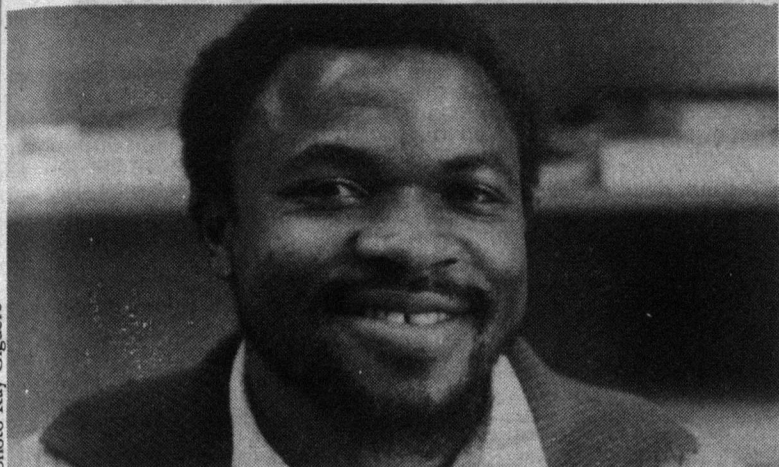


African calls for unity and brotherhood



Augustine T. Marah, president of the African Association of Alberta; All those interested in becoming involved with the Association should contact the International Student Office.

By Augustine T. Marah

Observations about human beings and social life are often fascinating, and yet sometimes disconcerting. It is an irrefutable fact of nature that man is the most sociable and intelligent animal. He is resourceful and adaptable. His extraordinary qualities have made him conqueror of the universe. Yet there is still a simple fact that some people ignore: that man comes to this world without being asked by Mother Nature what he would want to be like in race, color, language or intelligence; so nature made us into what we are — diversified in thinking and in almost everything to an extent that there is no way of interpreting facts about this world in such a manner that personal judgements are completely eliminated.

It is in this regard that Ian Robertson said "If the world consisted simply of some self-evident reality that everyone perceived in exactly the same way, there might be no disagreement among observers. But the truth is that what we see in the world is not determined by what exists "out there". It is rather shaped by what our past experience has taught us to see and what we consciously or unconsciously want to see."

Another truth about life is that some men have used their intelligence to develop what they call science and used it profitably, though its current use has reached alarming proportions. But over and above all, some we have realized that, in spite of tremendous linguistic and ethnic differences, indomitable strength — latent and manifest — lies in unity and co-operation. Indeed men of foresight perceived that they could survive better if they transcend any and every seemingly unbreakable natural barrier (let alone man-made) of human nature for socially positive ends

instead of pursuing individual (or country) vainglorious profits or praises.

The two strongest nations of the world — United States of America and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics — each constitute an amalgam of several ethnic entities and large territories. There are exceptions of geographically small areas that have at one time been powerful and/or are potentially out. eg. United Kingdom and Japan.

In fact, a more pertinent example of the spirit of unity is manifested by Jews. However this reference to the Jews should not and is not intended to tell Africans that only those who belong to the same race or speak the same language are the only ones capable of forming alliances. It should be borne in mind that everything starts in our minds and that we need to think positive and act accordingly to bring about any unions, social or political.

Therefore, Africans should by now be able to look back into history so as to think globally and act locally for common good. It is high time we stopped intensifying and perpetuating any differences that would "strengthen" our weakness, so to speak. In other words I plead with Africans to come under the umbrella of unity, especially in retrospect of the afflictions they suffered and are still suffering, to some extent.

This is no time for one individual to feel that he is superior to another or that any nation in Africa could bring glory to or victory over the ailing problems of the continent. It is my strong conviction that if there is anything good to emulate, the first should be unity and concerted effort, rather than seeking the smallest or least tribal entities or castes and colonial "robes of sovereignty"

for progress. Let us being to think seriously of shedding of the shelves of colonialism and imported ideologies which make a brother take up arms against a brother and ask ourselves — who am I?

To answer this question, I would say for instance that a Sierra Leonean in Alberta, in Canada or in Russia should always realize that it is as much as he belongs to a small tribe in a "politically independent country" so should he be particularly aware that he belongs to a greater entity called Africa. In fact this entity is an identity that speaks for itself, in many ways. Therefore he should never imagine that every man in the street knows or cares that his country is the fourth producer of diamonds in the world. It is a very big illusion. So as an African, all he could do is to think and act African, especially as an intellectual in the making who is duty-bound by all circumstances of human nature and progress, to help eliminate or at least minimize the ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and the insignificant and self-destructive tribal strifes of rural Africa. He should strive, today and not tomorrow, for peace and unity in Africa and the world at large instead of singularly pursuing vain glory.

The big question undoubtedly is — what could he do to reach these goals. The answer is simple: While giving maximum time and effort to his studies, his work or his business, he could still become an active member of the African Association of Alberta in order to make life-long friends, help solve immediate or threatening problems here in Alberta, exchange ideas and "socialize". There are so many ways one could become an active member of the Association: one could give moral

support by attending meetings, contributing ideas and making constructive criticisms as well as giving financial support through membership dues and voluntary donations.

Finally, instead of asking what the Association has got to offer us as individuals, let us ask ourselves — what have I got to offer the

African Association of Alberta to make it an active, viable, and significant or profitable Association? Obviously, all or some of the above-mentioned services.

At this juncture I should stop and ask all concerned to think about this message, send constructive and valuable comments, if necessary.

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