



Diasporic Liberation and African Renaissance, the Challenge of Reggae Music in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the recurring theme of Pan Africanism has been the Unity of the Continent and Diaspora. The organizers of the momentous 1945 Pan African Congress in London and the Founding Fathers of the Organization of African Unity{O.A.U} were unreservedly propelled by the burning desire to consolidate the unity of the black race as a minimum condition for the continent's socio-cultural and even political rebirth. It was, therefore, not strange that a cardinal objective of the defunct O.A.U was the maintenance of African Unity. As a continent richly endowed with natural resources and a cockpit of global attention the new millennium, unity becomes a basic denominator for solidarity and peaceful co-existence. This is the main thrust of African Renaissance. Therefore, what challenge does this rebirth pose to Reggae music; this is germane because as a music of protest against inferior stereotypes about Africa, it must readjust itself to the new reality on the continent. With an analytical method, the paper argued that Reggae music must come out of its nostalgic cocoon and address the needs of Africa in the 21st Century. It concludes that Pan African institutions must widen the Pan African discourse for the participation of the civil society including the apostles of Reggae music.

Keywords: Pan Africanism; African renaissance; reggae music; diaspora; New Millennium.

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1. INTRODUCTION

They say the sun is shining to all.

But to some people it never shines at all- Bob Marley.

The above quote conveniently typifies the sorry State of Africa in the 21st century. Simply put, the new world order is the triumph of the Euro-American liberalism and the globalization of neo-liberalism. This is subtly implemented through the policies, programmes and reports released by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (WB/IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and other Capitalist -motivated organizations with a manifest destiny to dominate the political economy of the world.

In this scenario, other developing regions, including Africa are suffocated and subjected on the fringe of existence. While other countries of the world proudly entered into the 21st century with high expectations and hopes, Africa emerged in the new millennium with sadness, constraining conflicts, millions of frustrated and displaced people. According to the 2005 Human Security Report on War and Peace in the 21st Century, "by the turn of the century sub-Saharan Africa had become the world's most violent region, experiencing more battle deaths than all other regions."

Apart from the above, the continent has been inexorably tied to the strong noose of global apartheid. This process prodded by the hidden fist of the Washington consensus- (Institute of International Economics, WB/IMF, USA Treasury of State) has over the years dragged the continent and other developing regions to a debt peonage. In 1979 the Organization of African Unity [OAU] reported that Africa is unable to point to any significant growth rate or satisfactory index of general well-being, and the World Bank also reported an average annual growth of 2.8% from 1980 to 1987, external debt rose within the period from \$55billion to \$160billion [1:12]. Action declared that "... between 1970-2003 African countries received about \$540 billion in loans, and paid back \$580 billion in debt service, yet the continent is still saddled with over \$200 billion external debt" [2]. The inevitable conclusion is that the continent cannot fulfill its social responsibilities to the people. The financial burden of this debt has imposed a new form of slavery on the exploited classes in the continent.

It is amazing that a continent endowed with enviable human capital, approximately 930 million out of the global total of 6,600 billion [3] and unrivaled mineral resources could nosedive into an incurable economic coma with leadership failure. The desire to find a solution to this dismal situation motivated this study. The main thrust of this paper, therefore, is twofold.

1. To examine critically how the new thinking in Africa can enhance a reconfiguration of the continent for good governance and the liberation of Africans in Diaspora.
2. In this process what is the role of Reggae music?
Indeed, the significance of this piece cannot be overemphasized. Apart from using Reggae music to advance the frontiers and deepen the knowledge of Pan Africanism in Africa, it will be a strong instrument to check the tyrannical tendencies of leaders in the 21st century.

2. THE DIASPORA AND PAN AFRICANISM

Without doubt, African Diaspora and Pan Africanism are precipitates of the harrowing and horrific experiences of Trans-Sahara and Trans-Atlantic slave trades. These horrendous epochs aptly described as the rape of Africa and one of the darkest spots in the history of humanity, witnessed the violent forceful dispersal of people of African descent to distant lands. They became slaves, chattels and beasts of burden. This devastating situation prompted Dima to declare that, Africa is the only continent that has been subjected to the humiliating and dehumanizing practice of slavery as a commercial enterprise. Right from the 7th century the Arabs invaded North Africa, sweeping aside the Byzantine Empire, which ruled Northern Africa [4:19].

For more than 1,370 years, Africans were willfully bought and sold by Arab traders into the hinterland of the Middle East, and south East Asia. Through the policy of Arabization these people of African descent were assimilated into the Arabian culture especially through religion. North Africa affords us a good example of this fact. Again, there are certain communities in South East Asia whose music and dance can still be traced back to Africa [4:20]. As the continent was shading of the trauma of Trans-Saharan slave trade, it fell into another excruciating experience of man's inhumanity to man. This was the Trans- Atlantic slave epoch. The

mercantilist activities of European countries in the fifteenth century provided the desire for wealth appropriation and discovery of new markets. To all intents and purposes, this was the genesis of the expansion of European imperialism in Africa. While searching for a new sea route because of the blockade of the Mediterranean sea route by Muslims, Christopher Columbus who was under the services of Spanish government accidentally landed in what became the New World. This development rapidly engendered a phenomenal change in the European political economy. Without hesitation European countries such as the Netherlands, France and Britain flooded the place. They set up a plantation economy and a political superstructure evidently, which were hostile and unacceptable to the indigenous people. Resistance to this external imposition and forced imprisonment meant humiliation and death. Roger Osborne (2006), and Jack P. Morgan (2009), noted how the Spanish conquistors decimated the Aztec and Inca population of the New World. Osborne observed that acting under the support of Spanish government, Francisco Pizarro and Hernan Cortes mindlessly dispossessed the native people of their land, gold and subdued them to a life of slavery and starvation.

There was no restraint on the use of sadism, rape and unimaginable violence by Spain in their rabid quest to dispose the Indians of their natural resources. The aftermath was that by 1600, the Spaniards claimed control over a vast region extending from the current Southwest of the United States to the Caribbean.

The systematic decimation of the natives through "imported diseases", starvation and war led to the drastic reduction of their population. The few who survived this state of terror ran into the interior. Africans became the alternative to satisfy this imperialist need. It was against this backdrop that more than 21 million Africans were transported to Europe, America and the Caribbean in an unforgettable "Rite of Passage". Eric Williams (1944), Edward Blyden (1967), James Walvin [5] and W.E.B. Dubois [6] have copiously written about the bloodletting, heartbreaking and unimaginable condition which African slaves passed through on their way to the plantation farms. Unarguably, the enormous wealth built by these slaves funded the enviable civilization of North America and Europe. We can see the seamless relationship between slave labour and the development of Capitalism.

Rodney pointed out that "Africans were carried to the Americas for the single though the multifaceted purpose of laboring in the interest of European capitalism. But the significance of their presence in this part of the world extended beyond the aims and dispositions of their masters" [7:62].

These slaves of African descent either sold in the East or in the Western Hemisphere collectively constitute the Global African Diaspora. According to Niikando.

African Diaspora has been applied to the forced migration of millions of enslaved Africans in Europe, the America, and Asia that occurred between 1441 and the abolition of slavery in Brazil on 13th May, 1888 [8:31].

In fact "Africans Abroad" or African Diaspora was born from tragedy arising from the two-slave epochs Africa experienced. According to Adetugbo, the dispersion of Africans, especially during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade has led to the establishment of African communities in many parts especially of the Western World. Thus, today we find African Communities in Europe, the Caribbean and even Latin America. [9]. The emotional outburst, indefatigable resistance and romanticization of the African past for psychological solace by the slaves laid the groundwork for Pan Africanism. It was a conscious effort by Africans to rise above their slavish status quo, economic exploitation and racial inferiority. This is reflective of the fact that the captured Africans refused to be seen as mere passive subjects in the hands of their slave masters. They fought assiduously and unhesitatingly to assert their freedom and dignity even in the most horrendous circumstances. The Haitian Revolution of 1791-1803 led by Toussaint L'ouverture, and the thirty-seven slave revolts between 1522-1895 [10:61-62], demonstrate the conscious feeling of liberation and freedom among Africans.

The race consciousness inflamed by the common realization that they were under alien control made the Pan African idea a racially laden ideology. The Afro- Centric posture of the Movement was based on the simple reason that "...it was an ideology of emancipation from white supremacy from the start" [11:42]. But over the years, the Pan African idea assumed a higher meaning and dimension. It became a rallying point for continental unity and Africans in Diaspora; emancipation of Africans from all forms

of derogatory oppression and foreign rule. This feeling of brotherhood was heightened by the invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 by Italy. The invasion provoked an unprecedented reaction. It led to the formation of Pan African Organizations such as the Ethiopian World Federation (EWF) in 1937 by Malaku Bayem, International African Friends of Ethiopia (IAFE) in 1936 by C.L.R. James, the International African Service Bureau (IASB) in 1937, the International Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia and in 1944 the Pan African Federation (PAF) was formed. The invasion was seen as an affront to African civilization. In 1936, the National Negro Congress which took place in Chicago, unreservedly committed itself to mobilize the Negroes internally "to defend Ethiopia, to fight against recognition of the fascist imperialist claim to dominate over Ethiopian peoples" [12:194]. The African Federation had as its leaders Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, C.L.R. James and Jomo Kenyatta. These people and their organizations raised the consciousness of the blacks to a high crescendo through their writings, speeches and outright condemnation of the imperialist invasion of African homeland. Some Africans even volunteered to fight on the side of Ethiopia as a demonstration of their Pan African commitment.

It was against this background of high passion for African affairs, and total commitment to defend what belongs to Africa that the 1945 Manchester conference of Pan Africanism took place. This conference is distinctively epochal because it triggered a swift turnaround in the activities of the Movement, and indubitably became a veritable instrument of nationalist activities in the continent.

Formalized in 1900 by Henry Sylvester Williams, the 1945 conference, which for the first time witnessed the active participation of students and fraternal organizations from the continent drastically changed in strategy, tactics and outlook. Dibia noted that,

By the end of the ... congress Pan Africanism finally had been turned into a mass ideology of Africa by Africans and for Africans. It has grown from a reformist, protest ideology for the people of African descent in the New World into a nationalist ideology for the continental liberation of African. The global Pan Africanism of Dubios, the militant self-determination and self reliance of Garvey, and the cultural

restoration ... had then become integrated element of African nationalism ...the constitution of all nationalist movements included Pan Africanism clauses... [13:37]. In his book, Pan Africanism or Communism (1956) George Padmore defined Pan Africanism as an "ideological alternative" with which Africa could liberate itself from the shackles of imperialism. It would create an authentic and independent, political, social and cultural environment for creating, making and reproducing what was uniquely African and insulate Africa from the decadence of Europe and Africa.

It may not be a hyperbole to surmise that the radical momentum which the post-1945 Pan African Congress generated led to the political independence of Africa from the late 1950s to May 10, 1994 when South Africa became independent. Thus ending the whole struggle about the continent submerged in colonial thralldom. Unfortunately, by the 1980s, the hopes and high expectations of independence gradually withered away. Pan African feelings became an abstraction far removed from the realities of the time. In fact, the 1980s were regarded as a lost decade in Africa, with signs of regression boldly expressed in all sectors. At the close of the twentieth century, Africa was still saddled with a labyrinth of needless woes, a hungry population and irrelevant leadership. Adebayo Adedeji noted that,

Civil wars and civil strikes are but violent reactions to the pervasive and lack of democracy, the denial of human rights, the complete disregard of the sovereignty of the people, the lack of empowerment and accountability and generally bad governance [14].

As majority of Africans in the continent found themselves in a Hobbesian, 'state of war' because of bad governance, Africans in the Diaspora did not fair better. Except for a few, most Africans, in the United States of America, Europe, the Caribbean, South America and Asia still suffer the same destiny as their counterpart in the continent. This to a large extent has drastically weakened any sustained cooperation between the continent and people of African descent.

It is this realization of common suffering and a pedigree that has necessitated a new wave of Pan Africanism.

3. AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AND LIBERATION

African Renaissance simply implies a rebirth; rethink and a conscious re-launch of Africa into the new millennium so that it can sufficiently initiate the solution that will positively touch the lives of its people. It is a strong realization of the fact that the dreams, vision and radical commitment to Pan Africanism of the 1940s and 1950s had fizzled out. It recognizes that Africans must not be wards of benevolent 'experts'; rather they must be the architect of their own affairs and circumvent global vulnerability .

Although not a novel concept, it was Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa who popularized the concept in 1998. According to him "we speak about the need for the African Renaissance in part so that we ourselves and not another, determine who we are, what we stand for, what our mission and hopes are, how we do things, what programmes we adopt to make our lives worth living, who we relate to and how" [15:33]. In a nutshell, African Renaissance "is an attempt to end the violence, elitism, corruption and poverty that sum to plague African continent, and replace them with a more just and equitable order" [16:165]. Landsberg stated that Africa Renaissance is the fifth wave of Pan Africanism. For him, therefore, Pan Africanism had traversed four stages, each with its own unique contribution to African liberation. It is, therefore, not out of place that Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah declared that,

The years of Pan Africanism were the years of euphoria in Africa. The years in which hopes of an African awakening, a Renaissance, a re-generation, a re-birth were frequently trumpeted by all and sundry. The hopes was that, in as little time as possible, Africa would move forward towards greater and rapid development and emancipation of her peoples [16:165].

The fifth wave of Pan Africanism focuses on popular welfare, rising above neo-colonial political inhibitions and elite driven governing consensus "... seeks to find a balance between solidarity and continental unity on one hand". [17:117] African Renaissance seeks to set the parameters for a new intervention in favour of "..., accountable governance, and human rights" [17:124].

This new realism is reflected in the Constitutive Act of African Union (AU), the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and other sub-regional initiatives that seek to achieve African liberation and unity through the eradication of absolute poverty, triumph of responsible governance and abolition of civil conflicts. This is anchored on the imperative that no continental and Diasporic liberation can take place to the extent that Africa is still gripped by neo-colonial forces, at the mercy of awe-inspiring dictators who solely depend on neo-patrimonial logic for survival. According to Awodele,

A study of African leaders show that between 1960 and 1969 twenty-eight (75.6%) of the thirty Seven leaders who left office were forced out. Only one left voluntarily and none did so as a result of the election. From 2000-2004, four were forced out by military coups out of twenty-four leaders, indicating the distaste for military coup d'etat in recent times [18:21].

Perhaps it was against this backdrop that Nelson Mandela, first black President of South Africa declared at the 1998 O.A.U meeting in Ouagadougou that "Africa has the right and duty to intervene to root out tyranny, we must all accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty, to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene when behind those sovereign borders people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny" [17:124].

The above presupposes the fact that any perennial crises in any part of Africa may have unforeseen implications for the rest of the continent. The protracted wars in Liberia, Darfur (Sudan) Somalia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Congo DR are shining examples. Therefore, AU can intervene in any conflict in Africa that has,

1. Degenerated to a genocidal dimension.
2. Internal conflict used to commit crime against humanity.
3. Any internal crisis that is capable of spilling over to other African countries.

Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act of AU defined four conditions under which the organization can intervene. These are;

1. A military coup d'etat against a democratically elected government;

2. Intervention by mercenaries to replace a democratically elected government.
3. The replacement of democratically elected government by armed dissidents and rebels.
4. The refusal of an incumbent government to relinquish power to the winning party after a free and fair election [17:135].

Realizing the political and social relevance of this new development, Yamwney advised ‘...that a 21st century African Renaissance needs to incorporate the energies of Africans in the Diaspora to successfully build a United States of Africa, especially given a global content which is increasingly hostile to Africa and African people’ [19:133]. African Renaissance, therefore, focuses inwards and conditions the enabling environment through which it could collaborate and cooperate with Africans in Diaspora for the liberation of all people of African descent. It is a clarion call that the new world order is full of unprecedented vicissitudes and hostile to Africa, therefore, a readjustment and realignment has become a desideratum to achieve the goals of Diasporic liberation.

4. THE CHALLENGE OF REGGAE MUSIC IN THE NEW EPOCH

We have vividly demonstrated that African Renaissance is not a discrete epistemology, but an integral part of Pan Africanism. It seeks to advance the objectives and values of Pan Africanism to meet the onerous challenges of the epoch. Hence the need for a change of tactics and parameters of struggle. In this scenario, what are the likely role(s) and challenge(s) of Reggae music in the actualization of this new shift?. But before we delve into that, it will be apposite to understand the etymology of Reggae music. Reggae is a genre of music that developed by a group known as Rastafarians in the Trench Town of Jamaica. Trench town a suburb of Kingston was noted for its notoriety in poverty, hopelessness of life and cramped with unemployed people of all grades.

This made it a possible pathway for crime and a beehive of criminalities. Apart from the socially unacceptable condition in which the people passed through, they were racially discriminated against. Barry Chevanness [20] in his Rastafari, Roots and Ideology stated that “the subjugation of Africans by force was accompanied by the attempt to instill in them, both physically and culturally a sense of inherent inferiority, offset by

a sense of inherent superiority of the master race” [18:10]. In his account of the squalid and miserable condition of Trench town, Niaah stated that,

Persons were living from hand to mouth, unemployed or having no steady income, unable to care for themselves and their children. There was the absence of a real voice of leadership for a people disenfranchised by poverty. The option they pursued included domestic work (for women) pickpocket...and music (emphasis mine) [4:125].

Therefore, it was within this seemingly hopeless environment that a few conscious minded people rose to give hope and encouragement to others. In no uncertain terms, they condemned officialdom which they referred to as Babylon and clamored for a Redemption of Africa, maintenance of its purity and a strong desire to return to the land of their forefathers. These people included Leonard Howell, Nathaniel Hinds, Alexander Edward and Mortimmer Planno. Through a painstaking research, they laid bare the historical contributions of Africa to world civilizations. Like Socrates of the 5th century Athens, they constituted what may be called a “sidewalk university”. Their work was later complemented by George James’s Stolen Legacy. The Greeks were not the Authors of Philosophy, but the People of North Africa, commonly called the Egyptians (1985), C.L.R James’s Black Jacobins and Walter Rodney’s How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (1972). As the activities and sermons of these men resonated within and outside Trench town, a new consciousness and realization started building up within the people. They called themselves Rastafarians. This name was proudly adopted from the name of an Ethiopian king Ras Tafari, who was crowned in 1930 and took the title “king of kings and conquering Lion of the Tribe Judea”. Africans, especially those in the Diaspora were emotionally excited to see an independent African king at a time colonialism had swept off all existing political and social institutions in the continent. The intellectual contributions of these people were lyrically brought down to make the people become part and parcel of what the Rastas stood for. Garvey’s ‘Back to Africa Adventure’ and all he stood for became common themes in their music. According to White,

The Wailers music used the language, love and idioms of the humble country folk Jamaica to

explain the goals of Rastafari on earth principally that of ascending to iration the highest form of creation'- a level of existence at which no false dogma holds sway, no evil exist, and there are no duppies... [21]. Not stupendously, between the 1950s and 1980s Reggae music had penetrated every part of the globe with its message of love, and Blackman Redemption. Small wonder that Planno declared that "Rasta mek Jamaica get more money, get houses, get more everything. Trench town responsible for ska, rock steady, reggae and dud" [22]. Indeed, all the Reggae musicians such as Jimmy Cliff, Sly Dumber, Bob Marley, Eric Donaldson, Peter Tosh and others were Rastafarians. In his celebrated album "Equal Rights", Tosh alerted people of African descent that they have a common destiny, hence the need for unity. This is because "no matter where you come from, as long as you are a Blackman you are all African". Bob Marley's Rasta Man Vibration (1976) Survival (1979) Exodus Movement of Jah People, and Uprising (1980), unreservedly espoused a strong Pan African vision. For instance, in the Uprising, Marley encouraged Africans to,

Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds, have no fear for atomic energy 'cause none of them can stop the time (Marley, 1980). In his famous album, Exodus, which was named by the Time Magazine as Album of the century, encapsulated Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa Movement,

*We know where we're going
We know where we're from
We know we're leaving Babylon
We are going to our father's land
[19:146].*

Since reggae music is part of the Pan African process of creating a New Africa for all people of African descent, its lyrical arsenal and rhythm must synchronize with the new wave of Pan Africanism, to maintain its relevance. This basically calls for a turnaround and thematic re-focus so that it can go beyond the challenges of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The music must direct its attack and attention to those inhibiting conditions which retard the realization of African dreams and personality. Just as African Renaissance is geared towards good governance, accountability, human rights and self-sufficiency, Reggae music must without hesitation key into the new reality. It does not portend any good omen for the music to eulogize

and pay obeisance to African leaders who have over the years maimed and subjected their people to a life of misery, inhumanity and deprived of human security. These leaders cannot hide under any Pan African rhetoric to incubate tyranny and perpetuate their predatory legacy in the continent.

Just as it popularized the intellectual contributions of major Pan Africanists, it should also not hesitate to expand and reduce to simple terms the policies and programmes of NEPAD, AU and APRM. It is on record that most Africans do not know the existence of these bodies. The task before Reggae music, therefore, is to use its peculiar tradition and aura to close this widening gap. This of course presupposes that the founding fathers of the aforementioned bodies must work in tandem with the apostles of the music. All peoples of African descent must close ranks and assiduously work for the realization of African Renaissance. This is because the 21st century is replete with stiff competition, and only those who are stiffly prepared can survive in all ramifications. As we vigorously emancipate ourselves from all mental slavery in the quest for a nascent Africa, we should endeavour not to sit aloof and watch global events from the sideline. Therefore, reggae music which is an integral part of this new beginning must wear a new look.

5. CONCLUSION

Africa is facing an unprecedented challenge in the 21st century. The euphoria and ideals of Pan Africanism in the 1940s-1950s, the common determination and the vibrancy of African nationalism, which resulted to political independence in the 1960s have become mere wishes signifying nothing.

The aftermath is that the continent is institutionally weak and economically backward to solve its myriad problems: A heavy external debt, over-hang, corrupt political leadership and prolonged internal conflicts. Fanon in his Wretched of the Earth (1983) noted that the lack of leadership acumen and entrepreneurial spirit of the African bourgeoisie was largely responsible for their woeful failure and marginal performance. This explains also why the radical tradition of the post- 1945 Pan Africanism suddenly slumbered. Walter Rodney also explained that, Pan Africanism has become a sterile instrument of the bourgeois class, just as Negritude in Senegal buttresses neo-colonialism,

in Haiti it is used to gloss over an even more desperate situation of exploitation and suppression of the Black masses [7:198]. As the continent is proliferated with Small Arms and Light Weapons (SLWs), more than 120,000 Child soldiers are virtually soliciting for alms at every international forum, it becomes unbelievable how it can forge a lasting alliance for the liberation of Africans in the Diaspora. After all, a sick person cannot defend the defenseless. With the new wave of Pan Africanism [16], there seems to be a renewed optimism that Africa will soon extricate itself from the political and economic back wood. This will lay a solid foundation for Diasporic unity and liberation.

This rebirth which is anchored on African Renaissance promises to advance the cause of Africa and Africans in Diaspora to greater height, and Reggae music cannot afford to lag behind. Therefore, rather than being exclusively a music of protest against external injustice and the worship of the African past, it should be an instrument of condemnation of internal tyrannies and unjust rule. It should preach the evangel of accountability and human security for Africans. Leaders who have betrayed their oath of office should also be a subject of ridicule. In Nigeria, some musicians like late Sonny Okoson's '**Which Way Nigeria**', The Mandators '**Rat Race**,' Endee Ineji's '**Revolution**' and others have made some headway. Unfortunately, their generation is gradually depleting. However, these suggestions cannot have the efficacy it deserves if Reggae music is still treated with scorn by neo-colonial African leaders. Their vision still serves as a speck that block the appreciation of the Pan African message in the music. Therefore, Reggae music should in all ramifications serve as a trigger for the reascent and the rebirth of the African post colonial epoch.

It will interest you to note that most African universities do not teach Pan Africanism as a course. It is either given as a passing attention or just mentioned. This has made it impossible for the younger generation to comprehend the struggles of our hero's past. Therefore,

African universities must necessarily live to realize and be part of those reality because as Cabal noted, the university is heir to a tradition that have to be adjusted to the surrounding social environment and must be prepared to change if it wishes to guarantee its future (Spence, 2008:355) [19].

Speaking during the 17th All African Students conference held in Windhoek, Namibia in May 2005, Burrel declared that it is imperative that students take the lead in forging the steps towards the development of Pan Africanism in the 21st century. It is through *youthful*, exuberant commitment to the spirit of Pan Africanism that a political programme can be used to uplift African people on the continent and in the Diaspora [9:359]. This political programme is the new reality of Pan Africanism expressed in African Renaissance. Therefore, Reggae music cannot afford to still exist in its pristine state. It must create a wide niche for itself **Now**. Finally, NEPAD, AU, APRM and other sub-regional organizations must not hesitate to incorporate the civil society, students, the African Global Diaspora and above all Reggae music in the propagation of their political objectives. This will lay the foundation for a Diasporic liberation and African Renaissance in the 21st century.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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