



## Humanism and the Quest for Justice in Africa

Justice, they say, is the first condition of humanity. That means justice is imperative for human existence and coexistence. Justice is necessary for any society to grow, develop and flourish.

Any movement that gives primary consideration to the human being must take the quest for justice- the enthronement of a just society- seriously. Millions of people around the world are living, languishing, suffering and dying under unjust conditions imposed on them by fellow human beings. And this is particularly the case in Africa.

The humanist outlook cannot thrive in a situation of so much injustice and deprivation. Humanism cannot take a firm hold on a society where unjust institutions abound and oppression prevails.

So for humanism to flourish in Africa, humanists must take the quest for justice and human emancipation seriously. In fact humanists must take part, contribute to and advance this important struggle for the realization of human happiness and well being in this world. Part of the reason why Africans are deeply religious, spiritual and supernatural in outlook is because the people have given up hope of achieving justice and happiness in this life and in this world. Humanists must be involved in changing and challenging unjust institutions, customs, and traditions. Humanists must work to dismantle all machineries of oppression, exploitation and dehumanization in Africa.

The humanist movement must lobby the governments or petition them before international bodies so that they would take action against injustice.

Humanists must be involved in marshalling ideas for social change and transformation.

They must champion the cause of addressing and redressing cases and instances of injustice against all persons. Humanists must strive to ensure that justice, equality and human rights are enjoyed by all no matter the age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief. To achieve this, humanists must be ready to speak truth to power and be the agents of the change they desire. Because very often, in Africa, power is used to oppress, exploit and dehumanize the people. Power is employed to victimize poor and defenceless citizens. Power is used against vulnerable groups and minorities.

Justice is light and injustice is darkness. Eradicating injustice is an enlightening and illuminating process. So tackling unjust systems is critical to the growth and development of humanism in Africa. Today Africa is a dark continent not because there is something fundamentally wrong or



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lacking or extraordinary with the regional geography and weather conditions. Africa is a dark continent because of so many acts of injustice that reign supreme in the region. Africa is mired in darkness because of the reign of anomie, the terror of barbarism, the ubiquity of impunity, criminality and savage acts

Unfortunately, Africans always point accusing fingers on colonialism and imperialism for injustices on the continent. As if there were no unjust acts or systems in Africa before its contact and 'corruption' by the outside world. When it comes to analyzing and addressing Africa's problems and predicament, colonialism is always a cop-out or an alibi. Imperialism is a reason or an excuse Africans always tender to avoid responsibility- accepting or taking responsibility for their mistakes and failures.

Africans always comfortably prefer blaming the West and the whites for their woes and troubles. Surely, injustices predate and post date colonialism in Africa. Unjust acts have been going on in Africa for ages.

Humanism is a philosophy of hope, reformation and rebirth. Humanism is an outlook of liberation, emancipation, intellectual awakening and enlightenment. So humanists cannot afford to look away or turn a blind eye on the suffering and oppression of the people. They must strive to correct and reform systems and institutions responsible for human suffering and misery in this world. Above all humanists must show compassion, empathy, solidarity and goodwill. For these values encapsulate humanism par excellence

Author

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Igwe Leo

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