

OBY'S Perspective re: George Floyd.

Touched and laudable, but had to laugh at images of Nigerians at the American Embassy in Lagos, supporting their brethren abroad, in the aftermath of the George Floyd atrocity. It was all well-intentioned but I fear misplaced energy and resources. If we really want to help, there is certain housekeeping that we, as Africans in the Continent, need to effect. There is an Igbo proverb – **'Ara ama nma asa ulo pu o ezi'-Nkporo Igbo dialect. {Ana ama nma si n'ulo puo n'ezi - General or union Igbo dialect}** Beauty starts from inside the house and then struts out. We start from home. To illustrate, imagine you want to go to a big occasion. You start getting ready from home. You have your bath, cream your body, put on your makeup, {yes, men too these days}, your party clothes, your shoes. And then you step out of your house. Usually everyone turns in admiration of your efforts.

Africa symbolizes the black man wherever he may reside in the diaspora. Africa is the wind beneath their wings. When Africa soars they soar. When Africa is respected, they are respected. If we really want to regain the dignity of the black man universally, we need to reconstruct the existing paradigm that gives a nod to the notion that the African world is one of destitution and inherently incompetent leadership. I heard about the heady days of the '70's oil generated wealth, before the corruption set in, before the light dimmed: when Nigerians strutted through the main streets of the capitals of the world, proudly and arrogantly, I might add, proclaiming their citizenship as Nigerians, with the world falling back, whispering to each other "ooh, they are Nigerians!" in awestruck admiration. I heard about and saw images of our Airports, so representative of the United Nations as the country was flooded with investors from most countries, of every hue, every creed and every race. I remember a sea of white and foreign investors flooding Murtala Mohammed Airport as I returned on holidays from abroad in the 80s pinching my arm to reassure self that I was indeed in a black country called Nigeria. But things then fell apart. The center, as they say, did not hold. We compromised our self-respect and our dignity, thus losing our rightful place on the world stage and in scheme of things. However, I do maintain that we will regain our status when Africa's Capital resources are used for the primary goal of increasing our

nations' financial wealth and not for the bank accounts of corrupt leaders; when images of destitute African representatives, begging, cap in hand, to be let in to the doorway of the rich westerner, and getting kicked, like a cur, out of the way, is relegated to history books; when we stop feeding off crumbs that fall from a global table we helped set, supplied and sustained with food; when images of destitute African Youths, fleeing their continent, being fished out dead or alive from the watery graves of the Mediterranean and Atlantic by unsympathetic Border Patrol/Coastal Guards/personnel, is relegated to history books; when images of dirty capitals with poor drainage systems, environmental hazards and all manner of pollution, become relegated to history books; when images of starving children {mostly exaggerated for western consumption} are relegated to history books {so we can give Oxfam and the Red Cross a break}; when Education and Health care become the priority that they deserve; and when competent leaders are allowed to be elected and allowed to flourish without bankrupting themselves in the quest to be voted into offices that they are eminently qualified. I know. I tried to get elected into the Abia State House of Assembly in the 2018 Elections. Sadly I did not succeed, but that was only due to the disunity of my Party in that region. We did not present a strong and singular, cohesive front to thwart the Opposition. Still that's another story. I digress. So if we really care about our African brethren in the diaspora, if we really care about affording them pride and due respect in their various communities, then it becomes incumbent on us to present them with a proud, affluent and progressive alternative Continent. Consequently they would regain some the aforementioned affirmations by association. I am well aware that some of these ideas may seem an oversimplification in characterizing a complex set of circumstances/issues, and not the platform for lengthy and complex discourse but, hey, we got to start somewhere. So, let us now pick ourselves up from the ground, set our marks and fly, cos we got the wind beneath **our** own wings. Just saying