

Right Livelihood

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“For a lifetime of scholarship and activism that has identified the key principles and processes by which Africans can create a better future.”



AWARDED 1997

Joseph Ki-Zerbo

Burkina Faso

Place of Birth: Toma, Burkina Faso

Date of Birth: June 21, 1922

Deceased: December 4, 2006

Education: Institut d'Études Politiques, France (Honours Degree in History, 1955)

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Joseph Ki-Zerbo (1922-2006) was a scholar, historian, and writer politically active in Africa, especially in his country of origin, Burkina Faso. As a historian, he focused his work on endogenous development, founding the Centre d'études pur le Développement Africain (CEDA). One of his primary goals was inspiring other Africans to pursue development projects which integrated ecological preservation, social praxis and cultural identity. CEDA was the base from which Ki-Zerbo conducted his intellectual crusade to re-found African development goals and methods.

The three strands of Ki-Zerbo's life and work – historian, action researcher and advocate for endogenous development, and politician – were closely linked. His profound understanding of Africa's past was the bedrock for a political philosophy that sought to establish the framework for a different and genuinely African path of development.

Joseph Ki-Zerbo passed away in 2006 at the age of 84.

The Africa which the world needs is a continent able to stand up, to walk on its own feet rather than on crutches or on its head.

Joseph Ki-Zerbo, 1997 Laureate

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Joseph Ki-Zerbo was born in 1922. He was educated in Burkina Faso and at the Sorbonne in Paris, graduating with an honours degree in History from the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris in 1955. He returned to Africa, first to Conakry (Guinea) and then to his native Burkina Faso (the Upper Volta), where he was politically active since 1958. Later he was a MP and leader of the opposition party Parti pour la Démocratie et le Progrès (PDP).

Parallel to his political life, he was a scholar, historian and writer. In 1972 he published *L'Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, the standard work on the subject, which he updated repeatedly. From 1972-78 he was a member of UNESCO's Executive Council and Professor at the Université d'Ouagadougou. He was a member of the Scientific Committee for UNESCO's 8-volume history of Africa and director of the first volume, *Méthodologie et préhistoire africaine*, published in 1981.

The theme of Ki-Zerbo's work as a historian was endogenous development.

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"CEDA conducts research which is actually rooted in our land for the purpose of determining one or more global hypotheses of understanding, liable to inspire action by Africans and capable of integrating ecological preservation, the social praxis and cultural identity, key sectors which are almost invariably treated as secondary in development projects."

In 1983 Ki-Zerbo was forced into exile by the military regime. He went to Dakar in Senegal where he reconstituted his centre as the Centre de Recherche pour le Développement Endogène (CREDE). It was under these auspices that Ki-Zerbo organised the inter-African and interdisciplinary meeting at Bamako (Mali) in 1989, the results of which were published in 1992 as *La natte des autres: Pour un développement endogène en Afrique*, which won the European Community's Book prize at the Dakar Book Fair in 1993.

Ki-Zerbo returned to Burkina Faso in 1992 and decided to reconstitute CEDA

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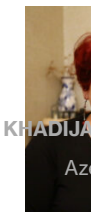
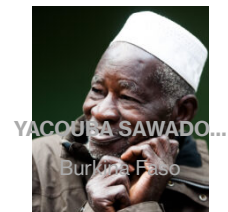
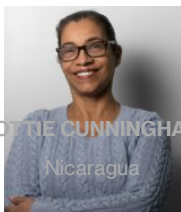
SPEECH

Acceptance speech – Joseph Ki-Zerbo

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