.A. concentrated on developing its industries and satisfying its local market needs. It was only in the twentieth century that the U.S.A. had attained the excess production for the internal needs that it embarked upon the export drive. But African States are interested in the so-called foreign exchange earning cash crops and raw materials with its foreign investors that the multiplier effect of such endeavours hardly trickles down to the people or reflected in the growth of other service industries. An example of Nigeria, an oil exporting country may suffice. The oil industry in Nigeria is dominated by Western multinational oil companies, which drill the crude oil for export to Europe and America. The population of Nigeria involved in such major industry is negligible because the government would not allow small entrepreneurs to engage in it thereby leaving the field open to the big oil giants of America and Europe. Although Nigeria exports crude oil, it is unable to satisfy the internal needs of refined petroleum products to the eternal shame of the so-called rulers. Nigeria is perpetually in crisis of refined petroleum

products that the country annually expends huge amount of hard currency to pay for the importation of refined petroleum products. During the Nigerian Civil War, the Biafrans were able to fabricate and build a refinery entirely out of locally available materials.¹⁵ The scientific breakthrough, was dismissed as crude and some complicated foreign designed refineries established in the country. But these refineries have become an albatross breaking down so frequently and taking longer time to import the spare parts for its repairs that Nigeria has become a laughing stock in the eyes of the world as it continue to re-import refined petroleum products which it had exported as crude oil. And the ruling elite and business tycoons that awards the contracts and imports the refined products would not want the situation to change because of the huge profits they are making which they normally stashed away in European banks because Nigeria is unsafe and unstable to lodge their illegal acquisitions.

The consequence of this disarticulated and distorted economic policies are manifold. The economic malaise in many countries in Africa has led to political instability, mass unemployment, famine, corruption, civil strife and refugee problems and even brain drains. The poverty, ravaging the mass of the African people; contrast sharply with the luxury and splendour of the ruling elite. The leaders appear to imitate the taste, life-style and sophistication of Medieval Europe without the inspiration and quest to make their states great. They wallow in personal aggrandisement through the unscrupulous looting of states treasury. What is even worse, the looted resources are salted to Europe and America in coded bank accounts. It never crossed the minds of these treasury looters desperate to hide their booty in Euro-America vaults that no American and European officials would ever bank even their legitimate personal wealth in any African country how much more laundering stolen government wealth to Africa. After all, citizens of Europe and America are not as brainwashed as their counterparts in Africa.

Government officials in Africa are generally seen as most susceptible to accept bribe. They are easily induced by the multinational corporations; seeking mining concessions, government contracts and other business activities in Africa with a month or so sponsored holidays for their families in European capitals, or a percentage of the inflated contract sum in their foreign bank accounts and palatial holiday resorts in any Western capital of their choice. With these sham tinsels they sign away the country's resources to these imperialists anxious to devour and denude the African continent. In 1999 the German-based anti-corruption research organisation,

Transparency International ranked Cameroon first and Nigeria second out of the 99 countries surveyed in which top government officials were most likely to accept bribe.¹⁶ The report also showed that Denmark retained the first position with an essentially corruption free society, closely followed by Finland while New Zealand and Sweden tied for the third position. The survey on corruption among the leading exporting countries known as Bribe Payers Perception Index (BPI) noted that companies from China were the most likely to pay bribes and closely followed by South Korean firms while Taiwan came third.¹⁷ A British government report on corruption in Nigeria asserted that 54 percent of it was located within the presidency while the United States government supporting this claim however stated that 56 percent of corruption in Nigeria was within the presidency. The Abuja national stadium, which the Nigerian government claimed, cost it N60 billion was estimated by IMF not to have cost more than N18 billion. No less than 20 serving governors in Nigeria are known to have choice houses in London by 2003¹⁸.

President Obasanjo since assuming office in 1999 had single-mindedly pursued the recovery of looted state fund by the late dictator, General Sani Abacha's family. Whether as a vendetta against the Abacha family for jailing him, since the search-light had not been beamed on other former military rulers, particularly General Babangida, the exercise is worthwhile, at least to forewarn other treasury looters that the long arm of the law could catch up with them sometimes. After a prolonged legal battle and with a new Europe frowning on their banks' connivance with third world rulers to siphon their country's resources some significant effort - had been made. In the words of President Obasanjo:

Our lawyers had been on this job for well over two years. The first thing we did was to freeze the Abacha family loot where we were able to get the cooperation of the judiciary and government of those countries. So our lawyers came and said: Well you have a choice to make. We get a situation where we can get about \$1.2 billion and the Abacha family may get \$100 million. So, you have to decide whether to go for this or continue with the litigation. And that is the hardest decisions I have to make in my life because I know that the Abacha family hadn't legitimately done any work to deserve \$100 million.¹⁹

The avarice of African leaders borders on psychosis. For what would the Abacha family do with \$1.2 billion? Would the children not exert themselves again in life to earn a living or did General Abacha wish to

indulge them in life of luxury, the dangerous pastime of those who inherit dubious wealth.

The systematic looting and pillaging of the Nigerian economy by her successive rulers had left the state in a parlous economic condition. Unemployment swelled, infrastructural decay followed, while those who had jobs were owed many months of arrears of salary and even the wages became so worthless that many professionals fled Nigeria. The brain drain syndrome had affected Nigerian medical doctors, university teachers and nurses in particular while other professionals are not left out in this desperate struggle to escape before the ship would sink. Bola Ajibola, the Nigerian High Commissioner to Britain succinctly captured the dilemma of Nigeria and indeed Africa under the scourge of brain drain in a lecture he delivered to the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). He observed that "whereas 30,000 doctors are available in Nigeria, the United States of America (USA), alone has 33,000 Nigerian-born medical doctors."²⁰ He further averred that should Nigerian medical professionals employed in US, Britain or Saudi Arabia, among others decide to withdraw their services, there would be crises in their respective health care systems. In 1979, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), estimated that each African professional between the ages of 25 and 35 contributes \$184,000 each year to the US economy. When professionals in Canada, Europe, Saudi Arabia and South Africa are added, the amount would be over \$100 billion, Ajibola lamented²¹. Indeed, underdeveloped Africa, due to poor leadership are losing highly trained manpower to the West in large numbers.

Some of the causes of brain drain especially among the medical doctors include frustration arising from lack of basic essentials, like oxygen cylinders and syringes to work with. Another reason is poor remunerations following the liberalisation of the economy with the introduction of SAP, which further reduced the value of the public sector workers' earning power. This led to high inflationary rate without corresponding increase in the salary of workers by an indifferent military dictators, thereby forcing those whose training had an international market to emigrate to where their services would attract commensurate pay. Furthermore, government high-handedness in addressing labour disputes had contributed enormously to the exodus of doctors. When medical doctors went on strike to force government to redress the shortages of essential drugs in hospitals, or the poor working conditions, such actions were characteristically construed as unpatriotic machinations of government

opponents. The strike threat of February 1985 by medical doctors led to government proscription of the two doctors' unions, NMA and NARD²². Another reason for the medical doctors emigration to foreign countries was the attractive pay packet and good facilities such as obtained in Saudi Arabia, United States of America and elsewhere around the world²³.

The major causes of brain drain among university lecturers were the withholding of their salaries by the government following the ASUU strikes and the promulgation of the decree which made teaching an essential service. The decree made it an offence for lecturers to go on strike for more than one week. Any transgression of the fiat attracted sack, which provoked a sense of insecurity among lecturers²⁴. It would be hypocritical to expect African professionals to remain in Africa on the spurious ground of patriotism when African heads of states and governments and their cronies engage in brazen looting of their peoples resources. Until African countries get their leaderships aright, people imbued with a high sense of patriotism and nationalism, people not brainwashed to ape European institutions and cultures, the fumbling of Africa might continue. Those professionals who have escaped the harsh conditions in Africa might find it difficult to return home due to the comfort, luxury and job security that come with working in America, Europe and some other places²⁵.

Fashion, Skin Bleaching, Music and Religion

Culture is the totality of the people's way of life. It includes their mode of dressing, the way they worship, their artefacts, music and dance. Culture is not static; it is dynamic and open to refinement and improvement. But it is not a wholesome adoption of foreign ideas, institutions and methods. African culture is under the battering influence of Western imperialism. The European colonial rulers realizing that a thriving African culture would cast off their exploitation and domination of Africa resorted to despising our cultural values through intimidation, humiliation of those who cling tenaciously to their roots as inferiors. These same Europeans would steal African artefacts, use it to decorate their national museums and homes and glibly denigrate the Africans. Right from 1897 after the Benin massacre when British soldiers looted famous Benin art works, the West are still plundering African antiquities through generous financial inducement to poverty stricken Africans to part with their cultural inheritance. As Omotoso Eluyemi has observed: "We ended the slave trade more than a century ago. Now it's the objects of antiquity

that are being carried off to the West."²⁶ It is only a people afflicted by the dangerous disease of brainwashing that can acquiesce to the sale of their cultural artefacts. Africans now adopt the mode of European dressing to the disgust of fair-minded people. And our educated elite are the worst offenders of this cultural alienation.

In former British territories, the judges and lawyers still retain the British judges and lawyers mode of dressing including, despite the climate, even the wigs and gowns.²⁷ Definitely, it is the fall out of the brainwashing of Africans that would make our judges and lawyers to feel that justice could only be dispensed when attired in Western suits, wigs, and gowns. Whether our judges and lawyers ever take a look at the mirror to see how they look like in the lifeless scarecrows, scaring litigants and observers of courts proceedings. Nigeria's national costumes of flowing white gowns are more befitting and dignifying than this Western aberrations. And judgements given wearing our national costumes of white, which signifies purity will be better appreciated than the black suits which signifies mourning. As Abd-Ru-Shin aptly summed it:

Look at a Chinaman when he wears a top hat, or a Japanese or Turk for that matter! Caricatures of European culture! Look at the Japanese woman who nowadays dresses herself in European clothes, and then see her when she wears the costume of her own country! What a difference! How much she loses when wearing clothe alien to her country! It is indeed a great loss for her!²⁸

It is the dressing patterns of our elite particularly lawyers that send wrong signals to our youth that Western mode of dressing is a status symbol. The youths construe fashion to mean bastardisation of our culture, imitating dressing styles of Western musical artists meant for stage performance as a normal dressing pattern in their daily life. These young ladies cat-walked in haughtily short-mini skirts, leggings, low cut evening gowns with high slits and patched jeans often exposing the greater part of their bodies to the glances of the public. Lady Diane Oputa, wife of punk star, Charlie Boy, introduced a new concept of dress; two pieces, mid-rib baring busting which left little to the imagination.²⁹ It is this cultural suicide that easily appeals to the African youths and gradually the brainwashing would be complete before old age with the worship of Western culture. As Chinweizu has succinctly observed:

When we have thus made ourselves into black imitations of Europeans, shall we have gained the respect and ended the contempt

of Europe? But what sane man would treat his ape as an equal? If anything, the more we become black mimics of Europeans, the less Europe would accord us equality, and this would merely exacerbate our problems of identity and dignity in the world.³⁰

Imitation is not only degradation of self but also sign of lack of confidence and dignity in what one possesses. Africans must purge themselves of foreign ideas inimical to her development.

Our musical taste is seriously under assault by Western pop culture. African rich musical attribute which should be nurtured, nourished and refined is presently ridiculed by Africans themselves due to bad Western influence that tend to look down on our culture as inferior. Even those Western critics marvel at our innate musical abilities which are prodigious. And yet our people in order to be accepted within the Western orbit tend to show preference for Western music, which is often meaningless and lacking in philosophy of life. As Mazi Mbonu Ojike had admonished us all, let us boycott the boycottable and showcase our musical talents to the world. As he further stressed thus:

The human motive for music is one throughout the world. But just as no two human personalities are identical in all respects, so music of nations must be dissimilar one to another.³¹

The effect of Western imperialism and colonialism is palpable in the unwholesome swallowing of Western musical culture and style of dancing. Mazi Mbonu Ojike while lamenting the damage caused by the brainwashing of Africans which have led to the neglect of their music stated this:

I have never in all my safari seen a country as mine. It is a nation that despises its song, its dance; a nation that patronizes foreign dances to the utter neglect of its own. It is a nation of people who think of progress (and civilization) in terms of imbibing whatever is foreign. It is a people that have as it rejected its fashion, its drink, its food, its ideals of marriage, also neglected its music. Let us sing of old Benin, and old Calabar, New Nigeria.³²

The increasing dependence on the West even for food, drink, music and clothing has not only affected the productive capacity of the Africans but is worsening our economic plight. It is in the development of our local food industry and the enjoyment of same that our dignity, respect and pride would be enhanced. The local production of our clothing needs would expand our textile industry and create job opportunities for the

people. The enjoyment of our indigenous music and not in slavish imitation of Western music and dance styles would inspire respect for our culture and ennoble our humanity that had been under serious attacks since the era of slave trade.

Another unpardonable slur being inflicted on blackman's dignity is skin bleaching especially by our women fold. The concept that light skins are better is difficult to fathom. The white people's colour is so fragile and perishable that they save a lot of money to travel to Africa as tourists so as to tan their skins. It is true that in their envy of our beautiful colour they tend to call us "black monkey" when actually they are the ones that resemble monkeys. Ever seen an old white lady in her appalling wrinkled body? It would be difficult to accept even a gold from such a hand how much more food. It is unfortunate that most African ladies and even men would be so demented as to tamper with their lovely black skins. The Creator in His infinite wisdom created the black, white, yellow, red and even albinos and planted them in the most suitable regions of the world for their development and maturity. To tamper with the natural order of creation is the height of misguided education and brainwashing that can befall any group of people. It is the worst debasement of the blackman and an unqualified admission of our inferiority to the other races of the world. This is where the conscientisation of the black race must begin, to develop self-pride in their colour of skin and sustain the overweening self-esteem never to long to be fair skinned. Our men must desist from making uncomplimentary remarks to black ladies who rebuff their love advances so that they do not feel dejected and snubbed because they were not light skinned. Our musicians and artists must sing songs in praise of black beauties while our cartoonists should ridicule white skinned people of all types in their crafts.

Besides, skin bleaching has adverse effects on the body. Those who bleach their skins are highly prone to skin cancer and damage to the kidneys, the organs in the body which filters out dangerous substances from the blood. A dermatologist, Dr. Yetunde Olumide stated that women with bleached skins face grave dangers when they are injured. If such a woman undergoes surgery, her skin is difficult to stitch because "it tears like rag and continues to bleed". Besides such patient may need repeated stitches and face much higher risk of fatal infection from surgery.³³ The normal skin has melanin, the substance for filtering out ultra-violet rays. But bleaching destroys melanin and leaves the skin at the mercy of dangerous ultra-violet rays. What is even worse, bleached skin often sweats

excessively with offensive odour, patches of discolouration may appear since the bleaching is often uneven, and multiple stretch marks, similar to post-pregnancy stretch mark may appear on the skin. Also, skin problems may arise when hormone-based creams (corticosteroids) are used without prescription. Such creams are often used wrongly by women for bleaching and the result is that they start growing hair on their faces and other parts. Again the tropical climate tends to make the body absorb such substance from the skin causing such grave diseases as hypertension and diabetes.³⁴ Some girls have this wrong notion that men prefer light skinned girls to pure black beautiful girls. The reverse is mostly the case even though it is often more difficult to convince real black beautiful girls than light skinned girls who are cheap and easily yield to sexual advances. Skin bleaching is the worst form of mental perversion to which the black race has fallen into and to restore our collective dignity every hand must be on deck to discourage it.

European missionaries came with the object of abolishing some of our savage practices like the killing of twins and the cult of burying "important dignitaries" with slaves. This must be acknowledged as iniquitous crime committed out of ignorance and sheer wickedness. But the missionary's condemnation of African religious practice as heathen and idolatry borders on ethnocentrism. The knowledge of elemental beings such as the gods of fire, thunder, water sprites, goddess of fertility were dismissed as barbarous beliefs. The African recognition of the supreme God, *Chukwu* or *Chineke* by the Igbo and *Olodumare* by the Yoruba was heresy to the Christian missionaries. They forcefully imposed their own version of the supreme Godhead on the African converts. But the reality on ground appeared to be syncretism not outright acceptance of Christianity by the African converts. Otherwise the resurgence of ritual murders like the Otokoto saga in Owerri and the recent Ogwugwu Akpu shrine in Okija, patronized by the so-called Christians and traditionalists would not have arisen. The missionaries insisted that "to be admitted into a church, an African had not only to be baptized but had to change his name and renounce a whole range of traditional practices".³⁵ The imposition of European names on African converts was another arrogant display of superiority and racism. Some Africans especially the coastal city elite dropped all their African names for the meaningless European names. Some traditional practices like polygyny were condemned and Christian converts forced to select one of the wives regardless of the social dislocations and difficulties arising thereof.

Language and Foreign Architecture

One of the so-called benefits of colonialism was the *lingua franca*. The official languages of the colonial powers were imposed on each African territory being administered by the British, French, Portuguese, Belgians and even the Spanish. Except in North Africa, Tanzania, Kenya and Madagascar, these European languages have become the official and business languages of the rest of African countries.³⁶ The development of indigenous African languages has been stalled as these foreign tongues were used in educational institutions. As Ngugi aptly observed:

Equally important for our culture renaissance, is the teaching and study of African languages. We have already seen that what any colonial system does: impose its tongue on the subject races, and then downgrade the vernacular tongues of the people. By so doing they make the acquisition of their tongue a status symbol, anyone who learns it begins to despise the peasant majority and their barbaric tongues. By acquiring the thought process and the values of his adopted tongue, he becomes alienated from the value-system of his mother tongue.³⁷

The upgrading of African indigenous languages as the official and diplomatic languages throughout the continent would win the black race respect and dignity that can hardly be imagined. Let the French, British and German ambassadors in Nigeria learn to communicate in Igbo or Yoruba or Hausa and see whether they would ever look down on any Nigerian. The Igbo population of over 30 million makes it imperative that the Igbo language should be developed to a high level as to compete with any other international language like English, French, German and Japanese. The population of Britain in the 19th century was not up to 30 million yet the language was never subordinated to any other European languages. Although Poland had been ruled by the Russians for several years, yet the Polish language has continued to be the official and diplomatic language of Poland. How can we hide any secret in another man's tongue? Let our leaders chew upon this and revitalise African indigenous languages no matter how few the population of the ethnic groups might be. If African's indigenous languages had survived up until today it means that their values and resilience cannot be wished away by a fiat.

A new consciousness in African architecture is urgently required. The present situation whereby African people copy architectural styles from different parts of the world is abhorrent. Buildings meant for temperate climate are constructed in Africa even though snow never falls

in Nigeria and elsewhere and the temperature reaching freezing point how much less ditching below the zero point.³⁸ African architects should develop distinct styles with African stamp and new cities model on this form of architectural styles. As Obong Victor Attah has observed:

It is a major source of concern and national shame that many of the national monuments in Abuja, for instance, are handled by foreigners in spite of the socio economic and security implications of this.³⁹

Conclusion

There is the need for conscientisation of Africans especially the elite to demonstrate a sense of love and pride in our culture through the enjoyment of African dishes, drinks and music openly and in their private life. African indigenous dressing costumes and styles should be exhibited proudly at every occasion. Textile industries should be encouraged to mass produce the Kente, Akwete, Nigeria wax and other clothing variants of Africa cheaply and of good quality. The damage caused by the brainwashing of Africans due to European imperialism and colonialism, though enormous could be corrected as soon as African leaders imbibe the new consciousness of love for their race. To achieve this, official corruption must be eliminated. A situation whereby African leaders salt away their nations resources with the active connivance of European and American capitalists to coded foreign bank accounts is disgusting. Besides they tie their country to atrocious IMF and World Bank loans for frivolous projects that are not self-sustaining.

Africa must indigenise their technology no matter how crude it might be at the beginning. If the economy is properly managed, Africa has enough manpower to transform their country to viable industrial nations. But due to political instability and economic malaise, these manpower are drifting to the West in form of brain drain. This is most unfortunate and disheartening. African's need for these talents is critical. There is the need to create the enabling environment to still retain those in the continent and hope to attract those who are already abroad. Once the environment is conducive these economic exiles would return back to Africa. The present situation whereby our elite encourage their wives to travel to major European cities to deliver their babies in order to qualify for the citizenship of those countries must be stopped forthwith. To allow the terrible trend would give wrong signals that we are not proud of our African countries. Or else how can we restore our dignity if we do not outlaw dual citizenship in Africa? And as Abd-Ru-Shin has correctly stated:

True progress for each people lies solely in the development of its own culture adapted to the soil, the climate and the race. Man must become indigenous in the purest sense, if he wishes to develop and expect help from the Light (God). He should beware of adopting the habits and customs of peoples alien to his nature, not to mention foreign opinions. To be rooted in one's native soil is a basic condition and alone guarantees health, strength and maturity!⁴⁰

NOTES

1. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (Enugu, Ikenga Publishers, 1982), p.150.
2. C.A. Leeds, *European History 1789-1914* (Estover, Plymouth, Macdonald & Evans Ltd., 1979), pp. 336-337.
3. *Ibid*, p.337.
4. *Ibid*, p.338.
5. *Ibid*, pp. 338-339.
6. A. Adu Boahen, "Colonialism in Africa: Its Impact and Significance" in A. Adu Boahen (ed.) *UNESCO, General History of Africa, Vol. VII, Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), p.785.
7. *Ibid.*, p.786.
8. *Ibid.*, p.787.
9. Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, (London, Panaf Books Ltd., 1973), p.253.
10. E.M. Cooper, *Japan: An Historical and Cultural Introduction*, (Rushcutters Bay, Pergamon Press, Australia, 1970), p.67.
11. *Ibid*, p.792.
12. *Ibid.* Boahen, "Colonialism in Africa..." p.792.
13. *Ibid.*, p.792.
14. *Ibid.*, p.793.
15. P.N.C. Okigbo, "The Economics of the Civil War: The Biafran Experience", in *Nigeria Since Independence: The First 25 Years vol. VI, The Civil War Years* (ed.) Tekena N. Tamuna and Samson C. Ukpabi; (Ibadan, Heineman 1988), p.410.
16. "Cameroon, Nigeria Top Bribe Takers' League", *The Guardian on Sunday*, 31 October, 1999, p.5.
17. *Ibid*, p.5.
18. Wada Nas, "A Well Deserved Medal" *Tell Magazine*, November 17, 2003, p.55.
19. "A Question Mark for Legal Precedence", *The Guardian on Sunday*, 21 July 2002, p.19.

20. Dominik Umosen, "The Cost of Brain Drain", *Tell Magazine*, 1 October, 2001, p.20.
21. Ibid., p.20.
22. Ogoh Alubo, "Reaping the Whirlwind", *Newswatch*, 17 July 1995, p.8.
23. Victor Omuabor, "Greener Pastures", *African Concord*, 23 February, 1988, p.10.
24. Jonah Achema, "Again, Brain Drain", *Newswatch Magazine*, 18 October, 1993, pp.18-19.
25. Rufus Ladipo, "African brains in exile", *African Concord*, 15 May, 1986, p.12.
26. "Africa... A Squandering of Treasures", *The Guardian on Sunday*, 17 June, 2001, p.30.
27. Ibid. Boahen, "Colonialism in Africa...", p.785.
28. Abd Ru Shin, *In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message* (Stuttgart, Stiftung Gralsbotschaft Publishing Co. Vol. III, Fifteenth edition 1993), p.112.
29. Josephine Akarue, "Beauty, Fashion Shows: Bold and Outrageous", *Newswatch*, January 6, 1992, p.20.
30. Chinweizu, "The African Heritage and A Black Renaissance in *Nsukka Journal of the Humanities*, Nos. 5/6, 1989 (Enugu, Magnet Business Enterprises), p.166.
31. J.A. Sofola, *African Culture and the African Personality (What Makes an African Person African)* (Ibadan, African Resources Publishers Co., 1973), pp. 27-28.
32. Ibid, pp. 27-28.
33. Jossey Ogbuanoh, "Heavy Problems From Light Skins" *Thisweek* magazine, March 30, 1987, p.43.
34. Ibid., p.43.
35. Ibid. Boahen, "Colonialism in Africa...", p.804.
36. Ibid., p.797.
37. James Ngugi, "The Independence of Africa and Cultural Decolonisation" (Lagos, Afrografika Publishers, 1977), p.23.
38. Ibid. Sofola, *African Culture and the African Personality*, pp. xi-xii.
39. Boye Ajayi, "Architects Decry Expatriate Syndrome", *Tell Magazine*, December 14, 1998, p. TP. 1.
40. Ibid., Abd-Ru-Shin, *In The Light of Truth: The Grail Message...* p.113.