

NNAMDI AZIKIWE'S ECLECTICISM, PRAGMATISM, NEO-WELFARISM AND THE QUEST FOR A PEDAGOGICAL AND SELF-RELIANT TEMPLATE FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The nature and problems or causes usually adduced for African underdevelopment as well as the cure for it have acquired the character of what Claude Ake calls 'technicism' – a situation where Western social scientists are causal assessors and solutions to Africa's woes. The consequence of this is that close to no attention has been given to how indigenous pedagogy can assist in the evolution of a framework to tackle the menace of underdevelopment. By admitting the method of philosophical analysis which thrives on the critical assessment or exposition of ideas and concepts, we expound Nnamdi Azikiwe's reflections that have implications for the pedagogy that can engender a self-reliant template for African development. We focus on the triad principles of eclecticism, pragmatism and neo-welfarism in his reflections to extrapolate ideas that can propel African development. It is based on the plausibility of Azikiwe's thoughts on education that we submit the urgency for Africans to emerge from the challenges of development by focusing more on inward-driven ideas that are original and indigenous to them yet applicable in other climes, non-African.

Keywords: African development, Colonialism, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Pedagogy,
Political Philosophy.

Introduction

The motivation for this study is the urgency to revive the seeming given but now obsolete perception that African development can only emerge from the Western world. This study also seeks to show that emphasis on theories of development from the West may not be able to liberate the African continent from her woes of economic failure and poverty levels. Perhaps this is a factor that prompted Jonathan Chimakonam to aver that there may be a need to invoke an Afro-indigenous yardstick to take into account, the psychological implications of these realities for the contemporary African.¹ Whereas this essay lauds this move, it explores an Afro-indigenous pedagogy extracted from the reflections of former Nigerian statesman, Nnamdi Azikiwe, as a cue.

By admitting the method of philosophical method of comparative philosophy for our purpose, this study begins with the economic development theories that have been recommended to Africa for their upliftment but with tangible results. Afterwards, we disclose in two sections, the veritable nature of Azikiwe's principles and philosophy of education which may serve as a viable basis for development that overcomes the previous recommendations usually emanating from Western social scientists. It is in this section that the comparative exploration of Zik's ideas is given a critical assessment in the light of the contemporary challenges that beset the African continent. The last section is the conclusion of this inquiry.

Development Theories and the Quest for Praxis in Africa

The primary agenda in this section is to uncover the reality of underdevelopment in the African continent. It is helpful to commence with the notion that whatever one thinks regarding the discourse on development, regardless of theories and structural plans, it remains obvious that Africa is yet to achieve the status of economic development which dictates all other forms or cadres of development.

So, the title of this section has two fundamental presumptions. Firstly, it assumes that there is under-development in Africa, hence the quest for development. Secondly, it makes the case that the quest for development is unending. These two presumptions inform the bulk of scholarship that will be pursued within the corpus of this section. We should also state from the outset that each of these assumptions, in our understanding is entrenched in the assertion of Walter Rodney when he opines thus:

¹Jonathan O. Chimakonam. "Where Are We in the Global Poverty Measurement? The Human Minimum Development Model as a Veritable Option," in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. 2019 DOI: 10.1177/0021909619885961

The question as to who and what is responsible for African underdevelopment can be answered at two levels. Firstly, the answer is that the operation of the imperialist system bears major responsibility for African economic retardation by draining African wealth...Secondly, one has to deal with those who manipulate the system and those who are either agents or unwitting accomplices of the said system.²

In this section, we shall make a philosophic assessment of the hitherto employed ideologies to combat the development saga of Africa. The task, therefore, goes beyond mere exposition but analysis aimed at revealing why these ideologies failed to bring the much-needed development to Africans.

What is development? When we talk of development, there is the tendency of jumping at growth of some sort. This often leads to confusing growth with development, whereby every act of growth is erroneously considered to be an act of development. But can we actually maintain that to grow is to develop? If we cannot equate growth with development, how then do these two concepts possibly relate or differ? This forms the main basis of our consideration of development in this section. What then is development?

It is instructive to commence with the conviction that development is a many-sided process. Generally, development is the progressive unfolding of the inner potentialities of a given reality. It is to de-envelop, that is, to bring out to light: existential, functional end epistemic, what was enveloped, folded or hidden. As it applies to a people, development is the integration of the various givens: natural, physical, acquired and human, of a people towards the full working out, permanently and cumulatively, of their being as persons, of their community, and of their real productivity.³

Pantaleon Iroegbu maintains that the fundamental contrasting term for development is envelopment. Envelopment is the putting of something, for example, a letter in an envelope. It is cover, fold or veil in. Hence, to develop literarily means to un-wrap. It is the un-wrapping, un-folding, un-*velopping*, un-veiling, out-growth, or growing out of what was enveloped, hidden or latent. Development is unwrapping of potentials. Development is “both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has secured the means for obtaining a better life.”⁴ Consequently, development can be defined as a process of unfolding,

²Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (Dares Salaam: B’ogle Overture 1971), xiv.

³Pantaleon Iroegbu, *Enwisdomzation and African Philosophy, Two Selected Essays*, (Owerri: International University Press, 1994), 81.

⁴Pantaleon Iroegbu, “Philosophy of Education: Ethics of Teaching profession,” in *Kpim of Ethics: General, Special & Professional*, ed. Pantaleon Iroegbu et al. (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 2005), 290.

evolving, or maturing that entails a movement from a lesser stage to a greater one. Therefore, to develop is in some cases to increase in dimension, to mature, and in some others, to come out full and perhaps complete.⁵

The concept of national development is another way to address nation-building. It has been variously viewed in dimension. In other words, there is no one-sentence definition of national development. According to Joseph Omoregbe, national development is the ability to defined the frontiers of a nation, it connotes high percentage of mass literacy, a buoyant economy, and in short, having all kind of material goods, which are calculated, to make man's life happy and also guarantee national security.⁶ However, nation-building has both the material and spiritual aspects.⁷ Through this process, the society ensures growth in wealth acquisition and mental enrichment and the betterment of the quality of life and living conditions of all the people. This explains why Udoidem defines national development as a gradual process of unfolding for the better or growth of a nation; a type of growth that affects the nation as a whole or a development process that is patriotic and nationalistic.⁸ This implies that national development in patriotism and nationalism is the desire to contribute meaningfully to the progress of the nation, as well as the adequate vision and willingness or readiness to work for the progress of the nation.

Though lots of theories have been proposed for African development: Consciencism of Kwame Nkrumah, Self-Reliance in Ujamaa by Julius Nyerere, Negritude of Leopold Sedar Senghor, African Humanism by Kenneth Kaunda, Arab-Islamic Socialism by Muammar Gadhafi. Even theories from non-Africans such as Modernization Theory, Dependency Theory, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and so on. These theories of development have not yielded the ultimate result for African development. Why does this reality persist?

It is to be noted that the immediate post-colonial African leaders built their theories of development on an erroneous conception of the African Mind and Society and the consequence is a catastrophic failure in the bid to develop Africa. The successors of this first generation of African leaders did not toe the part of their predecessors in this developmental enterprise. They abandoned everything

⁵Basil N. Unegbe, "Philosophy and National Development," in *Foundations of Philosophy and Logic*, ed. Iniobong S. Udoidem, (Lagos: African Heritage Research and Publications, 2002), 101.

⁶Joseph Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy*, (Lagos: Joja Educational and Research Publishers Ltd., 1990), 194.

⁷Pantaleon Iroegbu and Matthew A. Izibili, *Kpim of Democracy: Thematic Introduction to Socio-Political Philosophy*, (Benin-City: Ever Blessed Publishers, 2004), 81.

⁸Iniobong S. Udoidem, *Values & National Development*, (Lagos: African Heritage and Publications, 1992), 102.

about socialism whether African or foreign and embraced the ‘free market’ model of development. They generally engaged in buying and selling – selling their natural resources and buying finished and semi-finished products from outside.⁹ This kind of practice also can never bring the desired development. Buying and selling can only succeed in killing the developmental spirit in Africa; hence, underdevelopment is still staring at Africa.¹⁰

It is, however, the understanding here that for Africa to be able to attain development, any drive for meaningful and reflective development must be indigenous; it must come from the people and be based on their environment. This is exactly what the Guyanese scholar Walter Rodney whom we had cited earlier meant when he submits that:

A society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. This capacity for dealing with the environment is dependent on the extent to which they understand the laws of nature (science), on the extent to which they put their understanding into practice by devising tools (technology), and on the manner in which work is organized.¹¹

The honest position of Rodney and so many right-thinking Africans is that development cannot be imported; it must be internally based and considered. Any external link has to be comparative in nature thereby ensuring advancement.¹² The current and future African leaders should always bear in mind the history of African relationships with the Western world especially Europe. Even when we can praise some of the positive aspects of the globalization process, we maintain that Africa can never achieve any reasonable development based on the dependent approach. This attitude had Rodney chronicling that “African development is possible only on the basis of a radical break with international capitalist system, which has been the principal agency of underdevelopment of Africa over the last five centuries.”¹³ The line of argument of Rodney tallies with that of so many African theorists who believed that no country or continent will willingly go all out to develop another without seeking her interest which most often is antithetical to that of the supposed poorer one. Development that is indigenous addresses in a

⁹Bonaventure Ozoigbo, “African Theories of Development and the Reality of Underdevelopment,” in *International Journal of Development and Economic Sustainability*, 4(4) (2016):17.

¹⁰Lansana Keita, “Philosophy and Development: On the Problematic African Development – A Diachronic Analysis,” in *Philosophy and African Development: Theory and Practice*, ed. Lansana Keita, (Dakar: CODESRIA 2005):1.

¹¹Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 10.

¹²Ozoigbo, “African Theories,”18.

¹³Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 7.

better way the peculiar need of that social formation more than an imported one.¹⁴ This explains why this inquiry proposes an intercultural philosophy of education of Western and African (self-reliance) thoughts for the development of African States, in particular, Nigeria, through philosophical thoughts of Nnamdi Azikiwe as a pedagogical framework for authentic development within Africa.

The Five Principles of Azikiwe's Political Philosophy of Education

The proposition that education is one of the indispensable tools for national development is undeniable. It is also not a misplaced position that education that shies away from being tailored to the present demands of development is a recipe for disaster. Education as a vital instrument for national development involves acquisition of fundamental knowledge and essential developmental skills needed for technological breakthrough and socio-political development which accelerates economic growth.¹⁵ A nation's strength largely lies in the quantity and quality of her human resources; education is the pivot on which development rotates and fundamental capacity building for sustainable development. It is one of the indispensable backbones of any civilization. This explains why Godwin Azenabor champions the perspective that education:

Is the most powerful and viable instrument for developing and empowering the citizens to master the social and natural environments and to compete for survival. A nation's strength largely lies in the quantity and quality of her human resources; education is the pivot on which development rotates and a fundamental capacity building measure for sustainable development.¹⁶

The realization of the above importance of education made Nnamdi Azikiwe seek education for national development as a priority before, during and after his presidency. Dr Azikiwe's writings and speeches on educational matters are numerous. He sees education through his writings as a tool for the emancipation of Africa. The first Nigerian to call for university establishment was Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe.¹⁷ His earliest writings were directed toward the 'New' or

¹⁴Ozoigbo, "African Theories," 18.

¹⁵Benson P. Irabor, "Entrepreneurial Studies for National Development: A Pestalozzi-Deweyan Groundwork," in *Ekiti State University Journal of Education* (EKSUJOE), 8, no.1 (2018):38-48.

¹⁶Godwin Azenabor, "Sustainability of University Education in Nigeria: A Philosophical Discourse on Problem and Revival Strategies" in *African Studies Monographs*, O.M. Ogbinaka (ed.), No. VI. (Lagos: Onosomegbowho Ogbinaka Publishers Limited 2005), 2.

¹⁷In July 1934 he dropped the name Benjamin as a protest against discrimination at the British Empire Games, London. See his *Respect for Human Dignity*, Inaugural Address as Governor-General, Lagos, 1960; also see *My Odyssey*; autobiographical sketches, published in *West African Pilot* 1938-1939 and persevered in mimeographed form at the University of Nigeria Library

‘Renascent’ African. In his book *Renascent Africa*,¹⁸ he described the new African species as one which exists in a transitional stage between the old and the New Africans. In 1943, through his Socio-Political Philosophy, he enumerated five principles that will serve as a tool for the liberation of Africans from colonial servitude. In other words, the philosophy of the New African has five bases: (a) spiritual balance, (b) social regeneration, (c) economic determination, (d) mental emancipation and (e) national resurgence. Education was specially discussed under the two latter headings.¹⁹ According to Kanu, these five principles could be called five cannons of Zikism, which will serve as a foundational structure for a free national political system.²⁰

Spiritual Balance: Zik calls for right and respect for other people’s opinions and suggestions. In other words, people should be allowed to express their views and opinions. So, Spiritual Balance admonishes one to respect the views and opinions of people including one’s antagonists.²¹ The implication of this to education is that every learner has the right to make a suggestion in the class.

Social Regeneration: This builds in one an attitude which makes all men develop a broader view about humanity. It aims at social harmony where people from different divides see themselves as one; discouraging discrimination of any form in the process. In Zik’s word, Social Regeneration requires the abandoning:

Of all forms of prejudice, be they racial, national, tribal, societal, religious, political, economic, or ethical; the realization that an African is an African no matter where he comes from, whether at Kribi or at Zungeru, Navroingo or Cape Coast, Bathurst or Accra, Brazaville or manyakpowuno, etc., the breaking down of all tribal barriers or tribal prejudice, be they inter-tribal or intra-tribal, which so far, has postponed social unity of African peoples.²²

Thus, Zik calls us to jettison all forms of prejudice, be they racial, national, tribal, societal, political, ethical, etc., because Africans are one irrespective of where they

¹⁸Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent African*, (Lagos: 1937), 7-8.

¹⁹Nduka Okafor, *The Development of Universities in Nigeria*, (London: Longman Groups Ltd., 1971), 42.

²⁰Anthony I. Kanu, “The Political Philosophy of Azikiwe as an Ideology of Political Regeneration for Nigeria” available online at: https://www.academicexcellencesociety.com/the_political_phylosophy_of_nnamdi_azikiwe.pdf Accessed on 12th March, 2020.

²¹C’Fine C. Oputa, *Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe: Africa’s Foremost Philosopher of Education*, (Port-Harcourt: C’FINEOPUTA International Company, 2018), 79.

²²Owan A. Enoh, *Main Currents in Nigeria Educational Thought*, (Jos: Midland Press, Limited, 1996), 43.

come from. One of the reasons why unity schools in Nigeria were set up was to address the issue of tribal sentiments. Therefore, formal education is supposed to be a meeting ground for people from various tribes without any tribal sentiments or bias.

Economic Determinism: Azikiwe sees the economy as one foundational structure for Africa to be self-sufficient. So no matter how educated Africans are, without economic power, they cannot go far. This view tallies with that of Julius Nyerere, the first President of Tanzania who advocated for the Philosophy of Self-Reliance Education for the liberation of Africans.²³ Therefore, education for Africans is useless, unless it is adapted to the African environment. Thus, he writes: a state of society where the mind is brought into harmony with... a psychological conception deeply rooted in a material environment.²⁴ In all, Economic determinism is a vision which favours an African continent with a strong economic base. As no nation thrives without a solid economy, Zik in his vision for a new Africa wants all African counties to be economically developed.²⁵ So, schools are to graduate individuals who not only have good grades in certificates but also in competences. In other words, there should be a tandem between theory and practice in the Nigerian education system for the sole aim of fostering national development.

Mental Emancipation: While Nkrumah (1974) spoke of philosophical conscientism, Wiredu (1995) spoke of Conceptual Decolonization; Azikiwe (1978) spoke of mental emancipation. In advocating for mental emancipation, Zik felt that the average African has been brainwashed; thinking that the whites are superior, leading to inferiority complex. Also, many Westerners considered Africans incapable of managing their affairs.²⁶ Africans are to be free from the mental enslavement of thinking that because they are black they are inferior.

Kanu calls this mental decolonization which he said is different from physical decolonization which was achieved in the late 1950s and 1960s by most African countries with the lowering of colonial flags and hosting of national flags. He further says: indeed, that the experience of slave trade and colonialism by Africa created a situation of the 'crisis of self-confidence' in the African, which

²³Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism*, (Dar es Salam: Oxford University Press, 1968), 410-411.

²⁴Nnamdi Azikiwe, "From Tribe to Nation," in *Themes in African Social and Political Thought*, ed. Onigu Otite, (Malta: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978), 277.

²⁵Oputa, *Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe*, 80.

²⁶Oputa, *Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe*, 80.

has opened apertures for a lasting barrier to growth and innovation²⁷ cannot be denied. Azikiwe therefore, calls for emancipation from the crisis of inferiority and assures the African that he had a glorious past and can design a more glorious future.

According to Ikenna Nzimiro, Azikiwe wants the African to follow Socrates' principle: *Gnothi seauton* (Man know yourself), and like a sleeping giant wakes up from his slumber and harness his power for his own good and that of mankind.²⁸ Oraegbunan describes the effects of this encounter as mainly psychological, manifesting itself through inferiority complex, cargo-cult mentality, anthropological impoverishment, identity crisis, cultural alienation, psychological trauma etc.²⁹ Okolo describes this crisis as the "uprootedness of African being."³⁰ Thus, it is the contention of this study that African philosophy of education, through its tools of criticisms and constructiveness, can contribute positively to the mental emancipation of the African peoples that will serve as a basis for national development, because development begins with the people.³¹ Mental emancipation, therefore:

includes education of the sort which should teach the African youth to have faith in his ability: to believe that he is equal to the people of other races of mankind both mentally and physically: to look at no man as his superior simply because that man comes from the Antarctic or Arctic regions. It means that the renascent African must be rid of the inferiority complex and all the trappings of hat-in-hand Uncle Tom-ism. Educate the Renascent African to be a man. Tell him that he has made definite contributions to history...that while Oxford and Cambridge were in their inchoate stages, the University of Sankore in Timbuctoo welcomed scholars and learned men from all over the Moslem world...³²

Elaborating the emancipation theme further, Dr. Azikiwe claimed that the education of the African up to his (Azikiwe's) time was anachronistic, had

²⁷Anthony I. Kanu, "The Political Philosophy of Nnamdi Azikwe as an Ideology for Political Regeneration for Nigeria." *Professor Bassej Andah Journal of Cultural Studies*, 3, (2010):146-155.

²⁸Ikenna Nzimiro, "Zikism and Social Thought in the Nigerian Pre-Independence Period, 1944-1950," in *Themes in African Social and Political Thought*, ed. Onigu Otite, (Malta: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978): 281-301.

²⁹Ikenga E. Oraegbunam "Relevance of African Philosophy to African Integral Development." *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 10, (2007):1-33.

³⁰Chukwudum B. Okolo, *African Social and Political Philosophy*, (Nsukka: Fulladu, 1993), 49.

³¹Benson P. Irabor, "Towards A Conceptual Decolonization of "Bastardized" African Value." *Crawford University Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, VII, nos.1&2, (2017): 148-167.

³²Azikiwe, *Renascent*, 9-19.

prepared Africans for life in a stagnant and unprogressive social order, and had encouraged Africans to cultivate false values. It lacked ‘moral stability’, emasculated Africans and was utterly useless as a preparation for leadership. He concludes: All that I have said can be summed up in these words: Africans have been miseducated, they need mental emancipation to be re-educated to the real needs of renascent Africa.

Political Resurgence/Risorgimento: This implies affirming a state of political freedom from imperial domination. Zik believes that if spiritual balance, social regeneration, economic determinism, and mental emancipation are achieved, political resurgence is also achieved, and where the life principles are fully working, there is bound to be a new Africa which people will be proud of.³³ If the African cultivates a spiritual balance, experiences social regeneration, cultivates and realizes economic self-sufficiency and mental emancipation, he/she certainly finds himself or herself in a state of political Risorgimento (renewal or rebirth).³⁴ Zik says:

Politics is a means to an end which is more glorious than the means through which this end must be attained. Socially, the end is guarantee of social security, and a right to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, just as do other peoples.³⁵

Once this is attained, a people can boast of a stable and reliable political system, which for Nnamdi Azikiwe can be achieved through education.

The Triplets of the Philosophy of Education of Nnamdi Azikiwe

Thus far, we have been able to expound the salient characters of Azikiwe’s philosophy of education. In this section, we focus on the triples that derive from these five and also unearth how they can tackle underdevelopment in Africa. It is in line with our reasoning that Chukwuma Oputa submits:

Zik was able to develop his education philosophy which was, an education that was liberal, progressive, and vocational; rich in African contents, laced with acceptable European and American values, capable of freeing the mind of the individual, and in the end committed to scholarship so that the individual can have enlarged and commanding view of things everywhere.³⁶

³³Oputa, *Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe*, 81.

³⁴Kanu, “The Political Philosophy of Azikiwe”

³⁵Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, (London: Frank Cass, 1937), 24-26.

³⁶Oputa, *Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe*, 45.

As earlier stated, the writings and speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe are copious, however, for this disquisition, we have made it into triplets of Pragmatism, Eclecticism and Neo-Welfarism. These three dovetail into his writings and speeches, either implicitly or explicitly. Let us consider each of them.

Azikiwe's Pragmatism

In brief, pragmatism is a philosophy that encourages us to seek out the processes and do the things that work best to help us achieve desirable ends. The pragmatists believe that an idea is true if it works. Pragmatism is a philosophy of workability; a philosophy of action and creativity.³⁷ It encourages the search for processes and doing those things which work best to help man achieve desired ends. While speaking of the pragmatic aspect of Azikiwe's socio-political philosophy, Oputa writes:

As a pragmatist, Zik was interested in how everyday problems could be practically solved. He believed that one should apply sufficient reasoning with accumulated experience in fashioning one's way of life. Zik was more of a pragmatist in reality and his activities spoke volumes of this claim. As a man who was very much interested in the liberation of his people, he sought for practical ways Africa could be freed one of which is education. He believed that what works is what is accepted. Whatever did not work, he discarded.³⁸

The University of Nigeria was born in the mind of its founder Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe more than twenty years prior to its establishment. Azikiwe's idea was contained in his book, *Renascent Africa*, published in 1937. He believed that Africans had been "miseducated" and that they needed mental emancipation if they were to be responsive to the social, economic and political needs of their society. Azikiwe's ideal university irrespective of its physical location in Africa, is "where you will notice that the curriculum is balanced and, consequently its graduates know a little of the classic; the humanities, and the sciences." This, he asserted, "is the criterion of the efficacy of university education, in any part of the world." Therefore, it is indeed not a mere coincidence that from its inception the University of Nigeria required every student, irrespective of his/her specialisation to take a course of general education, which consists of social science, English, natural science and the humanities.³⁹

³⁷Jean L. Mercier, *From Socrates To Wittgenstein*, (India: Asian Trading Corporation, 2002), 86-87.

³⁸Oputa, *Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe*, 46.

³⁹Bab Fafunwa, "The Beginnings and the Evolution of University Education in Nigeria," *50 Years of University in Nigeria: Evolution, Achievements, and Future Directions*, eds. J. Okojie, I. Oloyede, & P. Obanya, (Ilorin: National Universities Commission, 2010), 16.

Dr Azikiwe in particular, himself a product of foreign education, argued fervently that scholarships schemes abroad would not solve the problems:

Why should African youths depend upon Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, Sorbonne, Berlin, and Heidelberg for intellectual growth? These universities are mirrors which reflect their particular societal idiosyncrasies...Give the renascent African a university, you who are capable of financing the same. With twelve million pounds, there is no reason why the best libraries, professors cannot be produced right here and this Continent can become, overnight, A Continent of Light.⁴⁰

In his speech he writes:

The African should go beyond the veneer of knowledge. Ability to quote Shakespeare or Byron or Chaucer does not indicate original scholarship. The capacity to know what is the periphrastic conjunction, or to solve the Pythagorean problem, or to understand the principles of heat, light and sound, or to translate Aramaic, or to know all the important dates of British history, does not indicate true academic scholarship. These are the superficialities of a decadent educational system...Originality is the essence of true scholarship. Creativity is the soul of the true scholar. Initiative... Africans need to be scholars. We need to be creative.⁴¹

Dr Azikiwe delivered one of his most brilliant addresses entitled '*Hope to a Frustrated People*' in which he laid out the philosophy surrounding the establishment of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. He listed four major elements that would feature at Nsukka:

1. Its nationalists content so as to preserve the identity of the African, as expressed by the National Congress of British West Africa when the struggle for national self-determination was at its early beginning.
2. Its economic objective in order to provide for the requirements of industry, commerce and society.
3. Its cultural and creational nature for community service, as analysed in the report of the Economic Mission to Europe and North America.

⁴⁰Azikiwe, *Renascent*, 140.

⁴¹Nnamdi Azikiwe, "From a speech delivered at the Methodist Boys' High School, Lagos, in November, 1934, on his return from the United States en route to Onitsha, his home-town" in *Zik A selected from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 23-24.

4. Its revolutionary character in attempting to blend the American land grant college idea with the British classical concept of universities adapted both to the changing circumstances of contemporary Nigerian society.⁴²

Zik's Eclecticism

Eclecticism is a selection and merge of insightful ideas from idealism, realism, naturalism, existentialism, pragmatism, etc., into one coherent camp. This implies the pulling together of viewpoints from different schools of thoughts into one comprehensive whole. It simply means not adhering to any specific school of philosophy as it enables individuals or nations to adjust amid disparate ideologies. It has to do with a careful fusion of what is useful from various philosophical traditions.⁴³ Furthermore, Patrick Akinsayan asserts:

The basis of eclecticism is from the conviction that there is no school of thought that can stand out exclusively without some dependencies on other philosophies. This is to say that no philosophy can stand on its own and none can anchor an education system single-handedly without some complimentary support from other schools. This means that all the existing systems of thought perform complementary roles rather than contradictory.⁴⁴

As a Pan-Africanist, Nnamdi Azikiwe used eclecticism in his political cum philosophical thought. Elaborating on this, C'fine Chukwuma Oputa writes:

Nnamdi Azikiwe was not just a charismatic leader; he was also a foremost philosopher of education whose greatness traversed beyond the shores of Nigeria. He had a unique philosophy of education which he called "eclecticism", believed in the education of Africans for complete emancipation from ignorance and slavery, and joined few eminent persons of his time to champion oneness among human race.⁴⁵

Accordingly, Joseph Omoregbe asserts:

Azikiwe developed a philosophy of eclecticism which according to him leads to three 'harmony of opposites', he examines capitalism, socialism and welfarism critically and found each of them wanting. But none of them is totally bad

⁴²Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Hope for a Frustrated People" Address made by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chairman of the Provisional Council of the University of Nigeria, at the inaugural meeting of the Council, 3rd March, 1960.

⁴³Patrick O. Akinsanya, *Philosophizing About Education*, (Lagos: University of Lagos Press and Bookshop Ltd, 2015), 70.

⁴⁴Akinsanya, *Philosophizing*, 70.

⁴⁵Oputa, *Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe*, v.

without some good elements in each of them. He brings together what he considers as the good element in each of them, combines them with the ideals of African traditional society and forms all into what he calls 'Neo-welfarism'.⁴⁶

In this wise, eclecticism trend of African philosophy of education would define African Philosophy as the combination of various schools of thought in African Philosophy and ideologies, such as ethno-philosophy, philosophical sagacity, nationalist-ideological philosophy, etc. This would involve sifting the philosophical thought of Africans as could be gotten from their various world views, myths, proverbs, etc, and reflecting on them by professionally trained African philosophers. They believe that at the point of this romance between the professional and unprofessional, authentic African philosophy is realized. It argues that the different schools are already doing African philosophy, but that they will do better if they join heads together. The eclectic school of African philosophy can be referred to as a moderate trend, and for many a safer path to thread.⁴⁷

The dominant characteristics of each of the philosophies are not to be taken separately but rather combined to give rise to a functional, viable, practical and workable theory which will improve African philosophy of education. If no philosophy can be comprehensively complete and correct in every way, it would then be impracticable to think of a system of education anchored on a single philosophy. In the words of Taneja, "educational systems draw their sustenance from more than one school of philosophical thought; they are to a greater or less degree, eclectic."⁴⁸ Furthermore, he states:

...sticking to any particular school of philosophical thought idealism, naturalism, realism, etc. is neither possible nor even desirable. We are living in a fast-changing world. Education, if dynamic, has to conform to the changing norms and nuances of life. Instead of being rigid to certain beliefs and ideologies, we have to get inspiration from all philosophies, borrow from each what we feel is functional in the prevailing circumstances and fuse them into a new philosophy suiting the higher values of life.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Joseph Omoregbe, *Socio-Political Philosophy: A Systematic and Historical Studies*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Publishers, 2010), 62.

⁴⁷Anthony I. Kanu, *African Philosophy: An Ontologico-Existential Hermeneutic Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues*, (Jos: Augustinian Publications, 2015), 51-52.

⁴⁸Vidya R. Taneja, *Educational Thought and Practice*, (India: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd) cited by Patrick.O. Akinsanya, *Philosophizing About Education*, (Lagos: University of Lagos Press and Bookshop Ltd, 2015), 71.

⁴⁹Patrick.O. Akinsanya, *Philosophizing*, 71.

Nations that have purportedly adopted one school or the other as the basis of their education have resorted at one time or the other, to picking certain elements which are complementary from other philosophies, in their chosen school of thought. No wonder Akinpelu submits that a genuine system of education is essentially eclectic embracing the doctrines of two or more schools of thought” When various elements from disparate philosophies are pulled together in a way that dispels inconsistency and incoherence, the outcome is a comprehensive education which is highly rich, functional and dynamic. The implications of the foregoing on aims of education, curriculum, methods of teaching, etc., are evidently clear.⁵⁰

Azikiwe’s Neo-Welfarism

Nnamdi Azikiwe functioned seriously in favour of an ideology for Nigeria. He argued for pragmatic federalism, neo-welfarism and the establishment of democratic institutions. Only these would make the nation a true democracy, one where all would enjoy freedom and well-being (Welfarism).⁵¹ Before considering the Azikiwe’s Neo-Welfarism ideology, it is instructive to begin with the meaning of welfarism. According to Azikiwe, a welfarist state is that which prescribes minimum standards of living and provides equal opportunities in education, health, housing, pensions, rehabilitation, etc. Also in a welfarist state, free education and free health care are made available to all citizens. Fees are minimal when they are charged for certain expensive medical treatments. Unemployment benefits are made available to the unemployed who have made some contributions to a social insurance fund. Certain services like “paramedical services” such as nursing, midwifery, radiography, physiotherapy and laboratory technology are available for little or no charges. Thus, the welfarist state aims at bringing the greatest good to the greatest number of people by providing virtually free essential services to her citizens.

Though Azikiwe commends welfarism on its goals, he warns that it has inherent problems arising from its provision of essential services free of charge. Once it becomes known that these services are free, there are bound to be so many people rushing to take advantage of these free services that are being rendered. Finally, he admits that welfarism does not solve some of the problems created by capitalism; the problems are still there, and so we “are back to square one.” Simply put, he finds welfarism inadequate and unsatisfactory, and thus turns to neo-welfarism.

Succinctly put, Nnamdi Azikiwe proposes neo-welfarism as an ideology for renaissance Africa, with particular reference to Nigeria. Azikiwe examined the

⁵⁰Patrick.O. Akinsanya, *Philosophizing*, 71.

⁵¹Iroegbu and Izibili, *Kpim of Democracy*, 169.

major political systems: capitalism, socialism and welfarism. He found each of them wanting, but none of them in his view is totally bad without some good elements. He, therefore, works towards a harmonization of these systems by combining the good elements in them; the result of this is what he calls neo-welfarism. Therefore, Neo-Welfarism is a pragmatic, political cum philosophical ideology that was developed by Nnamdi Azikiwe as a tool for combating the economic problem of his time. It is:

An economic system which blends the essential elements of capitalism, socialism and welfarism in a socio-economic matrix, influenced by indigenous Nigerian mores, to enable the state and the private sector to own and control the means of production, distribution and exchange, whilst simultaneously enabling the state to assume responsibility for the social services, in order to benefit citizens according to their needs and officially specified minimum standard, without prejudice to participation in any aspect of social services by voluntary agencies.⁵²

At this juncture, it is fitting that we state the primary objectives of Neo-welfarism:

1. To reform and renew the instruments of power according to the Nigerian political experience,
2. To insist on the rule of law,
3. To bring about a total restoration and reinforcement of the fundamental rights of all citizens according to the constitution,
4. To bring into reality, the universally accepted principles of the separation of power between the executive, legislative, and the judiciary,
5. To bring about the renewal of confidence in the integrity of government,
6. To bring about a sincere and reliable organisation and administration of public utilities, welfare services, education, agriculture, recreational facilities and entertainment,
7. To introduce an open door policy in importation and exportation of products, and
8. To introduce and sustain a taxation policy that would be in accord with a reasonable scale.⁵³

Despite all that has been said concerning the strengths of Azikiwe's position, it is pertinent to provide some critical pointers. A critic may rejoind that Azikiwe's

⁵²Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Ideology for Africa: Capitalism, Socialism, or Welfarism?* (Lagos: Macmillan, 1980), 4.

⁵³Azikiwe, "From Tribe to Nation," 277.

ideas have not been put into flesh so one wonders how relevant they can be in the contemporary clime. At this juncture, we riposte that the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.⁵⁴ Just because an idea has not been used is no reason to dismiss its suitability. Azikiwe's ideas can be used as a platform because not only was he an African statesman who understood the problems and challenges of Africa but worked assiduously to eradicate the force of full reliance on Western ideas. It is on this showing that we had maintained that even when the foreign presence is not deniable, it is important to blend it with the ancient episteme of Africa to yield something productive and worthy enough to initiate a development that will translate meaningfully in the lives of the peoples.

Conclusion

Through its exploration of the core ideas of Azikiwe, this research makes a blend of the undeniable Western presence and the positive and relevant aspects of indigenous epistemologies with the intent of conjuring a template for educational philosophy that will inform inclusive development for Africa. The triplet educational philosophies of Nnamdi Azikiwe as we have shown herein can inform the emergence of minds that will accelerate the much-sought development that has been elusive in the African continent. The present educational system of contemporary Africa has waned consequent of the circumvention of proper assessment of knowledge. It is the conjecture of this work that this could primarily be one of the many reasons why Africa remains underdeveloped after over half a century of political independence. By and large, education remains a key to development, and for Africa to achieve this, it is pivotal to explore the details of "intercultural philosophy" – an intellectual horizon that blends Western and African epistemologies. In other words, for authentic development to be actualised in Africa, there should be a blend of Western and African philosophies. And this research has done this through the exposition of the ideas of Azikiwe as a template upon which a development that is people-inclusive can thrive.

⁵⁴Emmanuel Ofuasia. "Teaching Morality and Creative Thinking via Modern Technology at the Pre-Tertiary Level," in *African Moral Character and Creative Thinking Principles*, ed. Jim Unah, et al., (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press 2019), 113.

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