

Zain Africa Challenge 2010 – Ask Mwalimu

Episode 2, Show 10 – The “Father of Pan-Africanism”.

On tonight’s “Ask Mwalimu”, it’s up to you to decide the answer.

The question is : “Who is the ‘Father of Pan-Africanism’?”

Is it Kwame Nkrumah, W.E.B. Du Bois, Edward Wylton Blyden or someone else?

Well, unlike some of the other topics we address, this question has no one right answer. “Father” could mean: “first”, “most-influential in his time” or “best-remembered today,” among other things.

Edward Blyden, an Igbo, born in the West Indies in 1832 was perhaps the first Pan-Africanist. Before the term was even coined, he authored *A Voice from Bleeding Africa* in 1856 and *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* in 1872. He lived mostly in Liberia and Sierra Leone and championed “decolonisation of the African mind”.

The man most-often credited with being the “Father of Pan-Africanism” is W.E.B. Du Bois, who was born in the U.S. and lived his last days in Ghana. He was a driving-force behind the Pan-African Congresses of the early 20th century, though credit for the first “Pan-African meeting”, held in 1900, goes to West Indian Henry Sylvester Williams.

The last contender is Kwame Nkrumah because of his efforts to take the movement from a time of colonialism to an association of independent African nations. Some call him the “Father of African Nationalism”.

If you’d like to contribute to this debate, do write and tell me. The address as always, is mwalimu@zainafrichallenge.com or complete the entry form on our website at www.ZainAfricaChallenge.com.