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## **My Trip to Ghana: a Valuable Learning and Spiritual Experience**

**By A. Peter Bailey**



**A. Peter Bailey with Samia Nkrumah, daughter of the late revolutionary Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah. Bailey met Samia Nkrumah in Accra, Ghana at the 60th Anniversary of the All African Peoples Conference (AAPC@60) and Pan African Federalist Movement Pre Congress. Kwame Nkrumah, who died in 1972, was the first prime minister and president of Ghana.**



A. Peter Bailey stands in front of conference sign in front of the University of Ghana.



**Here, I am with Malaak Shabazz who is standing with Jerry Johnson, an African American who now lives in Ghana. He created "The Wall of Ancestors" which includes, her father, Brother Malcolm X.**

About three years ago when Joomay Odongo Faye first introduced me to a new Pan African organization of which he was a co-founder, I had no idea that the introduction would lead to my flying on an airplane for the first time in 33 years.

I was already a Pan Africanist, having been guided into being one by Brother Malcolm X, the master teacher. Joomay told me that the Pan African Federalist Movement's members from twelve regions throughout the world are talented, resourceful, committed people of African descent who are totally committed to the concept that **Africa Must Unite**. The twelve regions are West Africa, East Africa, South Africa, Central Africa, North Africa, North America, Europe, South America, the Caribbean, Near East, Middle East and Far East. The five official languages to be used on PAFM's international documents are English, French, Ki-Swahili, Arabic and Portuguese.

At a North American Region Conference in Washington, DC in May 2018, we were told to prepare to attend a PAFM Pre-Congress in Accra, Ghana in December 2018. That left me feeling anxious since I hadn't been on an airplane since 1985 and was very hesitant about flying anywhere. But the chance to meet Pan Africans from throughout the world and to visit the Door of No Return eventually overcame my fears.

When we landed in Accra on the morning of December 7, 2018, after a direct flight on South Africa Airways, it was a deeply emotional experience for me. Though I had visited East Africa—Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania—and Cairo in the 1970s, it was from West Africa that my ancestors had been captured and taken to enslavement in North America.

The Pre-Congress officially opened on Saturday, December 8, 2018 in the Bank of Ghana Auditorium at the University of Ghana. In attendance were over 200 Pan African delegates from throughout the world and nearly 200 students from West Africa. The program consisted of cultural performances in dance, music and poetry, the showing of several short documentaries promoting the Africa Must Unite theme, panel discussions focusing on the same theme and a speech by H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana.

President Akufo-Addo's remarks noted that Africa's enormous wealth must be exploited for the benefit of African people "and not, as has been the norm in our history, for the benefit of people outside our continent."

The opening day's program also included the complete speech made by President Kwame Nkrumah at the first Organization of African Unity (OAU) Conference held in Addis Abbas, Ethiopia in June 1963. Among other things, he insisted "No independent

African state today has a chance to follow an independent course of economic development and many of us who have tried to do so have been almost ruined or have had to return to the fold of former colonial rulers. This position will not change unless we have a unified policy working at the continental level. The first step toward our cohesive economy would be a unified monetary zone with, initially, an agreed common parity for our currencies. To facilitate this arrangement, Ghana would change to a decimal system.”

President Nkrumah also said Africa must “forge a political union based on defense, foreign affairs, diplomacy, citizenship, an African currency, an African monetary zone and an African central bank.” Unfortunately, Africa, as of today, has not heeded his vision for the continent.

When it was my turn to speak as a panelist on Brother Malcolm’s Pan Africanism, I read a September 1, 1964 press release he wrote and distributed at the 2nd African Summit Conference. “Why does the press of the western world constantly ridicule and play down the idea of a United States of Africa? They know that a divided Africa is a weak Africa. And they want to keep a dependent target of western ‘philanthropy’ or what is being increasingly described here as ‘benevolent colonialism.’ The neo-colonialists who would ‘woo and rule’ Africa today must skillfully disguise their selfish aims with their generous offers of unlimited ‘economic aid’, ‘peace corpism’ or ‘cross roadism,’ all of which are nothing but the modern counterpart of 19th Century ‘missionaryism.’ A United States of Africa is a strong and independent Africa, an Africa that can stand on its own feet, walk for itself and avoid the snares and pitfalls devised by benevolent imperialists to keep the whole continent divided, weak and dependent upon a philanthropic west for ‘economic aid,’ ‘political guidance,’ and ‘military protection’.”

I also read a portion of a September 9, 2009 advertising supplement in the Washington Post paid for by an outfit called Pan African Capital Group based in Washington, DC. Its headline “Africa on the Agenda” says it all. It’s not Africa’s Agenda but Africa on the agenda to be ripped off by the continents of North American (aka USA), Europe and Asia. Though they have all kinds of conflicts among themselves, when it comes to Africa they are of one mind.

The subtitle of the supplement, “Africa-The Key to Global Economic Growth” blatantly reveals why this is so. According to Steve Cashen, founder and CEO of the group that paid for the supplement, “The continent (Africa) has approximately 60 percent of the world’s diamonds, 40 percent of its phosphate, 30 percent of its cobalt and 10-15 percent of the world’s proven oil and gas reserves.”

If that isn’t enough reason for Africa to unite, consider the following excerpt from the 1986 book, “*South Africa Inc. the Oppenheimer Empire.*” “South Africa...is the western world’s biggest provider of gold, platinum, gems, diamonds, chrome, manganese ore, and vanadium (which is used to make high grade steel for oil pipelines). The value of its minerals is exceeded only by the U.S.”

It was knowledge about this kind of exploitation that brought Pan Africanists from all over the world to Accra. I personally had the valuable learning experience of conversing and sharing ideas and concepts with delegates from 25 countries. They included Michael Flores, from Belize, who has traveled extensively throughout Africa, Ameth Lo of Canada, who did much of the English to French and French to English translating during the Pre-Congress, Samia Yaba Nkrumah of Ghana, the daughter of its first president, Kwame Nkrumah, Alessandro Robalo and Paulus Uremu of Cape Verde, who told me that it is illegal in their country to change one’s name to an African name. Prof. Miriam Victoria Gomes of Argentina, who noted that the government in that country often acts as though people of African descent in Argentina don’t exist. Hardi Takubu of Kumasi, Ghana, from whom I purchased a colorful, mind-blowing covering that can be hung on the wall if one has a huge living room or used as a spread for a larger than king-sized bed.

I also had knowledge-expanding conversations with Pan Africanists from Senegal, Mali, Germany, Burkina Faso, Jamaica, South Africa, Guinea, England, Liberia and the Virgin Islands.

Other North American delegates included Malaak Shabazz, one of the daughters of Brother Malcolm and Sister Betty, Mwalimu K. Q. Amsata, coordinator of the North American Region, Jacqueline Johnson-Dickson, who is another frequent traveler and Nobantu Ankoanda, who last fall celebrated the 20th anniversary of her Collard Greens Cultural Festival in Lithonia, Georgia. She told us about her collard greens ice cream.

Also memorable was conversing with several former residents of North America who now live in Ghana. They included Jerry Johnson, founder of the knowledge expanding Global African Ancestral Wall, an over block-long wall featuring 88 large painted

portraits of people of historical significance who are of African descent, Kwame A. Mitoto Sr., who took Malaak, Jackie, Nobantu and myself to breakfast at one African restaurant where we were served delicious yellow grits that were made in house.

For me, the most deeply emotional experience of the trip was going to the fortress El Mina where thousands of our African ancestors were held in captivity until being forced to go through the Door of No Return to be put on ships that would take them to enslavement in North and South America and the Caribbean. When hearing about the major role played by the Catholic Church at El Mina, I thought that, to some degree scandals are at least partially the Catholic Churches' current retribution for the despicable, horrific contribution Catholicism and Christianity made to the enslavement of millions of African people.

The Final Declaration of the event issued by All African People's Conference WLO and PAFM included the following: "The new organizational charter of the movement decided on the official proclamation of its existence three years after the call of the Provisional International Initiative Committee launched in Dakar, Senegal in 2015...Key members of the International Preparatory Committee of the First Pan African Federalist Congress were elected and the decision to hold the Congress in two to three years were made. Mali was chosen to host the headquarters of PAFM. PAFM and the Nkrumah Pan African Centre jointly launched a solemn call to all people of African descent, wherever they may be in the world to join them in the active preparation of the Congress for the Political Unity of Africa in less than one generation."

That's a huge challenge. The greed-driven exploiters of Africa's wealth from the continents of Asia, Europe and North America are not going to graciously fade away. However, after interacting with and conversing with the significant number of delegates under the age of forty at the Pre-Congress, as well as with numerous serious, talented, resourceful and committed young people I know we have in North America, I am more optimistic about the future. I agree with the great Pan Africanist, Chiekh Anta Diop, who after criticizing the shortcomings of many of Africa's leaders of his time, said "As generalized insecurity spreads, no African regime will be able to prevent the masses from seeing that the ineptitude of their own governments is linked to the general insecurity. At that point, I feel the masses will find within their own ranks the type of political vanguard, made up of young altruistic and politically motivated Africans to unleash a powerful, continent-wide movement. This political undercurrent would eventually be forced to sweep away the objective obstacles standing in the way of a continental African Federation."

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