
*Confronting the Challenges and Prospects in the Creation of a Union of African States in the 21st Century* is the 280-page book written by Professor E. Ike Udogu, a seasoned scholar of African studies. It is made up of a preface, six chapters, a comprehensive bibliography and an index. The book’s foreword was contributed by Professor George K. Kieh, Jr., another seasoned scholar.

The book is very useful in varied ways. In fact, in his foreword, Professor Kieh asserted, *inter alia*: “…this book falls within the context of the urgent, tough and ‘current’ epistemological approach in African scholarship that calls upon academics to design more theories and modalities for possible short and long term solutions to the current situation of underdevelopment,” (p. xi), Apart from being very instructive, Professor Kieh’s assumption is warranted against the backdrop of a continent that is arguably the richest vis-à-vis other regions of the world with respect to its abundant untapped natural and human resources.

Meanwhile, Dr. Udogu contends that the rationale for writing this very provocative book flows from “the notion that in almost all polities, in all regions of the world, there comes an epochal moment when groups would examine their political, social and economic formation. The purpose of such a re-examination is to restructure the community so that it could become more relevant to the character of the zeitgeist,” (p. 1).

In the preface, the author further reminds the reader that in contemporary discourse on African politics, there are two major contending schools of thought, namely, Afro-pessimists and Afro-optimists. It is clear from the analysis that the author, like a number of other scholars, is an Afro-optimist. He contended, within the dogma of Emile Durkheim’s organic solidarity, that interdependencies in the “new globalization” should unite African nations and their peoples across “occupational specialties.” Subsequently, he articulated the need for a drive for the unification of Africa to be pursued collaboratively, with . . .:

Africanist scholars, who in the tradition of great sages of the past, must provide appropriate modalities and instrumentalities for its actualization; political actors whose task will be to develop adequate infrastructures and implement the frameworks constructed by academics; the oligarchs, who will supply entrepreneurial and industrial base to boost relevant development schemes; civil society, that will monitor good governance performance, economic growth indicators, and other worthwhile programs in order to

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ensure their efficacy; and the grassroots, would offer their labor and other necessities to sustain the union (p. xii).

Chapter one is sub-titled, “General introduction and a synoptic overview of the study”. It provides a brief textual construction of the volume, chapter by chapter. A careful read of it not only simplifies the argumentations in the volume, but also stimulates the curiosity of the reader as s/he seeks to dig deeper into the author’s opinion, rationales and explanations for continental amalgamation in the rest of the work.

Then, chapter two is about “Political leadership and the way forward”. In its entirety, it tackles a problem that is commonplace globally. In the developing nations, however, the lack of transformational leaders is “killing” the societies. Little wonder, then, that in the African context, the reactionary and poor leadership quality prompted the late President Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso to note metaphorically that: “A leader cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of “madness” In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen…. We must dare to invent a [positive] future [for our population]” (p. 27). If the leadership and government fail to provide citizens with tools to engage or take on the struggle for their daily survival, they will, in the words of Claude Ake, be “delinked from the society and alienated from it.” The author concludes by alluding to the importance of transformational leaders in a Union of African States (pp. 44-50), and backing his postulations by reproducing the impressive tenets of the Mombasa Declaration and Code of African Leadership (pp. 49-53) as the guiding principles for transformational leadership in the continent.

In “Pan-Africanism and the long march toward African unification in the millennium”, as chapter three, the author rightly cites one of the preachments of an African sage, President Julius Nyerere who cautioned Africans to “…reject the nonsense of dividing African peoples into Anglophones, Francophones, and Lussophones. This attempt to divide our peoples according to the language of their former colonial masters must be rejected with the firmness and utter contempt that it richly deserves. The owners of those wonderful languages are busy building a united Europe. But Europe is strong without unity. [It is Africa that deserves unity in order to be strong]. Africa must unite!” (p. 59). This quotation summarizes the basis on why Africa’s integration of sorts is critical. The author, in a way, presents a blow by blow account of the steps taken by pan-Africanists as long ago as the early 1900s. This odyssey in the ambition to invent a Union of African States or United States of Africa suggests that nothing good comes easily – a truism that is manifested in the onerous efforts of the African Union to move the continent toward this object in the millennium.

In chapter four of the book, readers have been offered the sub-title, “The issue of democracy and good governance in the union discourse.” There, Dr. Udougu brought to

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