

Book Review**New Scramble for Africa**

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The book begins with the conceptual and theoretical issues in the new scramble for Africa. The term scramble is a figurative or euphemistic expression denoting the expansionist imperialistic policy of the principal European powers of the 19th century ratified by the Berlin Conference of 1884/85. It was impelled by the drive to maintain balance of power in Europe.

Thus, its nature would require materialistic, historical, dialectical, social and psychological approaches. The new scramble sets in motion a new process of globalization propelled by the transnationalization of capital in search of new markets and the logic of capital accumulation. Thus, the term new scramble is used to capture the exploring hegemonizing character of contemporary globalization. Available data on capital transfers and decline in the standard of living in the periphery further explains the effect of the new scramble. The new scramble and new imperialism pose serious possibilities for recolonization of Africa. Thus, the way out will be to return to the idea of Pan Africanism that would facilitate a coordinated continental response to the new scramble.

There is a historical context of the scramble. The continuous scramble for the resources of Africa reflects the dynamics of a global economic system of centuries past enabled by contacts with European powers, the effect of which the continent is practically struggling with and find difficult to rub off. Historically, Africa provided the resources needed by the first world to build its economic system in the 19th century but is today unable to evolve any meaningful development stride except those propelled from without and conditioned within. The mercantilist period induced the scramble for Africa and has since continued the scramble for Africa only transforming itself as

capitalist expansion demanded. Of great importance was the development of capital in industrialized countries leaving the rest of the world as suppliers of food and raw materials.

Even with the attainment of independence, the colonialists ensured that only weak states emerged that cannot challenge the dominant interest of the capitalist states and this has remained till date. These weak states in Africa give access to external forces to the resources of African states. It was thought that the first and second world wars would have spelt a great doom to the world economy but western states quickly reunited to form financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank etc to revive western capitalist domination and to facilitate a coordinated and orderly scramble for African resources. The new nature of the scramble was perfectly defined by the emergence of unipolar world following the failure of African states to unite in favour of the ideological stance of the Soviet Union. Prior to 1884, Africa was technologically ahead of some now industrialized capitalist states but internal and external contradictions resulting from her contact with the west stunted her progress and brought it to where it is today. Following this contact, African economies were structured to allow the evacuation of minerals and agricultural resources from the hinterland. Hence, the post-Berlin conference was simply a continuation of the process of scramble for African resources.

Some have argued that this contact in form of colonialism lead to some forms of development but Mike argued that it is a product of capitalist expansion driven by profit maximization and the colonial states do not develop by its own nature. African development has remained problematic because it is predicated on global capital from which it cannot extricate itself. The only way out he argued, is a deconstruction of her economy for a self-reliant, people-focused, just and egalitarian system. America's interest in Africa was engineered by the desire to ensure that African was in consonance with ideals it propagated following the failure of the Soviet Union. Thus, U.S became interested in Africa's natural resources and the expansion of its capital around the world. The Soviet Union is considered a late comer to African continent. It made effort to gather ideological support from Africa so as to increase her say in the global economy. This however did not happen thus justifying the emergence of a world economy that advances the interest of the west.

Thus, a survey of the global economy shows U.S dominance of the International Finance System and the effect of the fixed exchange rate system on Africa. The fixed and floating rate variants of the gold exchange set a standard and core tools for entrenching grinding poverty in second tier

non convertible and non-reserve currency world of the global South and exponential wealth and affluence in the financial convertible and reserve currency west. Thus, Africa has remained the eternal resource reservoir of the global economy.

This chapter (3) would have made more meaning if the author had done a brief definition/explanation of some compound and seemingly difficult terms used. These terms include first tier, two tier, multilateral trade and payment system, floatingrate, reserve and non-reserve currency, fixed rate, CFA currency, three-legged economies, public sector debt money etc.that were obviously couched in abstraction. Again, the private gold International reserve chart should be bold and clear enough for readers to decipher. Every capitalist economy depends on public sector debt money to drive its economic policy. It is an error to claim that the reserve currency nations of the west are the donors to the non convertible currency nations of the globe. Thus, human development is denied in second tier nations because of the fiscalist phenomenon of public sector borrowing requirements and interest.

The floating rate gold exchange debt standard is good for China but a set back to the west and Africa because of the separate economic objectives they seek to achieve. The bank for African Settlement has a primary duty of transmitting African economy from asymmetry to symmetry in economic distribution. As such, it is synonymous with an African Industrial Location Policy that would bring permanent reversal in the current post colonial and massive rural urban drift of Africans in the working age bracket. Achieving this makes Africa unarguably a capstone in any viable global attempt to revamp the economy of Europe and North America.

Achieving the above objective would require a set of carefully articulated strategic policy with specific efforts made to eliminate the very exploitative bonds that held Africa stagnant. This would begin with first analyzing the situation correctly before adopting appropriate measures in tackling the situation. The author is commended for observing that U.S presence in the gulf of Guinea and establishment of U.S-African relationship under various guises were legs of the new scramble for Africa including the increasing presence of Asian countries in the last two decades. Like the old scramble, a roundtable may as well be initiated to share the loot of the new scramble of a continent forcefully incorporated into the international capitalist economy.

The writer notes that the pattern of production, specialization and consumption in African colonies were deliberately changed to facilitate colonial exploitation and this led to the external distortion and disarticulation of African economy. Even the Bretton Wood institutions have assumed responsibility of directing, supervising and monitoring development in the various neo-colonial states. Africa remains one of the most richly endowed regions but the poorest continent. Embarking on a path of economic independence and self-reliance as well as anti-colonial imperialism not to develop Africa for African is the greatest challenge posed by the new scramble for Africa. The intention of the new and the old scramble remain the same to both Asian and western powers. It is to secure sources of critical raw materials at cheap cost and lucrative markets for finished goods. The dynamics of external interest in Africa was also considered. External interest is capped by its main objective. It is to create a link to the resource-rich continent. Globalization is a contested concept with implications for all peoples in the world.

Scholars who are aware of the sinister implications of globalization link poverty among groups to it. Globalization has the capability of marginalizing developing parts of the world making groups therein poorer and the very goal of development efforts useless. The collapse of the Eastern bloc led to the emergence of a global economy governed by the interest of the west. The author notes that globalization is one of the challenging developments today because of its inherent parasitic expansionistic nature. Thus, impoverishing by expansion some parts of the world remains necessary to maintaining it. As such, it is practically difficult if not impossible to solve the problem of globalization because it paralyses national control of the economy and engineer external control of the state. Thus, no meaningful development targeted at clearing the horizontal inequality of third world states can be made. The writer however failed to point out the major indices of the claim.

If indeed globalization is instigated and reinforced by the invisible forces of the market, then, it will suffice to posit that all nations of the world would be almost the same level of development. This would not be because of the activities of the most powerful actors in the international economic system like transnational corporations. Thus, Africa's exploitation is not a recent development. The author also suggested deconstruction and reconstruction of Africa as the ultimate solution to all the problems. The process, method and perhaps time of this deconstruction and reconstruction would involve developing necessary capacities to exploit its own resources in

such a way that it is able to add value to it before it gets to the global market. The scramble, according to the writer lies at the local, continental and global levels but each level of the struggle exposes Africa to exploitation and this has been a major principle to enhance the exploitation and subordination of external relations and interest to the logic of internal development.

China-Africa relations and increasing competition for access to Africa natural resources was the focus of further discourse. China has remained key in the globalization of capital. Her isolationist tendencies have made it underappreciated. Its relations with Africa became more pronounced following China's support for anti-colonial policies in Africa and the promotion of Maoist Agenda in Africa which gave them a foothold to nurture their relationship with Africa with close eye on their future needs and prospects. The work reveals China's efforts to gain access to Africa and its resources but does not show how Africa has used this relationship to their own benefit. China's long interest in Africa makes her invest in it without much political conditionalities. This claim would have been compared with other Asian or Western states who also have investments in the African continent.

While Africa has the resources and market needed by China and the world, China has long developed effective practices and know-how to explore and enjoy Africa's resources. This exchange deepens inequality and nation's rent-seeking conditions as well as environmental damages in Africa. This had made the trade relations between China and Africa to be in favour of China. Though China has been of great financial assistance, this manner of assistance has also been injurious to Africa. China-relations with Africa is seen in the light of Africa's expected support to China in her competition with the west in years to come. This furthers the ideological attempt intended to pull down the current unipolar world order of the International System.

Thus, African-China engagement was surveyed. Africa is composed of 54 modern states that have long been engaged in mainly economic relations with China. Interestingly, the history of Europe-Africa relations had been that of wars and violence in various shades. This is driven essentially by the pursuit of national interest with the people's survival as the most vital, hence, the interest of the former in the resources of the later to sustain the living standard of the advanced world. This should not be surprising. The author claims that the Asian world is also showing interest for possibly different reason. This assertion from the writer is pretty difficult to swallow because,

economic interest remains an all time principal driver of a nation's interest in another and explains the character of the imperialistic and parasitic relations between the core and the periphery states.

According to the writer, Africa is not industrialized, yet it has more to offer the world in terms of natural resources. This probably explains Africa's 2% share in world trade. The writer should have indicated that this 2% share in world trade was not just assigned to them but it is a product of their economic contribution to the global trade equation. Hence, the west holding back investment from Africa while sustaining demand for oil, minerals, raw materials etc is hypocritical. The basis for this is her claim of the inability of Africa to achieve certain western standards like democracy, disease-free environment, insecurity, stable government etc. If the environment is unsafe for investment to help and allow Africans raise their world trade quota, then it should also be unsafe for the exploitation of her resources. The writer notes that Western states have always been busy strengthening their ties and cooperation especially with Europe but African states have kept themselves busy working on their internal problems. This has given rise to series of masterplans developed by Western states at least to improve the Economic status of Africa in the world economy but the conditions set for this external intervention are too stringent that almost all African states are unable to meet.

The chapter (7), page 35, paragraph 2 makes reference to Nigeria SAT2 that was to be launched into space in 2007; a date earlier than when the programme itself was initiated. This creates some confusion on whether or not the (launching) preceded the programme itself. The author argues that Africa's slowness to development can be blamed on her leaders. He paints a picture that china's scramble for the resource of Africa is entirely in the interest of Africa. This is a deviation from the position of previous chapters. All that China has invested in Africa is in pursuit of her national interest. The author also failed to highlight a few of these interests to enable the reader pinpoint which is most essential to China and the principal driver of their actions and interest in Africa.

The sources and patterns of external interest of China in Africa was analyzed. China-relations with Nigeria was prevented earlier to avoid the infiltration of its communist Ideology into Nigeria and Africa at large but China's economic breakthroughs has made this relations inevitable. The initial passivity prevented her from harnessing the benefits of this partnership. It is also clear that all African states also had the same disposition except Ghana. Because of this, China adopted soft

diplomacy in order to access Africa's natural resources and market. We must note here that the use of colon (:) for whether China is a South country is unnecessary (Page 140).

At independence, China sought diplomatic relations with newly independent states like Nigeria, but some of these states were not interested in this relation. China however has constantly justified this relations on the basis of helping Nigeria and African states at large to improve her trade imbalance. During Obasanjo's regime, Nigeria-China relations experienced growth in unprecedented pace. This pace was sustained after Obasanjo's administration. After about 30 years of intense economic isolation, China has developed its internal economy and used it as a launch pad to corner African states to her side. Thus, its projection to become the first highest economy in the world is realizable. Though, this may not be possible in 2025 as projected. The direction of trade between China and Nigeria will in future time be determined by the growth in the economy but at the present, China's investment in Nigeria's economy has not been limited to the oil sector rather it had extended to such areas as construction, telecommunications, agriculture etc.

This investment drive and the intention behind it have been considered as neoimperialism especially because of the fact that it has not yielded the expected benefits to Africa. China's products are considered substandard, fake or expired. China uses her own work force but when Nigerians are used, they are placed in slavery conditions etc. These obviously point to regulatory policy failure in Nigeria's relations with China. Thus, China's increasing engagement in Nigeria and other African countries is not entirely altruistic. It is soft diplomacy to secure greater market and access to economic resources to sustain her economic growth and the need of its growing population through strong state leadership; all skewed toward dismantling the current pro-west international equation and unipolar world order. Indeed, the Chinese model of partnership and development in Africa devoid of market fundamentalism or Political strings is considered the biggest ideological threat to the west.

The book remains one of the finest attempts to carefully synthesize various strands of the rapacious struggle for the soul of Africa into a single topical volume. Written in very simple and organized pattern devoid of spelling and grammatical tumbling; the book endears itself to all. The nature, style and contents of the book presents itself a model reference material that delivers to the reader sufficient knowledge sought about African's relations with external forces especially China. This provides a systematic glance to the corpus of truth contained in the book. As such, the 164

page book written by these African Social Scientists is a must read for all and as such recommended without reservations.