

The Fading Pan-Africanist Thinker?: Nnamdi Azikiwe in the Historiography of Pan-Africanist Thought

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Abstract

Nnamdi Azikiwe, sometimes called ‘Zik of Africa’, is frequently disregarded in the literature on Pan-Africanism, despite his active and significant role in developing African consciousness during the 1920s and 1930s—a period representing the high tide of the Negro Renaissance in the New World. This study addresses a major gap in the historiography of Pan-Africanist thought concerning the place accorded to Azikiwe. The study employs a quantitative research method and relies heavily on the historical approach, combining primary and secondary data sources, including newspapers, official documents, books, and journal articles. Findings show that when great Pan-African thinkers are mentioned, Nnamdi Azikiwe is often either totally excluded or mentioned only in passing, whereas individuals such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere are deified. This implication—that the latter figures were more Pan-Africanist than Azikiwe—is contrary to fact; Azikiwe was one of the earliest sub-Saharan African thinkers with a high intellectual pedigree in continental and international relations. The study concludes that Azikiwe cannot be denied his leading Pan-Africanist status, and therefore recommends more academic studies on this sagacious intellectual.

Keywords: Azikiwe, Historiography, Ideology, Negro renaissance, Pan-Africanism

Introduction

Pan-Africanism witnessed a remarkable turn at the beginning of the twentieth century, complemented by European imperialism in Africa and its attendant racialism and relegation of victims to an inferior position. The history of Pan-Africanist thought is consequently rich in both personages

and ideas. Yet, the name persistently associated with the flowering of Pan-Africanist thought is Kwame Nkrumah. In fact, it can be rightfully argued that the historiography of Pan-Africanist thought is largely Nkrumah's celebration. For instance, Ola describes Marcus Garvey and Nkrumah as 'the original apostles of Pan-Africanism' (2); Nkrumah came into the limelight only in the 1940s. Geiss describes him as 'the most dynamic leader of Pan-Africanism since 1958' (3), and Clarke sees him as the one who, from 1957, provided a home for Pan-Africanism, 'literally a motherless child who had wandered away from home' (4).

On the other hand, the name of Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe (5) has been inconspicuous, either by its absence or cursory treatment in the literature. Azikiwe was not even considered sufficiently as a Pan-Africanist to be included among the forty names in the history of Pan-Africanism written by Adi and Sherwood, which purportedly discusses 'political figures from Africa and the diaspora since 1787' (6). If, as Mezu argued, 'Pan-Africanism is basically a philosophy, and has, like all philosophies, undergone changes and adaptations' (7), then Azikiwe—whose thinking on Africa and Africans exhibited historical changes corresponding with the Nigerian and African political environment since the 1920s—is a crucial figure. Azikiwe's Pan-Africanist thought has been both understated and understudied, with hardly a substantive historical work dedicated to it. Despite generating the slogan, 'Zik of Africa', Azikiwe's Pan-Africanist credentials have been little recognised in the movement's historiography, even though he began speaking and writing about Africa's need for resurgence and her anticipated place in international relations early in his career.

Azikiwe and the 'Zik of Africa' Jingle

In the collection of tributes compiled by R.N. Arinze (The Demise of Zik), F.A. Nwako, as Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, suggested a contrary narrative, describing Azikiwe as 'a great household name in the annals of Nigeria, Africa and mankind, a lesson in longevity, a testimony of colossal intellectual prowess for the youth and the coming generations... Zik's guiding principles have no doubt remained the torch light of aspirations for many African leaders' (8). Arinze, the compiler, described the man as 'the great Zik, the embodiment and doyen of African nationalism...' (9). In other tributes, he was accorded the status of 'a Titan,' 'an enigma,' and 'a legend,' and even granted the same recognition as classical Greek figures, such as Aristotle, Socrates, and Apollo (10). Mike Torey's tribute was even more gratifying, naming Azikiwe the 'great son

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of Africa, a man of many distinguished parts, a journalist of international repute, a prolific author of many books, a sportsman, a poet, political scientist, philosopher, politician, strategist and statesman, all in one...' (11). Animalu, in his epitaph Zik of Africa, explained that Azikiwe earned the name by virtue of his consistent struggle for the greatness of Africa and her citizens (12). This struggle is seen in the revolutionary journalism he introduced in the 1930s and his nationalist activities, which Animalu thought should earn him the status of 'Father of the Nigerian Nation' (13).

While many of the comments above were made by admirers, Azikiwe himself wrote and spoke extensively on Africa, colonialism, independence, and nationalism. His *Renaissance Africa* (14), for instance, clearly shows the ideological reflections of the young Azikiwe on Africa in the early twentieth century. One of the major questions exciting African youths was 'who an African was,' and Pan-Africanist thinking emerged from answering this and other fundamental questions. Yet, the dominant literature on Pan-Africanism surprisingly fails to acknowledge Azikiwe's credentials, with his name either omitted or mentioned in passing. Interestingly, Olisa contends that Azikiwe was one of the pioneer young Africans who sailed to America to study and embarked so early on prolific expositions of his sensitivities towards White domination, designing a program for eliminating colonialism's effects and emancipating the continent (15). Disappointingly, however, where it was proper to describe Azikiwe's activism, Olisa spoke about his political ideas in the idealistic terms of 'dreams' and 'visions,' noting that: 'Azikiwe's philosophy had to be presented as a dream at this stage because it had to fire the imagination and make it see a promised land, to inspire, the spirit and to precipitate action' (16).

It is safe to argue that presenting Azikiwe's ideas in *Renaissance Africa* as mere dreams undermines his intellectual and philosophical prowess. Azikiwe laid out concepts and concrete arguments derived from his reading of pre-colonial African history, constituting a political philosophy for Africa—a philosophy of change. The text depicts Azikiwe's attempt to conceptualize Africa and the African; it was tripartite, covering Africa's past, contemporary Africa, and its future. Olisa's position is important because it closely reflects the general impression in the historiography that Azikiwe is a mere dreamer. In contrast, Rake, in 'Is Pan-Africa Possible?' contradicts Olisa's position, noting that...

It is not just ideas that unite these leaders. There is something in their emotional approach to politics that made them the most militant nationalist leaders in their own countries, when under colonial rule, and now makes them the most vociferous exponents of pan-Africanism. Their approach is one of *principle* (emphasis is mine). Most of them formulated their ideas in foreign countries away from Africa. They thought out their principles as students, long before there was any chance of putting them into practice, before national self-government became a reality.¹⁷

Rake, too, could have also considered the ideas of these young Africans as dreams because, as he stated, they were conceived long before the idea of national self-government was in view; but, instead, he referred to their approach as *principles* which indicate the discipline, foresightedness and practicability attached to those ideas.

In addition, T.O.S. Benson, who was a popular Nigerian nationalist, in an attempt to place Azikiwe's thought in perspective, sums up his contribution to African political thought in one word – "vision". "Vision", according to him, is what sets great men of history apart from lesser mortals. Benson's choice of the word is informed by his reference to it as a quality of leadership and greatness. Although this may sound mundane, but Benson believes that most African minds, especially Azikiwe, who wrote or discussed pan-Africanism at that time envisioned a great reality which was yet to occur. In his appraisal of Azikiwe as a pan-Africanist, he argues:

As a Pan-Africanist and visionary extraordinaire, his vision of the total emancipation of Africa was quite clear to him, and was only exceeded by the intense fire of his patriotic zeal to make independence meaningful and beneficial to all.¹⁸

Principles, ideas or visions, however they are described, constitute the body of ideas Azikiwe developed very early in his career, which went as far as influencing several nationalists and pan-Africanists who were to play a major role in the emancipation of Africa and the discussions surrounding her unity.¹⁹

Although pan-Africanism, both as an idea and a movement, cannot be separated as they moved *pari passu*, for the purpose of this research, the literature that discusses pan-Africanist thinking will be separated from those that discuss the political movement for the establishment of an African union. As every movement begins as an idea, so too did the movement for the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity. In that connection, pan-Africanism, as an idea, began in the diasporas, with emphasis on the possibility of an association of Negroes, which would speak up against the discrimination and racism they faced in Europe and the Americas. The idea itself was fluid as the early propagators were not entirely certain of how they wanted the idea to flow. This made them open to several options, one of such being Garvey's 'Back to Africa movement'.²⁰ So, the literature that will be examined is basically those on pan-Africanism as an idea to accentuate the position Azikiwe occupied in the whole arrangement. Some scholars have argued that, although Azikiwe wrote on pan-Africanism, he did not show sufficient commitment when the issue of the establishment of an African union arose (that is the practical realisation of pan-Africanism).²¹ However, there are pertinent questions the paper hopes to answer: has the historiography of pan-Africanist thought been silent, passive or strident on the contributions made by Azikiwe to its development? Is Azikiwe recognised as a pan-Africanist at all and is he counted among the earliest pan-Africanist thinkers on the continent? What is the verdict on Azikiwe's style of pan-Africanism? Are there particular criteria to be met in order to be considered a pan-Africanist? If yes, what are these criteria? These are some of the questions, this paper provided answers to.

Azikiwe in the Historiography of Pan-Africanist Thought

The historiography of the idea of pan-Africanism includes texts which focus on the thinking about Africa and the emancipation of the Negro race in general. In fact, Immanuel Geiss argues that the knowledge of pan-Africanism needs further study "as it's a subject that is still very vague, its history is complicated and little explored".²² By this explanation, any attempt to set an exact date for the beginning of the thinking about the Negro may not be a very easy task. Also, the decision on what texts would be appropriate becomes difficult because too many works exist on pan-Africanism. What, therefore, will be the criteria for the selection of particular texts on pan-Africanism? To avoid the use of the over-flogged works on pan-Africanism and reduce cumbersomeness, literature that

discuss or list pan-Africanist thinkers and what such had to say about pan-Africanism, especially continental pan-Africanists, will be examined.

In considering the idea of pan-Africanism, focus usually begins with what diaspora proponents, such as Henry Sylvester Williams, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Edward Blyden and George Padmore, amongst others, had to say about the Negro and the many challenges he had had to contend with - the forces of slavery, racial discrimination and European imperialism; and how their ideas influenced other Africans on the continent. True, pan-Africanist ideas developed in the diaspora; nevertheless, many prominent exponents in Africa joined those in the diaspora and began thinking about Africa, the Negro race and the African's need for emancipation. Azikiwe was one person who, as early as the 1920s, began to ponder over the Negro problem and one whose pan-Africanist ideology needs further study.

Adi and Sherwood, in their *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora*, had a long list of about forty reputable personalities whose works were in one way or another associated with pan-African activities.²³ The selection process, according to the authors, was tough considering the great number of pan-Africanists there are, both diasporic and continental. Their research nevertheless, identified men and women whose 'works' have been associated with the emancipation of African peoples and Negroes in the diaspora. If, 'any pan-Africanist works' constitute their standards for selecting the pan-Africanists, is it possible that Azikiwe had no 'works', or that his 'works' were not sufficient enough to be associated with the emancipation of the African peoples? Adi and Sherwood admitted that they omitted so many other names because there was limited space. While the authors regretted the omission of names like Alexander Crummell, Bishop James T. Holly and Mojola Agbebi of Nigeria, which seems to be an apology tendered to posterity on their behalf, Azikiwe was totally ignored, and his work, *Renaissance Africa*, as important as it was in preparing Africans for social and political emancipation, was omitted receiving only mere mention.

Kwame Nkrumah, on the other hand, is celebrated in Adi and Sherwood's study as one with a distinguished career in pan-Africanism in continental Africa. The independence of Ghana is seen as a beacon that attracted pan-Africanists from the diaspora to Africa, "but it also played the role of building a new type of pan-Africanism centered on the African continent", and which culminated in the establishment of the OAU in 1963,²⁴ even though Azikiwe had begun his pan-African activities long before Nkrumah came into the theatre. Nkrumah himself acknowledged

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the great influence Azikiwe had on him and how, on one occasion, he encouraged him not to give up.²⁵ Although it would seem that Nkrumah overtook Azikiwe, especially as Ghana became the first West African country to become independent in 1957, the role played by Azikiwe prior to this time cannot be totally obviated or ignored. Adi and Sherwood merely mentioned Azikiwe in passing, a little more than ten times, not recognising any specific contribution to the evolution and development of pan-Africanist ideals. When they identified Azikiwe as the editor of the *African Morning Post*, and the owner and editor of *West African Pilot*, the authors did not show how these supported and encouraged pan-Africanist thinking, or how his thinking reflected his desire to see an emancipated Africa. Azikiwe was completely disregarded as far as Adi and Sherwood's work is concerned, and the place accorded him lumped him together with the likes of Duse Mohammed Ali, Nathaniel Akinremi Fadipe, and George Padmore. While Azikiwe may not have featured actively in the congresses and other such pan-African conferences which held, he was aggressive in charting a path for the pan-Africanist movement through his writings.

Sudarkasa, former Lincoln University president, when assessing some of the university graduates and their impact on the generation of ideas and production of knowledge, referred to Azikiwe as the "only African leader whose history as a pan-Africanist theoretician and activist pre-dated and rivaled that of Nkrumah".²⁶ This goes to show that those who personally interacted with Azikiwe recognised the position he occupied as a pan-Africanist - one who theorised the African personality, as well as one who was radical in addressing foreign domination in Africa. Obiwu on the other hand modifies Sudarkasa's assessment claiming instead that Azikiwe would not "rival" but "out-last" Nkrumah because he was not only a politician but a poet as well.²⁷ Although it is unclear how Azikiwe's literary skills place him above Nkrumah, Obiwu argues that there is indeed no contest between the two as Azikiwe began a style of pan-Africanism that cannot be rivaled. For instance, he noted that Azikiwe paved the way for other pan-African leaders to follow. Although he began to involve himself in national politics, he never completely forgot his first duty to help emancipate Africa, and so he wrote poems which were expressions of his deep feelings. While Sudarkasa's point recognises Azikiwe's pan-African credentials, Obiwu's submission below is a much stronger argument in favour of Azikiwe:

Though Nkrumah's Leninism was the rave of the 1950s' anti-colonial struggle, Zik's foresightedness has been

vindicated by the triumph of American liberalism over socialism throughout the African continent.²⁸

It cannot be denied that Nkrumah, just like Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin) of Russia, believed that an armed revolution was the solution to the African colonial problem. Nkrumah advocated the formation of an all-African Peoples' Revolutionary Army and the setting up of organisations to extend and plan an effective revolutionary warfare on a continental scale.²⁹ In his *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, Nkrumah set up a guide, including rules to facilitate the armed phase of the African revolution. This pattern of thought endeared him to George Padmore, who proposed a Communist approach to the pan-African movement. Azikiwe, on the other hand, had always rejected the use of arms or force against the colonialists; rather, he recommended dialogue and negotiation as Africans' weapon to invariably prevent bloodshed and unnecessary loss of lives, a kind of evolutionary approach to the struggle for African independence rather than a revolutionary path. His *Renaescent Africa* is replete with such injunctions: "War is an exhibition of man's barbarity to man. It is an evil which has retracted civilisation; youth must not be deluded into a belief that war is glorious. It is not ...".³⁰ To Azikiwe, the New Africa would usher in liberal democracy within individual states and a pan-African union to reflect such liberal democracy. Furthermore, Azikiwe noted that:

Radicalism and Revolutionism may be identified with changes, but these changes need not to be the type usually connected with bloodshed and open disregard for law and order. In my evangelisms regarding the New Africa, I have always emphasized the necessity for co-operation between all sections of the community and between the Government and the Governed.³¹

But then, Obiwu does not think there should be any dispute about Azikiwe's pan-Africanist credentials, nor that there should be a basis for comparison between Azikiwe and Nkrumah or any other person. He argues that:

It is intriguing that some Africanist scholars would equivocate over the status of Zik in the pan-African movement and the making of modern Africa through taxonomic comparisons. Such scholarly obfuscation

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tends to elide Zik's role as a Civil Rights activist, foremost nationalist, and role model in the African decolonization project.³²

From Obiwu's position, it can be contended that while Azikiwe was quiescent in the politics of pan-Africanism, he compensated for this by focusing on writing philosophical works. The text, *Renascent Africa*, was a discourse that collected his early ideas on Africa and the African. This was an extraordinary text; a political statement that was not pedestrian, neither was it made up of political, economic or social facts and theories, but rather of premeditated philosophical expositions of "idealism" and "realism", skillfully combined together, of spirit and the African personality. In fact, *Renascent Africa* was an attempt to design an absolute worldview or philosophy. Interestingly, it has been described by one of his followers as "the Bible of West African Youth".³³

Another listing of worthy pan-Africanists is contained in Nantambu's "Pan-Africanism versus Pan-African Nationalism". The author argues that the term "Pan-Africanism" is Eurocentric, dysfunctional, ahistorical and divisive in context because of the widely accepted belief that it was an African struggle inspired by a reaction against racism. He proposed, instead, the adoption of the terminology 'Pan-African Nationalism', which, according to him, is Afrocentric and most acceptable as it aptly captures the African and his many struggles.³⁴ According to his line of reasoning,

the nationalistic, unified struggle/resistance of African people against all forms of foreign aggression and invasion, in the fight for nationhood/nation building. The primary goal of Pan-African Nationalism is the total liberation and unification of all African peoples under African communalism. Pan-African Nationalism seeks to achieve African nationhood and nationality, human perfectibility based on the seven cardinal principles/virtues of ma'at; self-reliance; self-determination; the creation of Pan-African nationalist solidarity and confraternity among all African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora; a cooperative, humanistic, and communal value system; spirituality; the traditional extended family modus vivendi; and polycentrism.³⁵

Furthermore, Nantambu divided Pan-African Nationalism into four periods: resistance against foreign invasion in Kemet; continued resistance against foreign invasion in Kemet (Egypt) at the dawn of the AD era and beyond from 711 to 1485 AD; the period of revolutionary Pan-African Nationalism from the 15th to the 19th centuries characterised by slave revolts in the Americas and ideological conceptualisations by diasporic Africans; and the fourth period characterised by intellectual, geopolitical, scientific and cultural Pan-African Nationalism of the 20th century.

The fourth period is the focus here, as Nantambu, like Adi and Sherwood, presents a list of ‘worthy’ or ‘renown’ pan-African Nationalists, which excluded Azikiwe. In fact, his division into revolutionary, intellectual, geopolitical, scientific and cultural Pan-African Nationalists is an indication that he understood these nationalists and their contributions to the pan-African movement, but Azikiwe, who otherwise would have been classified as one of the intellectual nationalists whose “intellectual works and problem-solving research advanced the analytical course to achieve liberation”,³⁶ was completely excluded. Even George Padmore (also one of those mentioned by Nantambu), the Trinidadian poet who greatly influenced Azikiwe and Nkrumah and later became resident in Ghana, calls Azikiwe and the Sierra Leonean, Wallace Johnson, “the pioneers of pan-Africanism and ‘Home Rule’ for Africans”, respectively.³⁷ Also, Ali Mazrui is of the view that Azikiwe was not only a bridge between Nigeria and pan-African political thought, but also a bridge between African thought and American ideas when he asserts that “Azikiwe has been a fusion of African nationalism, and the best of American liberalism”,³⁸ and that “for parts of Africa, Nnamdi Azikiwe’s life traversed the entire span of European colonial rule and beyond”.³⁹ Mazrui identifies Azikiwe as an important figure in the origins of such momentous African movements as modern nationalism, pan-Africanism, the struggle for independence, the post-colonial struggle for stability, development and national integrity and the diplomacy of non-alignment in world affairs.

In addition, Geiss’ “Pan-Africanism” is also important as it discusses the historical development of the idea of pan-Africanism. In the article, he outlined most prominent proponents of pan-Africanism, both in Africa and the diaspora. Personalities such as W.E.B. Du Bois, George Padmore, and E.W. Blyden are on top of the list as prominent diasporic pan-Africanists, and when he came to continental Africa, Geiss mentions

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J.E. Casely Hayford and Attoh Ahuma as frontline pan-Africanists, followed by Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah. The main preoccupation of these thinkers, according to Geiss, was to refute the charge of the Negro's unchangeable racial inferiority, and to claim full equality for Africans and Afro-Americans in the modern world.⁴⁰ Geiss' notes on the individuals he mentions deserve some attention. For Azikiwe, his *Renaescent Africa* and *The African Morning Post* were the references for his thought. However, the author's comment on Nkrumah is climactic: "Nkrumah is too well known a figure to need further comment here".⁴¹ This means that Nkrumah's popularity is an uncontested fact which invariably overshadows Azikiwe and needs no further explanation as the mere mention of his name is equivalent to mentioning pan-Africanism. Interestingly, Geiss' notes indicate that although Azikiwe was recognised as one of the early pan-Africanists, Nkrumah was a personification of pan-Africanism. Nonetheless, it can be a safe proposition to make that despite Geiss' comment on Nkrumah depicting his exceptional popularity and his radical proposals to emancipate Africa as contained in *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* and *Towards Colonial Freedom*, pan-Africanism in Negro African thought cannot be adequately studied without reference to Azikiwe and his works.

Kasanda's "Exploring Pan-Africanism's Theories" is yet another study where the author mentions reputable pan-Africanists who have theorised or idealised pan-Africanism. The work, according to Kasanda, examines "the main leaders and theories of pan-Africanism to show the multiple faces of this movement and its evolution".⁴² Kasanda argues that pan-Africanism has its roots in the African diasporas in the nineteenth century, spread to continental Africa in the middle of the twentieth century and relied on the idea that black people all over the world constitute a single nation with a common destiny. Pan-Africanism, as an idea, may have originated in the nineteenth century in the African diasporas, its spread to continental Africa did not wait till the middle of the twentieth century. Africans, such as Casely Hayford, Ogundipe Fadipe and Nnamdi Azikiwe, for example, were already developing pan-Africanist ideologies from the early years of the twentieth century. Little wonder, when Kasanda got to list his *main pan-Africanist leaders* and their theories in continental Africa, he chooses only Nkrumah and Fanon who were active from the mid-1940s onwards. Nkrumah is considered a freedom fighter and standard bearer of pan-Africanism, and identified with such philosophical concepts as 'the African personality and consciencism', while Fanon is regarded as a major activist for African decolonisation,

whose “written work denounces and reverses the colonial paradigm of the relationship between coloniser and colonised that he thinks is based on a colonial fallacy”.⁴³

Yes, Kasanda’s work is an examination of theories, concepts, ideas and the pan-Africanist thinking of Africa’s leaders. As to the criteria he used to select his leaders of pan-Africanist thought, there is no hint. In a sub-section of his work, titled “The era of the African heirs of Pan-Africanism”, Kasanda considers pan-Africanism’s heirs in continental Africa from 1945, since it was in the middle of the twentieth century, according to him, that the idea of pan-Africanism began to spread to Africa. He lists leaders such as Banda, Awolowo, Kenyatta and Nkrumah as African heirs of pan-Africanism.⁴⁴ Again, Azikiwe is excluded. But then, did pan-Africanism not have a history in Africa before 1945? Were African Negroes intellectually passive on the question of the Negro’s destiny in the world? From this point, Kasanda discusses the Manchester Congress of 1945 and how African Negroes began to show interest and actively participate in pan-Africanist concerns.

While a host of these works seemed to have disregarded Azikiwe’s early contributions, there are a few who mention the inadvertent role Azikiwe’s ideas represented in championing the spirit of unity and the identity of the African Personality. Ali Mazuri, while analysing the roots of pan-Africanism, notes that although not all African Negro pan-Africanists visited the New World, the influence of American political thought robbed off greatly on the way and manner these Africans perceived the idea of pan-Africanism.⁴⁵ This is so because, although the likes of Du Bois and Garvey launched pan-African ideals onto the world stage, the personal experiences of African nationalists on American soil exposed clearly the African dilemma and created the opportunity for the influence of American political thought. Mazuri mentions Azikiwe as the most famous of these African nationalists, alongside Nkrumah of Ghana and Banda of Nyasaland. He lists the works of Azikiwe as he went on, including arguments and statements made by Azikiwe which clearly indicated the complexion and depth of his pan-Africanism. He referred to Azikiwe’s statement in West Virginia in 1947, in which he asserts that “one half of the world cannot be democratic and the other half undemocratic”. Mazuri explains that such statements constituted Azikiwe’s call for the total liberation of the colonised peoples of Africa.⁴⁶ Mazuri presents Azikiwe as a pan-Africanist thinker who has contributed immensely to the growth and development of the idea of pan-Africanism in Africa and the world.

Conclusion

How is the inconsistency of Azikiwe's position in the historiography of Pan-Africanism to be explained? The studies considered have had varied scopes, ideological perspectives, research objectives, and authors' personal dispositions. It appears that most of these studies have reduced Pan-Africanism to praxis, emphasizing visible activists who made 'big' pronouncements and declarations at Pan-African conferences and congresses or were involved in their organization. Consequently, figures who focused on foundational ideas, like Ephraim Casely Hayford or Mojola Agbebi, are often overlooked.

There is hardly a substantive study of the history of the idea of Pan-Africanism—the kind of history that would bring together the figures and concepts that have shaped its contours. The study by Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora Since 1787* (47), for instance, lacked the proper temporal and spatial framework needed to fully harvest major Pan-Africanists from the continent.

While Azikiwe was ideologically first an African before becoming a Nigerian, his discovery of Nigerian politics ultimately pulled him away from active involvement in West African and African political organization. Though his involvement in organizational work, spanning the 1930s to the 1950s, included groups like the West African Students Union and West African National Secretariat, his ideological prisms were often more restrictive than Nkrumah's—defining the African, for example, only as the African Negro. When it came to aggregating for pan-African and pan-continental objectives beyond British West Africa, Azikiwe showed only a passive interest. This organizational and ideological specificity must be borne in mind when explaining his absence or relative absence from Pan-Africanism studies.

If a bias exists in the historiography to view the phenomenon more from the perspective of the conferences held after Ghana's independence in the 1950s, then Azikiwe's activism would logically receive less mention. However, where Pan-Africanist thought is concerned, the lack of historical reference is more significant. What a study of Pan-Africanist thought from the late nineteenth century would show is the definition and further definition of what Africa is, and who the African is (e.g., Is Africa the Negro world wherever it may be?). Such an intellectual history of Pan-Africanism is yet to be undertaken. If it were, then a work might well be devoted to Azikiwe's ideas. Herein lies the relevance of this study.

Endnotes

1. David Apter and James Coleman, “Pan-Africanism or Nationalism in Africa”, in American Society of African Culture, (ed.), *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976); Albert Kasanda, “Exploring Pan-Africanism’s Theories: From Race-Based Solidarity to Political Unity and Beyond”, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 28(2), 2016: 187.
2. See Opeyemi Ola, “Pan-Africanism: An Ideology of Development”, *Presence Africaine*, 112, 1979: 68.
3. Imanuel Geiss, “Notes on the Development of Pan-Africanism”, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 3(4), 1967: 739.
4. John H. Clarke, “Pan-Africanism: A Brief History of an Idea in the African World”, *Presence Africaine*, 145, 1988: 56.
5. In Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1970), 8, Azikiwe disclosed how he summoned courage to erase Benjamin from his name when he was thirty years old which, according to him, had been a symbol of Western domination.
6. See Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora Since 1787* (London: Routledge, 2003).
7. S. Okechukwu Mezu, “Introduction: The Philosophy of Pan-Africanism”, in S.O. Mezu, ed., *The Philosophy of Pan-Africanism* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1965), 15.
8. R.N. Arinze, *The Demise of Zik: What a Gold Yield to Nigeria* (Enugu: Rabboni Publishers, 1998), 36.
9. Ibid., 37.
10. Ibid., 40-41.
11. Ibid., 45.
12. Alexander O.E. Animalu, *Zik of Africa: An Epitaph* (Nsukka: Ucheakonam Foundation, 1996).
13. Ibid., 51-52.
14. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renaissance Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1968).
15. S.O. Olisa, “Azikiwe’s Political Ideas: The Dream of the African Revolution”, in Michael S.O. Olisa and O.M. Ikejiani-Clark, ed. *Azikiwe and the African Revolution* (Onitsha: Africana-FEP, 1989), 73-74.
16. Ibid., 82.
17. Alan Rake, “Is Pan-Africa Possible?” *Transition*, 4, 1962: 29-30.
18. T.O.S. Benson, “Zik’s Thoughts and Philosophy”, in Amucheazi, ed., *Zik: Life and Times*, 47.
19. Nkrumah has become a household name in the historiography of pan-Africanism, regardless of the admiration for and the influence of Azikiwe and his works, which he himself attests to. See Kwame Nkrumah, *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (Edinburg: Thomas Nelson, 1957), 22; also Obiwu, “The Pan-African Brotherhood of Langston Hughes and Nnamdi Azikiwe”, *Dialectical Anthropology*, 31(1/3), 2007: 144.

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