

## **Let's Tell the Truth About Afrika**

by

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Afrika has been called "The Dark Continent" which suggests that there is little known about Afrika and that Afrika is a place buried in the darkness of ignorance, hunger, poverty and warfare. Most television coverage and documentaries do little to change this perception. However, let's shed some light on this "darkness".

Afrika is the world's second largest continent after Asia and has an area of almost twelve million square miles. Afrika is almost three times larger than the United States although the commonly used map, the Mercator Projection map enlarges the size of the northern part of the globe and makes countries like Greenland, Canada, the European countries and the United States seem larger than they actually are. The Peters Projection map is a more accurate depiction of the relative size of countries.

Afrika contains fifty-four independent countries.

Although many people associate Afrika with jungle, it should be remembered that the technical name for jungle is rain forest and there are more forests in the United States than there are in all of Afrika.

Afrika contains two of the world's largest deserts: The Sahara and the Kalahari. The word Sahara means "Great Desert", so to say "Sahara Desert" is saying "Great Desert Desert". Some of the world's highest officially recorded average daily temperatures have occurred in the Sahara in Algeria. In the mountains of the Sahara, the temperatures can also reach freezing. The Sahara is approximately 3.6 million square miles and is slowly enlarging even though it was once lush, fertile land.

Afrika's mineral and natural resources make it the richest continent in the world although many (if not most) of its people are poor. Afrika is rich in diamonds, gold, uranium, cobalt, iron, copper, tin, bauxite, lead, chromium, phosphates, oil, salt, manganese, mica, nickel, coal, lithium, zinc, antimony, palladium, titanium, natural gas, and asbestos. Many of these substances are only found in Afrika. Afrika is said to have about 30%

of the earth's mineral resources. Most European nations that are considered rich are wealthy based on their theft of these resources.

Agricultural products that are plentiful in Afrika include sorghum, cotton, peanuts (groundnuts), cocoa beans, wheat, coffee, corn, sweet potatoes, bananas, peppers, rice, tobacco, rubber, yams, cassava, potatoes, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, soy beans, alfalfa, soybeans and sesame.

Other continents have used up their own resources or have climates that prevent adequate food production so that frequently people of these climates look to places like Afrika for their own survival. As Dr. John Henrik Clarke, the great historian has said, many people throughout the world want the riches and resources of Afrika but are not willing to pay fairly for them.

For most of the history of the world, Afrikan people were in leadership positions and it could be argued that the world was more peaceful and civilized.

Afrika is the origin of mankind and the cradle of civilization. Why is this not taught in a meaningful way? The brilliant writer, philosopher and historian Ayi Kwei Armah explains it best: *"...children get their knowledge from the academy. And the Academy is a European institution imported into Africa to help achieve a purpose of central importance in the maintenance of Europe-an control over Africa's and material potential: to deny Africans accurate knowledge of-and hence control over-our immense resources, intellectual and material...for millenia, Africa's population has been under attack from societies convinced that to live well, they have to push others into penury and slavery; and that it is their right to deprive Africans of the continent's vital resources, and to appropriate for their own use those confiscated resources."*

He goes on to say, *"The European agenda, then as now, was fixated on power, not on accurate knowledge. Where knowledge stood in the way of power, it was cut down, distorted out of recognition, or driven underground. The increase of European power at the expense of Africa's population called for a systematic shortening of African memory. Europeans came to Africa as conquerors. That is the academic name for armed robbers. A conquered population is easier to administer if it has no memory of ancestral achievement. It can be made to accept*

*foreign occupation and oppression as part of a civilizing process, a mission of salvation, or a humanitarian intervention. It was logical for European colonialists to set up an educational system designed to persuade Africans, either that we had no history, or that our history went back just a few short centuries."*

Although he uses the term "European" throughout his statement, we could easily and justifiably substitute the word "American" and the meaning would not change.

The first writing systems are found in Afrika (script, ink and paper). The first physicians were in Afrika. Afrikans were the first people to create mathematics, architecture, educational systems, medicine, agriculture, the calendar, clocks, wigs, surgical instruments, cosmetics, toothpaste, religion, and embalming, just to name a few. The Greeks who are given credit for many creations actually give credit to their teachers, the Afrikans in the land of Kemet, now known as Egypt.

Afrika holds the future of the world. Most of the minerals needed to maintain our quality of life are found mostly in Afrika. Afrikans must regain control of their resources and also regain their traditional leadership position in the world. Afrikans must also return to the best of their traditional ways of doing things and abandon European methods and systems. Many people believe that AUSA will lead the effort but we must understand that the European and American systems of doing things were and are not the only or best ways of doing things. We must relearn the successful ways and systems of our Afrikan Ancestors that have been deliberately ignored and minimized by our kidnapper, enslavers, colonizers and oppressors. To quote Zora Neale Hurston, *"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change."*

Food for thought.