

# The Thinker

Quarter 3 – 2018 / VOLUME 77

A PAN - AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS



**MIKE PRIOR ON**

# AND THE WATER WILL COME

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Desmond Mlatha Sibonginkosi Mazibuko Olubunmi Famuyiwa Neo Sithole**

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## On the Cover:

We can save our shorelines  
and cities

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# We dare not fail the Palestinians

Since the end of March 2018, mass peaceful protests – ‘the Great March of Return’ – have taken place on the Israel fortified border with Gaza. Thousands of Palestinians cutting across all political and factional divides are demanding their legitimate human rights for access to their land, properties and homes expropriated without compensation by the Israeli colonial apartheid regime since 1948.

As Ilan Pappé, an Israeli historian and political activist, wrote in May 2018:

*Since the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and throughout the British Mandate period of 1918-1948, European Zionists began to build the infrastructure for a future state with the help of the British Empire. We now know that these founders of the modern Jewish state were aware of the presence of a native population with its own aspirations and vision for the future of their homeland.*

*The solution to this "problem" – as far as the founding fathers of Zionism were concerned – was to de-Arabise Palestine to pave the way for the rise of the modern Jewish State. Whether socialist, nationalist, religious or secular, the Zionist leadership contemplated the depopulation of Palestine, since the 1930s.*

*Close to the end of the British Mandate, it became clear to the Zionist leadership that what they imagined as a democratic state could only exist on the basis of an absolute Jewish presence in its territory...*

Seventy years of sustained ethnic cleansing

*While officially accepting the partition-enforcing UN Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 (knowing it would be rejected by the Palestinians and the Arab world), they regarded it as disastrous, as it envisaged almost an equal number of Palestinians and Jews in the Jewish state. The fact that only 54*

*percent of Palestine were accorded to the Jewish state in that resolution was also deemed unsatisfactory.*

*The Zionist response to these challenges was to embark on an ethnic cleansing operation that expelled half of Palestine's population and demolished half of its villages and most of its towns. An insufficient and late pan-Arab response could not prevent a Zionist takeover of 78 percent of the Palestinian territories (Al Jazeera, 14 May 2018).*

In its brutal and deadly response to the peaceful and non-violent protests of the people of Gaza the Israeli military machine in nine weeks up to the first week of June 2018, killed at least 119 people and injured thousands. Amongst those killed and wounded were children, para-medics and journalists.

Shamefully, in the context of these massacres the Trump administration moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem is a highly contested place as, at the very least, the Palestinians would want the capital of an independent Palestinian state to be in East Jerusalem.

In a grotesque “ceremony” attended by 800 guests and 22 representatives of foreign embassies the Israeli colonial apartheid regime celebrated a pyrrhic

**“In its brutal and deadly response to the peaceful and non-violent protests of the people of Gaza the Israeli military machine in nine weeks up to the first week of June 2018, killed at least 119 people and injured thousands.”**



victory. Amongst those who slavishly followed the US lead by opening embassies in Jerusalem are Guatemala, Honduras and Paraguay. It is important to record that Jimmy Morales, the President of Guatemala, is involved with corruption and money laundering and the President of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernandez faces serious allegations of corruption and electoral fraud, and violently represses peaceful protests. One can but only wonder what promises were made to these shady and discredited characters by Trump and Netanyahu.

No Arab states were represented at the event. But, shamefully, ten African countries attended. These are Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia.

Instead of engaging in genuine negotiations with the PLO for the independence of Palestine within the 1967 borders and thereby also ensuring the security and legitimacy of Israel the colonial apartheid regime is intensifying its violent and illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The people of Gaza face, daily, the most horrendous hardships, poverty, unemployment as well as Israeli military attacks. There can be no doubt that this Israeli regime is far more brutal and evil than the hated apartheid regime of South Africa. Apartheid was declared by the UN as “a crime against humanity”. Equally the Israeli regime

“During this excruciatingly painful and hazardous period the Palestinians deserve and must receive the solidarity and support of the international community.”

should be declared a “crime against humanity”.

As Ahmad Abu Rtemah, a writer and activist in Gaza writes:

*Since the beginning of the siege almost 11 years ago, the task of simply surviving each day is a challenge. To wake up and have clean water and electricity is now a luxury. The siege has been particularly hard on young people; the unemployment rate is 58%. What’s worse is that all of this is a result of Israeli policy, which can be changed. This harsh and difficult life does not have to be the reality for Gaza.*

*It is as though displacing us was not enough. It’s as if the entire memory of Palestinian refugees must be contained and erased...*

*But what many people fail to recognise is that, whether we are in our home or protesting in the fields, we are never truly safe in Gaza, nor are we truly alive. It is as though our entire existence, and dreams of ever returning home and living in dignity, must be hidden in the dark (Mail and Guardian, May 11 to 17, 2018).*

During this excruciatingly painful and hazardous period the Palestinians deserve and must receive the solidarity and support of the international community. Now is the time to take international solidarity with the progressive Arabs and Jews in Israel to a new and qualitatively higher level.

The evil colonial regime in Israel must be isolated and subjected to boycotts and sanctions. And at the time of the FIFA world cup, why is Israel allowed to play in European championships and friendlies against other teams? Congratulations to



Protester with placard at the Gaza: Stop The Massacre rally in Whitehall, London, in protest of Palestinian civilians killed by Israeli military. 15th May 2018

Argentina for refusing to play a friendly against Israel in Jerusalem; and to the crowd at the Celtic match for unitedly waving Palestinian flags when Israel played in Scotland.

It is a great shame that many neighbouring Arab countries are not taking decisive steps to isolate Israel and to compel it and its principal backers, the US administration, to enter into genuine negotiations with the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

The democratic South African government should immediately implement the ANC national conference resolution to downgrade its relations

with Israel. This should embrace diplomatic, economic, political, cultural and sporting ties. We, the people of South Africa, the recipients of all round support and solidarity from the international community, must be in the forefront of mobilising support and solidarity with the PLO and the progressive forces in Israel.

The BDS movement, internationally, should take firm steps to help build the solidary movement in the belly of the beast: the USA. Let us help to build a movement as strong as the anti-war and anti-apartheid movements in the USA.

We Dare Not Fail. ■



# TAX INCREASE IMPLICATIONS: HOW IT AFFECTS YOU

Commentators have repeatedly referred to the balancing act that was performed through the tax proposals announced in the Budget, but how does that translate into rands and cents for you? .

## VAT

Let's start with the major tax proposal – an increase in the value-added tax (“VAT”) rate from 14% to 15% from 1 April 2018. It is anticipated that this will raise R22.9 billion in revenue; a significant portion of the budgeted revenue shortfall of R48.2 billion for 2017/2018. While the increase was widely anticipated and considered unavoidable, it caused consternation for many tax-payers, leaving them wondering how the increase would impact their disposable income. It warrants mention that South Africa's increased VAT rate is lower than global and African averages; and we should not forget the 19 basic food items which are zero-rated for VAT purposes (including various grains; all fruit and vegetables; milk products; vegetable oil; pilchards; and eggs). The zero-rated food items, together with the proposed zero-rating of items of necessity such as sanitary towels, goes some way to refute the argument that increasing the VAT rate would have a regressive impact upon the most financially vulnerable in South African society.

The increase in the VAT rate will also be counter-balanced by an above inflation adjustment to social grants. Old age, disability and care dependency grants will increase on 1 April 2018 from the current R1,600 to R1,690; and by a further R10 to R1,700 on 1 October 2018; and child support grants will increase from the baseline of R380 to R400 on 1 April 2018; and to R410 on 1 October 2018. Approximately 17 million South Africans are supported by social grants.

## FEE-FREE TERTIARY EDUCATION

R324 billion has been allocated to expenditure on higher education over the next three years, including an additional R57 billion to cover fee-free tertiary education. This constitutes significant progress towards breaking the cycle of poverty and tackling youth unemployment. The cost of tuition for new first year students attending universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges from households with a combined annual income of R350,000 or less, will be fully funded; and returning students on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme will have their loans converted to bursaries from 2018 onwards.



## PERSONAL INCOME TAX

Regarding personal income tax, with effect from 1 March 2018, lower than inflation (approximately 3%) adjustments will be made to the bottom three personal income tax brackets. This means that if you earn up to R423,300 per annum and you receive an inflationary remuneration increase; you will effectively incur the tax rate of a higher tax bracket only to the extent of the difference between the lower than inflation adjustment, and the rate of inflation. This will give individuals earning up to R423,300 annually some measure of protection against bracket creep. Taxpayers earning in excess of R423,300 per annum, will be exposed to bracket creep.

## TAX THRESHOLDS

Tax thresholds have been increased across the various taxpayer age groups meaning that if you are younger than 65, the first R78,150 of your income will be exempt from income tax; if you are between the ages of 65 and 75, the first R121,000 of your income will be exempt from tax; and if you are 75 or older; the first R135,300 of your income will be exempt from income tax.

## TAX REBATES

The primary, secondary and tertiary annual rebates, which you deduct from your tax liability, have also been partially adjusted for inflation and increased as follows:

R14,067 for all individuals;

R 7,713 for taxpayers aged 65 and older; and

R 2,574 for taxpayers aged 75 and older.

To illustrate, a 65 year old taxpayer will be entitled to deduct R21,780 (primary + secondary rebates), from his/her tax liability, while a 75 year old taxpayer will be entitled to deduct R24,354 (primary + secondary + tertiary rebates) from his/her tax liability.

## DWT

If you earn dividend income from a South African resident company or a foreign company, such dividend income remains subject to dividend withholding tax (“DWT”) of 20% on the dividend paid (unless you hold in excess of 10% of the equity in the foreign company, in which case you may either qualify for a reduction in the rate of; or a complete exemption from DWT).

## TAX-FREE SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Since Treasury introduced tax free savings in 2015, many South Africans have benefitted from the merits of this product. Over the next year, your annual contribution of R33, 000 up to your life time limit of R500, 000 remains unchanged. All returns earned in a tax free savings product are free of income tax and capital gains tax. Opening a tax free savings account to include as part of your overall savings portfolio is fundamental and one of the smartest decisions you will make when building your wealth. Oasis and our network of financial advisors will assist you with opening a tax free savings account, if you have not already done so, and guide you through the process of investing with one of the Oasis social and ethical tax free savings products.



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**Michael Prior** is a British economist with over 30 years' experience as an international consultant specialising in energy and environment projects and policy development. He has worked in several African countries including Angola, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan. Michael was previously Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute at York University where he initiated continuing work in South Africa on environmental issues.

**Ronald Suresh Roberts**, together with Kader and Louise Asmal, co-wrote *Reconciliation Through Truth: A Reckoning of Apartheid's Criminal Governance* (1996, with a Preface by Nelson Mandela), *No Cold Kitchen: A Biography of Nadine Gordimer* (2005) which now features on the New Statesman's list of all-time best creative narrative works. His book, *Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki* (2007) foregrounded the African National Congress's decolonisation of knowledge and practice under its then President. He recently established Balliol Knowledge Networks, an Oxford alumni organisation for engagement and impact, and was its inaugural convenor in 2016-2017.

**Dr Mongane Wally Serote** is a South African poet and writer. In 1973 he won the Ingrid Jonker Poetry prize. As a Fulbright Scholar, he obtained a Fine Arts Degree at Columbia University in 1979. In 1993, he won the 'Noma' Award for publishing in Africa. He served as Chair of the Parliamentary Select Committee for Arts and Culture and was formerly the CEO of Freedom Park, a national heritage site. His written works include several acclaimed novels, volumes of poetry and a collection of essays. In August 2012, he was awarded the prestigious Golden Wreath Award. ■

# The Thinker

A PAN AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS

## The Journal for Progressive Thought

[www.thethinker.co.za](http://www.thethinker.co.za)

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Vusizwe Media

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Printed by Paarl Media, Paarl, Cape Town, South Africa  
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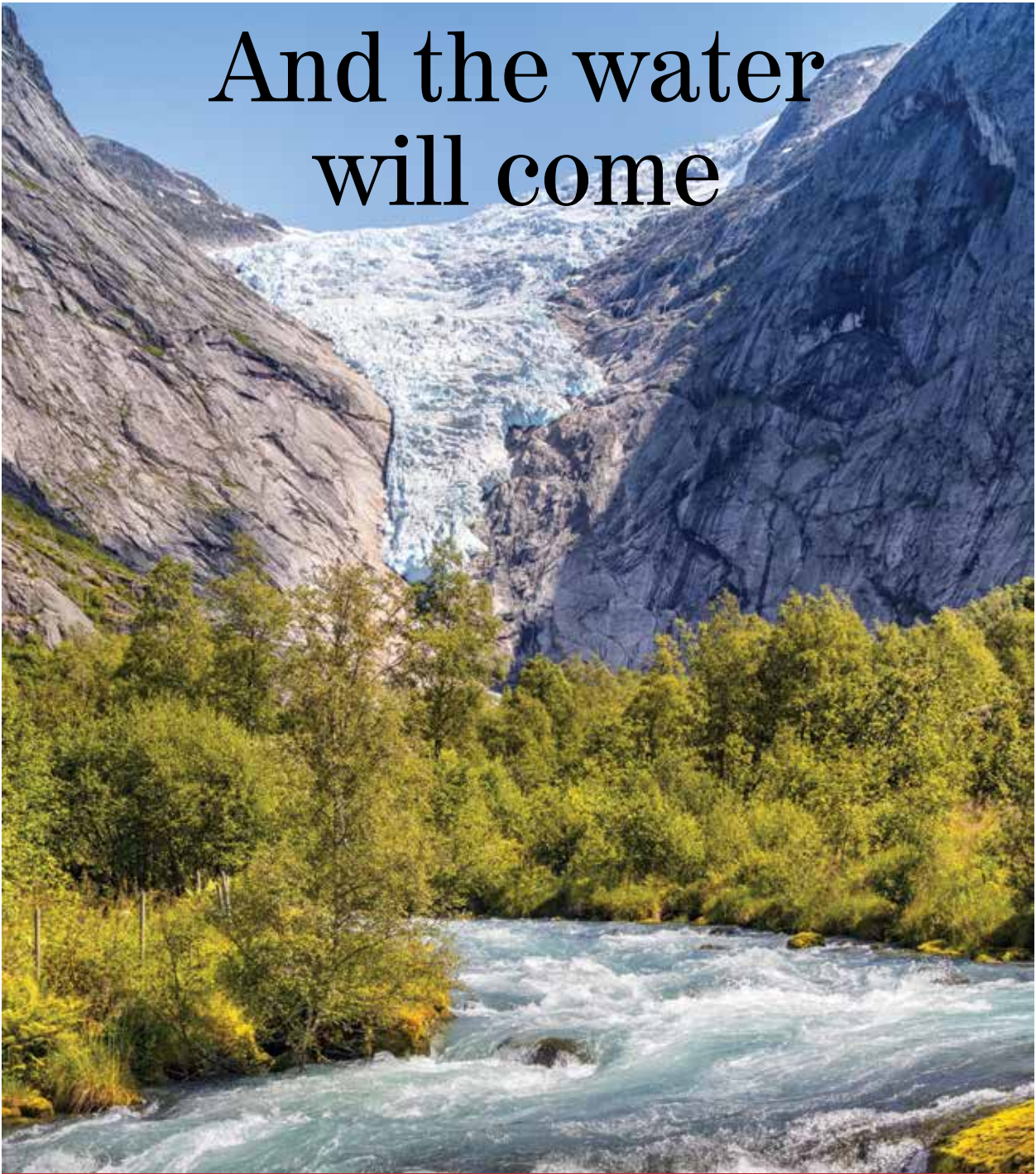
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# And the water will come



Recent analysis suggests that the problem may be on the world much faster and that the consequences of sea-level rise particularly upon coastal cities needs attention now, given the years it takes to remodel cities, let alone the huge expense.

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By Mike Prior



**A**nthropogenic climate change is essentially a very simple process. Gases from human-based activity are emitted into the atmosphere. These inhibit the radiation of heat into space. As a result the atmosphere tends to warm at a rate which is greater than climate change from other sources, for example fluctuations in solar radiation, which operate on a much longer time-scale, sometimes millions of years. In the past these fluctuations have resulted in the formation of huge ice-caps covering much of the globe or, at the other extreme, no ice-caps at all. The presently predicted consequences of human-caused climate change, probably in the range of 2-4°C, are nothing like so extreme. The problem lies in the complexity of the changes in regional and local climate which will result from this relatively modest change; and the fast time-scale over which they will occur.

In Africa, the main shift will be in rainfall patterns, some regions having higher, some lower precipitation. Not all of these shifts will be malign; increased rainfall could benefit agriculture in some places. However, even in such regions, the costs of shifting crop patterns and adjusting to the changed climatic condition will be very high. Meanwhile, as the temperature moves upwards, the erratic and extreme climate events,

drought in some areas, heavy rain and floods in others, which have come to characterise much world weather, will continue. Cape Town residents know this very well. Meanwhile, one thing is certain; that the water is coming.

The last ice age ended some 12,000 years ago with its maximum glacial extent around 22,000 years ago. In this period much of the world was covered by huge ice-sheets which have been slowly retreating ever since. There were, for example, small glaciers in parts of the Lesotho Highlands and in the Drakensberg. The average temperature is estimated to have been about 60C below current levels. The remnants of this ice-age are the ice-

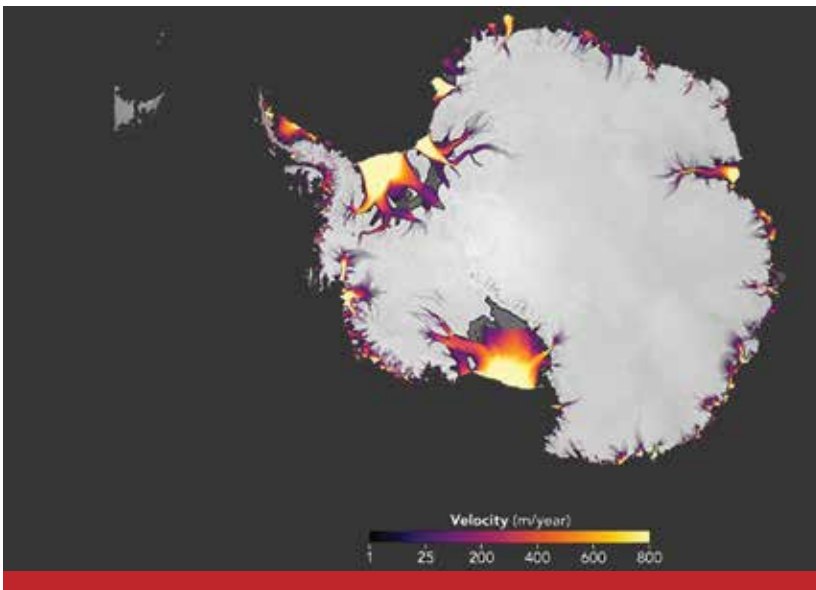
“As the temperature moves upwards, the erratic and extreme climate events, drought in some areas, heavy rain and floods in others, which have come to characterise much world weather, will continue.”

sheets which cover the landmasses of Antarctica and Greenland and the glaciers of the high mountains. Since this last glacial maximum, sea level has risen by more than 125 m, with rates varying from tenths of a mm/year to 10+mm/year, as a result of melting of major ice sheets.<sup>1</sup> This process will continue for many centuries to come. The factor which has altered this natural and long drawn-out process is human-based climate change which is likely to accelerate the process. By just how much and how soon is a matter of great uncertainty. The potential for sea-level rise is certainly great. If the Greenland ice-cap were to melt completely the sea-level would rise by nearly 7 metres whilst if Antarctica were to melt the rise would be as much as 60 metres.

Neither of these is likely for millennia but it does seem as if some degree of accelerated melting is taking place. In 2012, there was a sudden rise in surface-melting in Greenland which has been recorded in several dramatic videos.<sup>2</sup> One reason for this is the rapid increase in Arctic temperatures recently recorded most dramatically in 2018 when the land weather-station closest to the North Pole, at the tip of Greenland, spent more than 60 hours above freezing in February deep in the Arctic winter. Before this year, scientists had seen the temperature there rise above freezing in February only twice before, and then extremely briefly. This has resulted in a massive decrease in floating Arctic sea-ice to the extent that it is now thought that the Arctic may soon be ice-free for much, if not all, of the year. This would have little impact on sea-level but the accelerated collapse of the Greenland ice-cap mostly certainly will.

Antarctic melting is much more debated and appears to come about by a different mechanism with water coming out from under the ice-cap because of higher temperatures in the surrounding sea. It is, indeed, possible that increased snow-fall on the frozen surface compensates for this loss from the bottom of the ice. However, data released by NASA in February, 2018 suggest that ice-flow from Antarctica, particularly from the western ice-sheets, is accelerating. It found that:

*In total, Antarctica was losing*



THE FLOW OF ANTARCTIC ICE, DERIVED FROM FEATURE TRACKING OF LANDSAT IMAGERY  
Source: NASA

roughly 1,929 gigatons of ice per year in 2015, the vast majority of which is replaced by new snowfall. But not all of it is replaced by snow, which creates an imbalance that contributes to sea level rise. In 2015, Antarctica lost 183 gigatons of ice that was not replaced by snow. That is 36 gigatons more than the continent was losing per year in 2008. So in total, Antarctica's ice loss—which can also be viewed as its contribution to sea level rise—has accelerated since 2008. (A gigaton is one billion tons.)

West Antarctica has been losing a lot of ice in recent years, and at an ever-growing pace, while East Antarctica is losing ice more steadily. The West Antarctic ice sheet is of particular concern because, like a building that stands on an uneven

become the biggest source of sea-level rise, according to the first complete underwater map of the world's largest body of ice.<sup>4</sup>

Warming waters have caused the base of ice near the ocean floor around the south pole to shrink by 1,463 square kilometres between 2010 and 2016, according to the new study published in *Nature Geoscience*. The research suggests climate change is affecting the Antarctic more than previously believed and is likely to prompt global projections of sea-level rise to be revised upward. Until recently, the Antarctic was seen as relatively stable. Viewed from above, the extent of land and sea ice in the far south has not changed as dramatically as in the far north. But the new study finds that even a small increase in

temperature has been enough to cause a loss of five metres every year from the bottom edge of the ice sheet, some of which is more than 2km underwater.

"What's happening is that Antarctica is being melted away at its base. We can't see it, because it's happening below the sea surface," said Professor Andrew Shepherd, one of the authors of the paper. "The changes mean that very soon the sea-level contribution from Antarctica could outstrip that from Greenland."

There is little doubt that both the Antarctic and Greenland ice-caps are melting as are the glaciers in the high mountains and that the rate of this melting is accelerating. The mechanisms of melt and its rate remain controversial in some areas as does the key question:

“There is little doubt that both the Antarctic and Greenland ice-caps are melting as are the glaciers in the high mountains and that the rate of this melting is accelerating.”

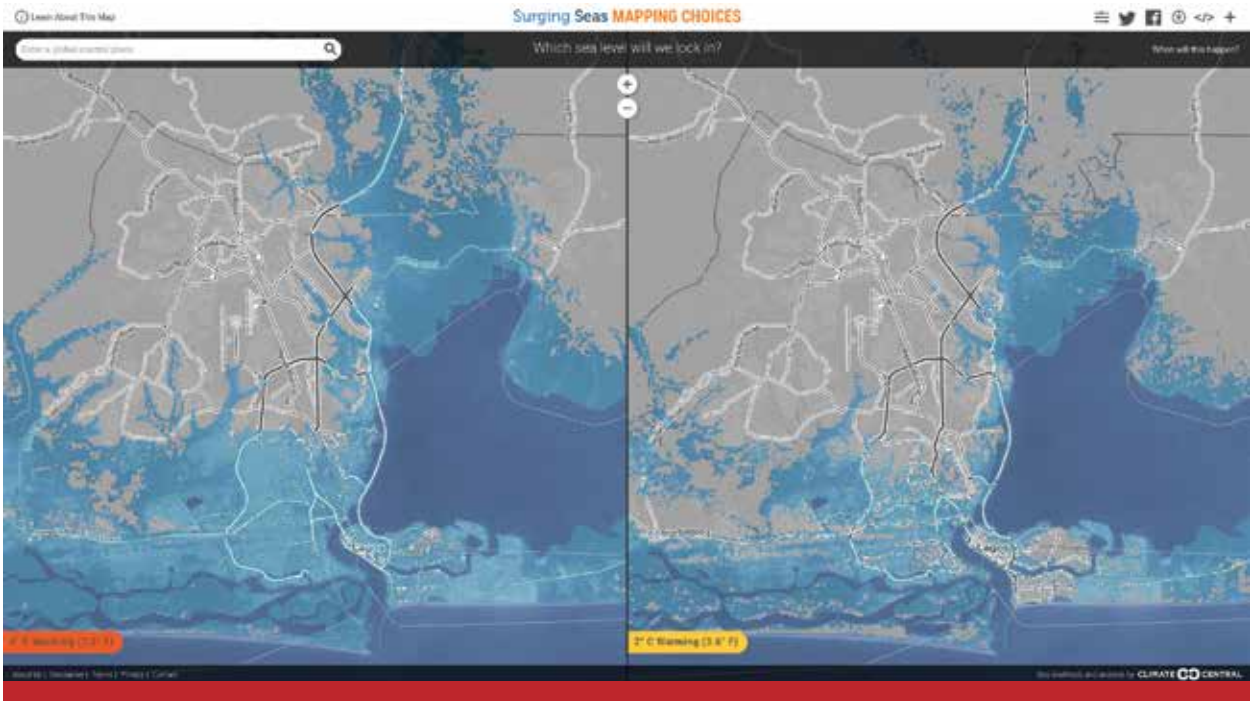
foundation, it is inherently unstable, making it especially vulnerable to the warming climate. If the entire ice sheet were destabilized and melted into the sea, researchers estimate it would lead to 3 meters (9 feet) of sea level rise globally. Models suggest that under a low-emissions scenario, where the world commits to “peaking” and then steadily reducing emissions in the near future, complete destabilization of the West Antarctic ice sheet is possible to avoid. But under medium- or high-emissions scenarios, the loss of the ice sheet becomes inevitable.<sup>3</sup>

These conclusions have been given even greater weight by recently published research which shows that hidden underwater melt-off in the Antarctic is doubling every 20 years and could soon overtake Greenland to



CAPE TOWN





LAGOS

just how fast is sea-level going to rise and at what level will it stabilise at least in a human timescale of decades. Until quite recently, estimates tended to look towards the end of this century thus parking the problem somewhere in the future. However, more recent analysis suggests that the problem may be on the world much faster and that the consequences of sea-level rise particularly upon coastal cities needs attention now, given the years it takes to remodel cities, let alone the huge expense.

Researchers at Climate Central, a US-based institute which works on various aspects of climate change, has produced an interactive map-tool which enables the impact of various temperature scenarios on the extent of flooding in world cities to be seen in vivid detail. Worldwide, the greatest attention has been paid to the megacities on the coasts of China and elsewhere in Asia and, of course, the startling news that Miami and even Disney World are likely to disappear. However, several African cities are also at risk as shown in the accompanying figures. (All are derived from [where many other cities can be viewed.\)](https://choices.climatecentral.org/#13/-6.8404/39.3272?compare=temperatures&carbon-end-yr=2100&scenario-a=warming-4&scenario-b=warming-2,</a></p>
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Cape Town will get off relatively lightly given its topography though, even at the 2°C rise which is probably the best that can be hoped for, its magnificent waterfront will largely disappear. There will be rather greater flooding along the southern part of the peninsula.

The huge city of Lagos will be much less fortunate as much of its metropolitan area is effectively at sea-level built around a large lagoon. The city's population is disputed and depends upon the area chosen but it is certainly in excess of 20 million and growing. The number of people that could be displaced by sea-level rise is very uncertain. Jeff Goodell, the author of *The Water will Come*, an inspiration for this article, writes:

*Various studies have come up with numbers ranging from three million to eight million. Whatever the number, you only have to spend a few hours in Lagos to understand that sea-level rise will displace a lot of people, and those people are going to have to go somewhere.*<sup>5</sup>

He continues:

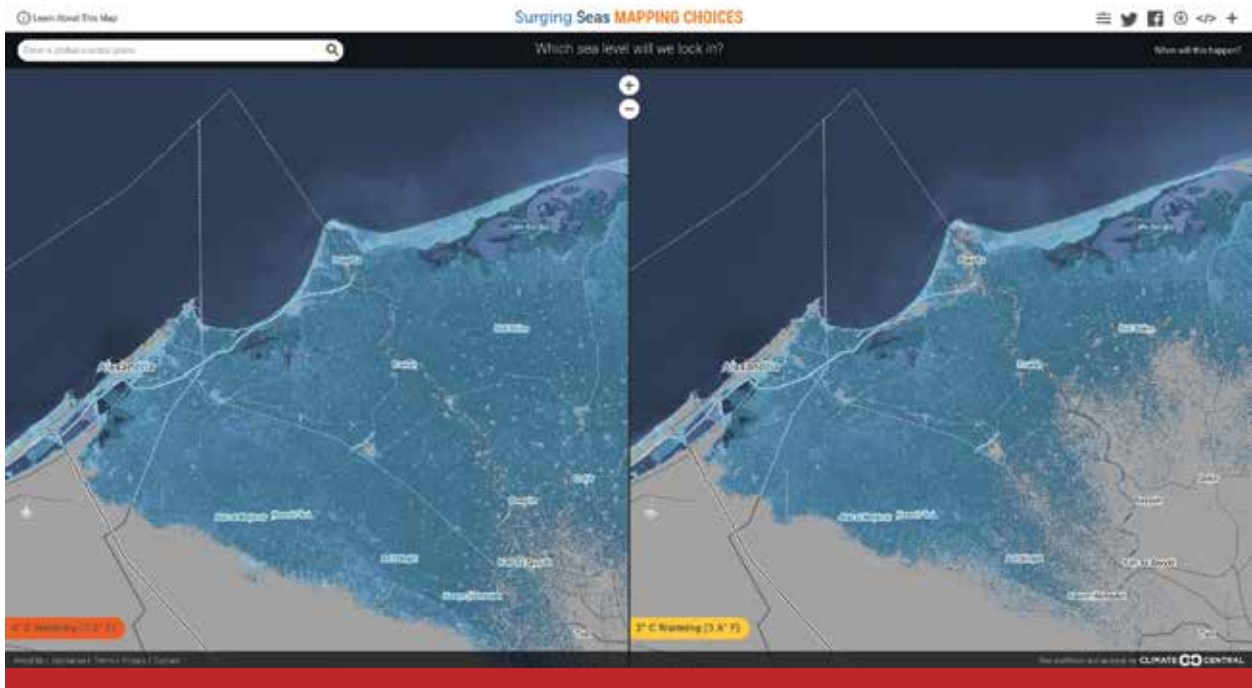
*West Africa is particularly vulnerable, especially the four-thousand-mile-long sub-Saharan coastline that stretches from*

*Mauritania down to Cameroon. It's mostly low-lying and sandy – in some places the sea is eating more than a hundred feet of land in a year. In a region where 30% of the population lives along the coastline, according to the World Bank, this is a potentially catastrophic problem...*

Lagos is not the only city at risk. In Accra, the capital of Ghana, low-lying areas of the city now flood every year during the rainy season. Parts of Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, already have lost up to eighty feet of beach every year, and erosion has already damaged several hotels in Gambia and Senegal, as well as an important water treatment facility in Cotonou, Benin's economic hub. On the outskirts of Lomé, the capital of Togo, rows of destroyed buildings line the beaches.<sup>6</sup>

In the north of Africa, the ancient city of Alexandria will essentially disappear, along with much of the heavily-populated Nile Delta, thus joining the submerged lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the seven wonders of the world.

The key question is not whether but when this devastation will come and this is a topic with widely varying estimates. A factor which confuses the issue is that, in a period when by



ALEXANDRIA

geologic standards, the sea-level is rising fast, there will be large storm and tidal surges capable of causing huge damage and then retreating. The recent rise in the number and size of hurricanes is evidence of this.

One thing is beyond controversy; forecasts of sea level rise are increasing almost yearly.

When the Paris Climate Change Agreement was drafted just over two years ago, it was based on reports that ice sheets would remain stable and on the assumption that sea levels could rise by up to three feet two inches by the end of the century. In 2015, NASA estimated a minimum of three feet. In 2017, a report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), the pre-eminent climate science agency in the United States, revised estimates up dramatically, stating that by 2100 sea levels could rise by more than eight feet. In the April, 2018 edition of *Scientific American*, a specialist in Arctic warming, Prof Jennifer Francis from Rutgers University in the USA, writes:

*We published a paper [in 2003] with a stunning, controversial conclusion: At the current rate of change, there was a real possibility that within a century, the world could witness a summer Arctic Ocean that would be ice-free, a*

*state not seen for thousands of years. Today I am startled again because it now appears that the ocean will likely be free of summer ice by*

**“West Africa is particularly vulnerable, especially the four-thousand-mile-long sub-Saharan coastline that stretches from Mauritania down to Cameroon. It’s mostly low-lying and sandy – in some places the sea is eating more than a hundred feet of land in a year.”**

*2040—a full 60 years earlier than we had predicted little more than a decade ago.*

The Arctic is changing exactly the way scientists thought it would but faster than even the most aggressive predictions. The recent behaviour is off

the charts. In just three years more than a dozen climate records that had each stood for many decades have crumbled, including those for disappearing summer sea ice, decreasing winter sea ice, warming air and thawing ground.

These trends signal trouble for people around the world. The last time the Arctic was only slightly warmer than today – about 125,000 years ago – oceans were 13 to 20 feet higher. Goodbye Miami, New Orleans, the naval base in Norfolk, Va., most of New York City and Silicon Valley, as well as Venice, London and Shanghai.

In the scale of economic damage, African cities do not figure in the top ten of the world. The Lagos huts which will be wiped out are worth very little compared with Miami Beach or Manhattan. But in terms of the numbers of people displaced by coastal flooding, West Africa does come quite high. The immediate question which arises is, of course, just who will pay for either the works needed to resist flooding or the new habitation for the displaced.

In terms of blame for causing the climate change, given that greenhouse gases remain in the atmosphere for many decades, there is no doubt that, at least morally, historic totals of greenhouse emissions should be the decisive factor. Put this way, the



totals from 1850 to 2011 as collated by the World Resources Institute are as follows:

USA	27%
EU	25%
China	11%
Russia	8%
Japan	4%
The rest: nowhere	

These countries do not, of course, see it like this. In 2013, the International Climate Change Conference meeting in Warsaw did set up the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) which has, ever since, been talking about such a process. The Mechanism has an Executive Committee with some 20 members which has met regularly ever since 2013. According to a detailed report on loss and damage prepared by researchers at University College, London, "Any discussion on liability and compensation for loss and damage remains a 'red line' for industrialised countries and, so far, the WIM has made only modest progress in terms of building concrete support mechanisms for vulnerable countries."<sup>7</sup> They discuss the COP 22 at Marrakech, in 2016, the annual gathering of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in these terms:

*At Marrakech, finance for loss and damage was a much discussed topic, however, this did not result in any concrete commitments. Although there were several calls to provide the WIM with more resources, this issue was essentially postponed: A technical paper will be prepared by the secretariat as an input to the upcoming review of the WIM in 2019 to elaborate "the sources of financial support" (draft decision FCCC/SB/2016/L.9). In addition, draft decision FCCC/SB/2016/L.8 highlights the need for the Executive Committee to include in its five-year workplan a strategic workstream dedicated to enhancing action and support, including finance, technology and capacity building. At the time of negotiations, the indicative five-year workplan contained only a place-holder for the finance-related workstream.*

This theme of endless talk appears to have been repeated at COP 23 held in 2017 in Bonn when the WIM agreed on a new "five-year rolling workplan" for the mechanism, finalising a proposal from October. However, the WIM has yet to bring forward any concrete plan on finance – the key difficulty in loss-and-damage discussions. A one-off "expert dialogue" was also agreed for the May intersessional in 2018, which will inform the next review of the WIM in 2019.

In 2009, at the Conference in Copenhagen, the Green Climate Fund was set up to help poorer countries cope with climate change. It had a target of mobilising \$100 billion in finance. In April, 2018, it had received \$10.3 billion in pledges, a figure which has been static since early 2016. By way of comparison, according to Goodell, the cost of a project to build a

**“The immediate question which arises is, of course, just who will pay for either the works needed to resist flooding or the new habitation for the displaced.”**

defence wall around Lower Manhattan alone is put at at least \$3 billion, probably more.<sup>8</sup>

Essentially, when the floods come, Africa will be left to fend for itself unless the developed world takes a much harder look at its responsibilities. Quite soon, these countries will also have to face their own problems and spend large sums on flood defence. The one major country which appears to be taking climate change seriously is China and it may be that help will come from this source. However, it will come at a price.

On a lighter note, in the USA, it appears, according to Carl Hiaasen, chronicler of Florida low-life, that rising sea-level is already being exploited to make money. In his latest novel, *Razor Girl*,<sup>9</sup> a plot-line records how eroded beaches are replaced by sand taken

from other beaches:

*Florida's beaches erode pitilessly, the unstoppable rise of sea level presenting a nightmare scenario for waterfront hotels, coastal developers and real-estate agents. Once upon a time you could get away with selling submerged land to faraway rubes, but those days were over. Now buyers wanted to visit the property first, and not by paddleboard. Likewise, high-end vacationers to the Sunshine State derived no tropical enchantment from the sight of waves crashing through their hotel's lobby.*

*Climate change created a boom for a hurricane-spawned industry known as "beach renourishment," a process by which thousands of tons of sand are dredged from the sea shallows and dumped onshore to replace the acreage washed away by nature. The enterprise is as costly as it is futile, though for a few glorious months the shoreline appears authentic if not pristine. This fluffing of public beaches is funded by helpless taxpayers, while privately held oceanfront is often augmented at the expense of the property owners. Either way, beach-renourishment deals are fabulously profitable for the contractors because the job never expires – every grain of sand you dump gets washed away.*

It seems as if, at least in Trump's America, even climate-change deniers have found a way to make a quick profit. ■

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# War, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Viability of Africa's Post-Colonial State System



Far removed from the immediate unfolding human tragedy and the true madness in the theatre of campaigns, the prospect – ushered in by the fourth industrial revolution – of emotionally sanitised conduct of warfare outside the traditional battlefield poses a mortal threat to all humanity.

By Ademola Araoye

War is the exercise of force for the attainment of a political object, unrestrained by any law save that of expediency.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will. Violence arms itself with inventions of Art and Science in order to contend against violence.<sup>2</sup> War is a problematic existential reality and the technology that it has inspired over the centuries, has a paradoxical nexus to human

progress and well-being.

On the one hand, war has become more and more cataclysmic violence with ever escalating catastrophic consequences for humanity. This has been the outcome of exponential increase in destructive power in the face of unrelenting scientific advances, in particular in applied military technology. As the outcome of the Manhattan project (or in the official codename 'Development of

Substitute Materials') demonstrated, war efforts across nations have often instigated scientific breakthroughs with unimaginable devastating implications for the "human animal".

Michael Prior observes that within the first two to four months following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the acute effects had killed 90,000-146,000 people in Hiroshima and 39,000-80,000 in Nagasaki; roughly half of the deaths in each city occurring on the first day. Many more would die from radiation effects in the years to come.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, on 17 October, 2017 North Korea's deputy UN ambassador warned the UN disarmament committee that the situation on the Korean peninsula "has reached the touch-and-go point and a nuclear war may break out any moment". He went on to claim that all nuclear states were accelerating the modernisation of their weapons and "reviving a nuclear arms race reminiscent of [the] cold war era". The North Korean Ambassador reportedly noted that the nuclear weapon states, including the United States, boycotted negotiations for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that was approved in July, 2017 by 122 countries at the United Nations.<sup>4</sup> With advances in war technology and attitudinal and institutional lags in mitigating the dangers by catastrophic violence in leading elite states, humanity faces absolute and complete destruction that may lead to our annihilation, and a possible rise of a long predicted insect age in an atmosphere-less planet.<sup>5</sup>

There is also a terrifying new lexicon of war machinery and accessories including Improved Explosive Devices, robots, stealth, unmanned aerial vehicles and lately 'invulnerable' hypersonic nuclear weapon delivery systems. Included in this lexicon of horror is the D3000, the Chinese 98-foot-long, stealthy robotic trimaran warship designed to operate autonomously for months. The stand-off between Donald Trump's USA and North Korea's Kim Jong Un or the United States and Iran as well as Israel versus Iran over the development of nuclear capabilities all reflect the real time dangers posed to global



and regional balances of power by the military scientific explorations of hegemonic world powers and aspiring elite powers.

It is in this context that the fourth industrial revolution has transformed the nature and conduct of war in such a way that questions may be asked with regard to the continued viability of states that are so technologically backward they have not attained the threshold of even the first industrial revolution. Also, what is the impact of advances in technology on warfare, notably information technology, for both who possess it and those who – to a greater or lesser extent – do not?<sup>26</sup> Indeed, what are the defensive options for those states that do not possess high-technology weaponry and skills?<sup>27</sup> These are mainly post-colonial states in Africa.

Technology assures the survival of states and societies: in war, health, economy – and it is even crucial in the projection of hegemonic culture as soft power. The fundamental logic is that the leverage for global influence is enhanced by a nation's demonstration of a formidable nationally based indigenous scientific expertise and capability, especially in the realm of applied military technology, including in the exploration and militarisation of space.

In instances the pivotal individuals and brains driving national scientific endeavors considered threatening to the strategic interests of its real time enemy states are neutralised. Four Iranian nuclear scientists – Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahriari, Darioush Rezaeinejad and Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan – were assassinated between 2010 and 2012. Another Iranian scientist, Fereydoon Abbasi, was wounded in an attempted murder. Many have suggested that they were assassinated by Israeli agents. Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its involvement, but Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon intoned that Israel will act in any way and is not willing to tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. Israel prefers that stopping the Iranian nuclear programme be done by means of sanctions, but in the end, Israel should be able to defend itself.<sup>8</sup> The objective of such assassination is

often to deny that nation the benefit of the dividends of major scientific breakthroughs that would enhance its military capability and profile as a major power.

To mobilise to win World War II, the United States attracted foreign Jewish scientists who played significant role in the development of military science and technology that proved decisive to the outcome of the war. These included physicists Albert Einstein, who petitioning with fellow scientists, instigated the Manhattan project. J Robert Oppenheimer, Richard Feynman, and Edward Teller were critical to the success of the Manhattan Project and the development of the first nuclear weapons.

Also, Britain in the Second World War was unambiguous that it was fighting an industrial war, bolstered by advances in science and technology

**“What are the defensive options for those states that do not possess high-technology weaponry and skills? These are mainly post-colonial states in Africa.”**

and by galvanising the country to produce more food, more planes, more tanks. The industrial production of more of everything was at the heart of Britain's war effort. The training and doctrine of the British Army reflected a readiness to deploy technology by sacrificing steel rather than human body: "Steel over Flesh". On the Axis side, the Third Reich also projected that her prowess lay in its mechanised might and that was at the forefront of its propaganda and the war itself.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, technology consciously inspired by war purposes has impacted constructively in advancing the well-being of society. The unraveling of the secrets of splitting a uranium atom by German physicists in 1939 and the desperate follow up in a three nation wartime collaborative Manhattan project ended

World War II with unimaginable devastation. Yet, nuclear technology also ultimately opened the flood gate to the innumerable peaceful uses of atomic energy. This paradoxical connectedness has long generated an intense discourse regarding the relationship between war and human progress.<sup>10</sup>

Notwithstanding the stalemated outcome of this intellectual jousting, preparation for war since antiquity has been unrelenting, through modern civilisation and the first industrial revolution ushered in by the increased use of steam power, the development of machine tools and the rise of the factory system, through to the nuclear age that is being transformed in the evolving fourth industrial revolution. This fourth industrial revolution that is defined by the deployment of an array of digitally based inventions, has remained a critical catalytic agent in human affairs, civilization and development.

In the digital age, noting that the world is on the cusp of the fourth industrial revolution that he described as a seismic shift that is beyond anything humankind has experienced, German economist Klaus Schwab observes that the first, second and third industrial revolutions gave us steam power, electricity and electronics respectively. Though these are no doubt great technological achievements, Schwab advances that the assortment of emerging technologies associated with the fourth industrial revolution – artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet-of-Things (IoT), 3D printing, bio printing, gene editing, autonomous vehicles (AVs) and so on, the world as we know it today will be transformed in unprecedented ways.<sup>11</sup>

This will undoubtedly have unimaginable implications for the strategic vision of the political class, tactical and operational levels of war planning and execution. Already, it has been proposed that it is time for decision-making in the British Army to be better informed by data and real evidence – not simply military judgment, which is what is taught in Staff College.<sup>12</sup> Also, in the United Kingdom there is an increased focus on the new technologies, capabilities

and doctrines (including cyber and electronic warfare, leading to the establishment of the Information Warfare brigade, robotics and artificial intelligence, air and missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, hardening and rapid dispersal). These are projected to be key in maintaining the United Kingdom's military credibility over the next ten to fifteen years.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, Russia has announced the launch of its 'invulnerable' hypersonic nuclear weapons. China's rapid progress in developing and exporting armed and unarmed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles has significant implications and is undercutting long-running US efforts to control the spread of this technology around the world.<sup>14</sup> Also, China's artificial intelligence robots could triple the country's production of bombs and shells by 2028. Meanwhile, China has turned to robot automation to populate ammunition factories because the country is running out of human workers.<sup>15</sup>

These strides are linked to a new dimension of a global arms race. The emergence of autonomous and remotely controlled systems as mature weapon systems has taken half a century to arrive, but there are signs that by 2035 such systems will be able to mitigate for scale and mass in warfare.<sup>16</sup> A top British intelligence expert had proclaimed that the US military will have more robot soldiers on the battlefield than real ones by 2025. Deadly combat robots are rapidly becoming a reality of modern day warfare. Also, the US is allegedly looking to have a military edge over other countries like China and Russia in the next 10-15 years. This is said to explain an invested intensity of effort in research and development of robotics systems.<sup>17</sup> Questions however are being raised as to the overall implication both at the strategic and tactical levels, of these developments. The question is posed that if the West is to place a robotic war fighter in the driving seat, will this provide the decisive edge in warfare or will it simply slow down decision-making and provide enemies with advantages of pace and tempo?<sup>18</sup>

These developments, including explorations of the opportunities and challenges involved in human-machine

combat teaming for naval warfare in the future,<sup>19</sup> among others, impact the evolving anatomy of warfare. Given the already changing anatomy of war, including the emergence of asymmetric warfare, underpinned by clashing ideo-philosophical and religious/civilizational confrontations driving new forms of hostilities between states at one level, and between states and organised bands of forces of non-state entities at another level, the fourth industrial revolution has demonstrated its potential, in horrific ways, to further diversify warfare. That is in spite of the many beneficial revolutionary transformations for human welfare associated with the digital age in non-military spheres.

Wars are fought along three levels: the strategic, at which the broad high level objectives, often political, are enunciated; the tactical entailing the battles and brutal engagements

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– what John Holland describes as the “coal face of war”; and the operational or logistical – “a nation's ability to produce war materiel, tanks or aircrafts and deliver them to the front line”.<sup>20</sup> This diversification, the outcome of transformations in tactical and operational levels of warfare, is expressed in the multi-dimensional character, changed nature and increased intensity of a comprehensive warfare executed in a fluid battlefield defined and controlled in situ campaign operational headquarters. The headquarters may target, and may choose to discountenance harm to unarmed civilians caught up with identified villains, at the other extreme end of the world. The battle field is surreal as a reality that is virtually defined on laptops in operational bunkers and headquarters 10,000 kilometers away from the assumed

enemy and targets in the digitally simulated cross-hairs.

The new war in the digital age is actually a virtual tragic but real live game. There are multiple dimensions of the use of cyberspace for hostilities by state and non-state actors. Cyberspace is the term used to describe the electronic medium of digital networks used to store, modify and communicate information. It includes the Internet but also other information platforms that support businesses, infrastructure and services.<sup>21</sup> Some individuals and groups, classified as 'hostile actors', use cyberspace for malicious purposes. The British MI5 highlights that these 'hostile actors' exploit cyberspace to conduct espionage operations or launch damaging computer network attacks. It notes that hostile actors include foreign states, criminals, 'hacktivist' groups and terrorists who target the interests of enemy governments and states. The resources and capabilities of such actors vary. Foreign states are generally equipped to conduct the most damaging cyber espionage and computer network attacks. Hostile actors conducting cyber espionage can target the government, military, business and individuals. They use computer networks, for example, to steal large volumes of sensitive data.<sup>22</sup> In worst case scenarios they have shut down the operations of large businesses and compromised national data systems.

The British MI5 officially perceives cyber espionage as an extension of traditional espionage. It allows a hostile actor to steal information remotely, cheaply and on an industrial scale. It can be done with relatively little risk to a hostile actor's intelligence officers or agents overseas. The MI5 calls this activity Computer Network Exploitation (CNE).<sup>23</sup>

Hostile coordinated intrusions into cyber space have also proven to be efficient for psychological dimensions of war fare. Al Qaeda and the Islamic state (ISIS) have perfected diffusion of the beheadings of their hostages in the public glare to shock the world. Non state forces thus project terror on digital platforms as a validated instrument of war. However, this mindset applies to both organised state



forces which project power through the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles, but in particular to non-state forces. In fact, terror, spread through digital platforms, is a main weapon of asymmetric warfare.

Thus cyber war goes beyond disruptions of the normal functioning of society and the government through hostile hackers. The more deadly games on computers often accept significant euphemistically expressed 'collateral damage' of unarmed human civilians and communities as legitimate victims of war. Massive human collateral deaths inflicted by computer directed unmanned aerial vehicles are often rationalised away by the political authorities of elite state forces. The ascent of hostilities through digital related platforms and media implicitly reflects the evisceration of moral restraints imposed on the conduct of armed hostilities by contemporaneous advances in technology.

The fourth industrial revolution, coinciding with the resurgence of unbridled nationalist fervor and explicitly expressed Islamophobia across the United States and also in Western Europe is reminiscent of the late 1930s and 40s. This volatile historic conjuncture portends the danger of the validation of unlimited and unregulated digital hostile campaigns against weak 'shithole' societies and the many perceptually defined discounted external Others by emerged powerful nationalist Orders. This consolidates unmediated nationalism, fundamentalist Christendom, white WASPian bigotry and racism in which the USA and Europe are together, in their undisguised racial hatred against black humanity. In the 1930s and 1940s Europe, anti-Semitism was fair game. In the second decade of the Third Millennium, resurgent anti-black racialism is fair game. What then do the crucial transformations and developments in the digital age portend for weak states increasingly inching to the periphery of global relevance? This refers in particular to the post-colonial states of Africa.

In the context of the rapid transformation in the character of war, any orchestrated plan to subjugate or degrade to the point of irrelevance and

or loss of integrity, including physical, psychological and material well-being of a community, people or race, state, nation, with or without the consent of the targeted group, constitutes a war. Massive and organised use of coercion and physical violence such as full blown military campaigns associated with the conventional understanding of war are the last desperate instruments of the offending power to force the capitulation of the target population. The ultimate strategic objective of war is to eliminate or degrade or completely neutralise the overall capacity to even forge an overarching and timeless vision of its sense of self and determine the direction of its development.

The political system and the underpinnings of the national political,

**“The question is posed that if the West is to place a robotic war fighter in the driving seat, will this provide the decisive edge in warfare or will it simply slow down decision-making and provide enemies with advantages of pace and tempo?”**

social and economy of the target community or entity is compromised. The economy is sabotaged, the authentic identity deformed, community spirituality distorted with massive internal defections and migration to the gods of the conquering overlords. The spiritual realm, as Africa continues to experience, is a potent platform for the subjugation of a people. It is the most efficient of conventional soft power. As Britain's Chief of the General Staff General Sir Nicholas Carter pointed out, there are no longer two distinct states of peace and war.

Visionless states, as in most of Africa, as individual entities or and in their collectivity as in the African Union are

vulnerable targets. In general, whatever narratives are forged to rationalise their strategic objectives, elite states are almost always on the offensive. Weak states are defensive. The permanent war against black Africa is illustrative of this. The evidence is overwhelming for the discerning and informed.

In a world dependent on technology, those who control it will wield tremendous power. Hence, it is advanced by experts that it is foreseeable that in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, the state's influence will progressively be eclipsed by those companies that control the technologies associated with this seismic shift. Yet, Tak Ten Boon also proposes that the state will be needed to provide security. Whether it is in fending off terrorists or hackers, in the state's role as protectors of the integrity of both the national and the integrated global digital systemic platforms will actually become more important. Boon concludes that while private enterprises do perform a number of ancillary security functions, public safety and national defense still rest principally with the state.<sup>24</sup>

It is here advanced that, as the full import of the digital age unfolds, the global, regional and continental disparities in technological capacities would be manifest in the strengthening of the notion of a weighted integrity of the humanity of races, as opposed to the commonality of humankind. This would be especially so if the evolution of the international state system or structure of global social and political organisations lag behind those of private and corporate forces driving terrific technological advances across state borders.

As a result of the widening disparities, the scientifically progressive but morally retrogressive societies and races would rapidly disengage from the fraying understandings of the commonality and equality of all humanity, as mainstream humanity thrives in the new and exciting frontiers of the digital age. This is premised on the continued fixation of the largely unviable post-colonial states in Africa on their antiquated systems and structures that rest on problematic axiomatic foundations of its excruciating

dependency, numerous contingent statehoods, fictive sovereignties and the pervasive dysfunctionality of the political culture and internal processes that have left the post-colonial state bereft of any meaningful relevance in mainstream humanity's expansion of the frontiers of the digital revolution.

The abysmal prospects of the post-colonial state are reflected in the very low technology index hovering around 2.5, given the far-reaching consequences of the fourth industrial revolution for social progress, stability and economic transformation in more advanced states. In 2005 (the latest report available) the United States had the highest global technology index at 6.24. It was followed by Taiwan at 6.04. Finland came in third position with 5.92. With the exception of South Africa (4.33) and Mauritius (4.19) in the high index zone, Botswana (3.70) leads the middle African technology group comprising Egypt (3.68), Ghana (3.21), Tanzania (3.12), Zimbabwe (3.04), Nigeria (2.99), Zambia (2.98) and Mozambique (2.89). African countries bring up the rear of the global technology index. Malawi (2.74), Algeria (2.67) Madagascar (2.64) Mali (2.52) Angola (2.3) Ethiopia (2.17), Chad (1.81). A significant number of states in sub-Saharan Africa are actually nil or unrecorded on the technology index.

The technology index denotes the country's technological readiness across the realm of businesses and economy. This index is created with such indicators as companies in the geo-political space spending on R&D, the creativity of its scientific community, personal computer and internet penetration rates.<sup>25</sup> Also, a somewhat more comprehensive New Economy Index deploys 25 indicators to measure the extent to which economies are knowledge-based, globalised, entrepreneurial, IT-driven, and innovation-oriented.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, different geographies and political jurisdictions that may also translate into sovereign states play specialised roles in the global economy. Robert D Atkinson and John Wu highlight that some regions engage in what is termed by economists as "seedbed" functions through specialisation in

cutting-edge innovations. This entails the development of new products and firms. Other regions, they note, offer attractive environments for company headquarters or other management activities. Still others specialise in more routine production functions for goods or services, handling aspects of the work that involve less innovation and have lower skill requirements. Finally, some regions, in particular those often tagged as developing economies, specialise in resource production tied to geographical endowments, such as raw minerals, arable land, agricultural produce, or lumber.<sup>26</sup> These are the low technology indexed zones that are often contrived to be dependent.

There is high correlation between low technology index and state by state estimates of the percentage of the population lying below the poverty line. The estimates are based on surveys of sub-groups, with the results weighted by the number of people in

**“The new war in the digital age is actually a virtual tragic but real live game.”**

each group.<sup>27</sup> The first 14 places on the global poverty grid are occupied mainly by sub-Saharan African states. They include, in order of depth of poverty, Zimbabwe (80%), Chad (80%), Democratic Republic of the Congo (71%), Sierra Leone (70.2%), Nigeria (70%), Swaziland (69%) Burundi (68%), Sao Tome and Principe (66.2%) Zambia (64%) Niger (63 %). Comoros (60%), Namibia (55.8%), Malawi (55%) Senegal (54%). 11 of the top 13 countries by population below poverty line are Sub-Saharan African. Nigeria has ranked in the top 2 for population below poverty line since 2000.

In the past, as contemporaneously clearly illustrated in the Donald Trump USA syndrome, the unfounded attribution that industrialised societies have emancipated themselves from irrational and primitive aspects of their nature instead of having merely

changed the character of their aspirations in directions perhaps as irrational as those of their ancestors was long declared a mere conceit.<sup>28</sup> In the miasma of the ascendant extremism of the times, defining war continuously is bedeviled by deep semantic challenges, given its variant meanings in different historical contexts.<sup>29</sup> In 1939, nationalism and militarism were the driving forces in the western world giving rise to the emergence of National Socialism and Nazism in the Third Reich and Fascist Italy under Mussolini. The outcome, as history instructs, was war. With Trumpism as a dominant ideology in the United States, is the world already at war? The enterprise of defining war thus requires some discretion, especially in the technologically constrained post-colonial state environment.

If unending preparation for war is a potential catalyst for social progress in advanced states and societies or a harbinger of unlimited devastation for communities still below the first industrial revolution at the cusp of the fourth industrial revolution in an era unhinged from moral restraints, what is the potential ultimate fate of technologically backward 'shithole' post-colonial states? And what is the locus of the post-colonial army in relation to evolution of global trajectories in technology? What is the antecedent of the military, the median profile of elite drivers of policy related to the military in the post-colonial environment? What are roles of exogenous factors and forces in the strategic and operational character of post-colonial armies?

For now, even though violence conventionally remains the core activity in warfare, definitions of war, as with any social phenomena, are varied. Defining war may reflect a range of divergent influences that may include the worldview, including understandings of human nature, the philosophical outlook, even theoretical orientations as well as the political persuasion and specific circumstances of the scholar and often times spokespersons of state actors and non-state protagonists. The definition of war is also often obfuscated by the imperatives of diplomacy. The



challenge of defining war has been compounded by the constantly evolving anatomy and dimensions of warfare since antiquity. The dramatic evolution, including the catastrophic consequences, of war has been most pronounced since the world was launched into the nuclear age on 16 July 1945. The nuclear age was presaged in 1938, when three chemists working in a laboratory in Berlin made a discovery that would alter the course of history: they split the uranium atom.<sup>30</sup>

The splitting of the atom led to an arms race that remains uncontained till today. The nuclear age was birthed in the labours of 130,000 men and women who went to work on a \$2.2 billion mission that furiously pushed science, technology, engineering, and society into a new age.<sup>31</sup> They worked across three major laboratories at the Columbia University, the University of Chicago and the University of California at Berkeley. Nuclear facilities were also built at Oak Ridge, Tennessee and Hanford, Washington. The main assembly plant was built at Los Alamos, New Mexico. The three nation collaboration on the atomic bomb involved the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada. The legacy of the Manhattan Project was an immediate ending to the Second World War. Atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki has permanently etched a security dilemma as a constant calculus in the permutation of potential systemic war. The outcome of the Manhattan project however also laid the foundation for nuclear medicine and great advances in physics, mathematics, engineering, and technology.<sup>32</sup> Social progress and modernity has since been associated with civilian use of technologies originally designed to gain advantage in war theatres.

Meanwhile in contemporaneous times, nearly 25 percent of China's ammunition factories have had their human workers replaced with "smart machines." Since China introduced automation to the factories, the Artificial Intelligence – equipped with man-made 'hands and eyes' – have been almost 5 times more productive than human workers and can assemble various ammunition including artillery shells, guided bombs, and rockets with

the kind of efficiency and perfection some human workers struggle with.<sup>33</sup> It is against this background that General Robert Fry has identified at least four evolved dimensions of warfare outside the conventionally organised deployment of mass of armed men and materiel in violent confrontations and battles with each other. The evolved kinds and dimensions of war between state and non-state entities include terrorism and asymmetric warfare, economic warfare, cyber warfare. To this can be added biological warfare. General Fry specifies that the wars of post 9/11 bear very little resemblance to the wars of the 20th century. He advances that contemporary wars:

*...are not wars between nation states. They are between nation states and non-state actors. Sometimes they are between groups*

**“Massive human collateral deaths inflicted by computer directed unmanned aerial vehicles are often rationalised away by the political authorities of elite state forces.”**

*of non-state actors. It is a global phenomenon and it is not about formed armies or defining your battlefields involving large contact battle until a decisive outcome. There are no longer any definitive instruments of surrender, rather conflict is insidious, ambiguous and comes and goes in heaps and flows.*<sup>34</sup>

As General Robert Fry further notes, the battle field has in turn become diffused, a battlefield less easy to categorise and define that involves innumerable imponderables.

The character of protagonists in direct engagement is evolving from states to non-state, stateless and non-governmental entities in warfare principally against states and other non-state militias. The combatants in

the last genre of warfare are faceless and undefined religious fanatics and ideologues. Their weapons system has included cudgels, deadly kitchen knives, home-made bombs, exploitation of target infrastructure including transportation systems, nerve agents and immense psychological use of terror on the side of the non-state forces. To counter the imaginative arsenal of the asymmetric warriors, elite states have developed more robust, intrusive and penetrating intelligence structures, stealth surveillance, and drones. Training and doctrine have evolved to adjust to the peculiarities of the new genre of warfare.<sup>33</sup>

Armies are modernised and restructured by principally increasing capacity to deploy special operations forces such as the United Navy's SEAL (Sea, Air, Land) for optimal impact in fluid environments and battle fields to counter loosely but deadly organised non-state forces that often are backed by shadowy state structures of quiet allies. The US Navy SEAL teams are a component of the Naval Special Warfare Command. Among the SEAL's main functions are conducting small-unit maritime military operations that originate from, and return to, a river, ocean, swamp, delta, or coastline.<sup>(34)</sup> As the name suggests, they are trained to operate in all environments. Such is the reputation of the SEALs that the CIA's highly secretive and elite Special Operations Group (SOG) recruits operators from SEAL Teams. Germany's KSK Kommando Spezialkräfte (Commando Special Forces, KSK) is an elite special forces military unit composed of special operations soldiers selected from the ranks of Germany's Bundeswehr and organised under the Rapid Forces Division. KSK has received many decorations and awards from NATO, the United States and its affiliates and KSK operatives are frequently requested for joint anti-terror operations, notably in the Balkans and Middle East. The Special Air Service (SAS) is a special forces unit of the British Army that may be equated with the Navy Seals. The SAS was founded in 1941 as a regiment, and later reconstituted as a corps in 1950. Like the American SEALs, German KSK, the SAS are

deployed in operations including covert reconnaissance, counterterrorism, direct action and hostage rescue. Meanwhile, the successful development of a recommended Combined Joint Expeditionary Force would avail Britain and France a highly trained pool of forces capable of a wide range of missions up to high-intensity combat. It is perceived that given the troubled state of international security, opportunities for deployment of the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force into action should not be lacking, whether as part of a multilateral operation – for example, under UN or NATO auspices – or as a bilateral deployment in circumstances where both countries (the United Kingdom and France) have interests at stake.<sup>35</sup>

The state of international society that includes the transformation in its sensibilities that have tended to delegitimise violence as a currency of transactions between states is an important development in the moral climate and the political context in which war takes place in the digital age. War, even as instrument of the last resort in the conduct of international relations, has become morally contentious even if not absolutely obsolete.

The invasion of Iraq by the United States under George W Bush against a restraining United Nations resolution remains a defining demonstration of the de-validation of unilateral declarations of war by powerful state actors. Concepts such as Responsibility to Protect (R2P) remain suspicious as clever attempts by elite states to circumvent emerged sensibilities of the international community to restrict violence as the final arbitration of relations among states. Any definition of war thus proposed carries with it particular political or philosophical perspectives with their associated implications.

Meanwhile, varying traditions of definitions of war have been noted by major philosophers as well as military strategists. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE), a Roman philosopher, observes that since there are two ways of settling a dispute: first, by discussion; second, by physical force; and since the former is characteristic of man, the latter of the brute, resort to force is only

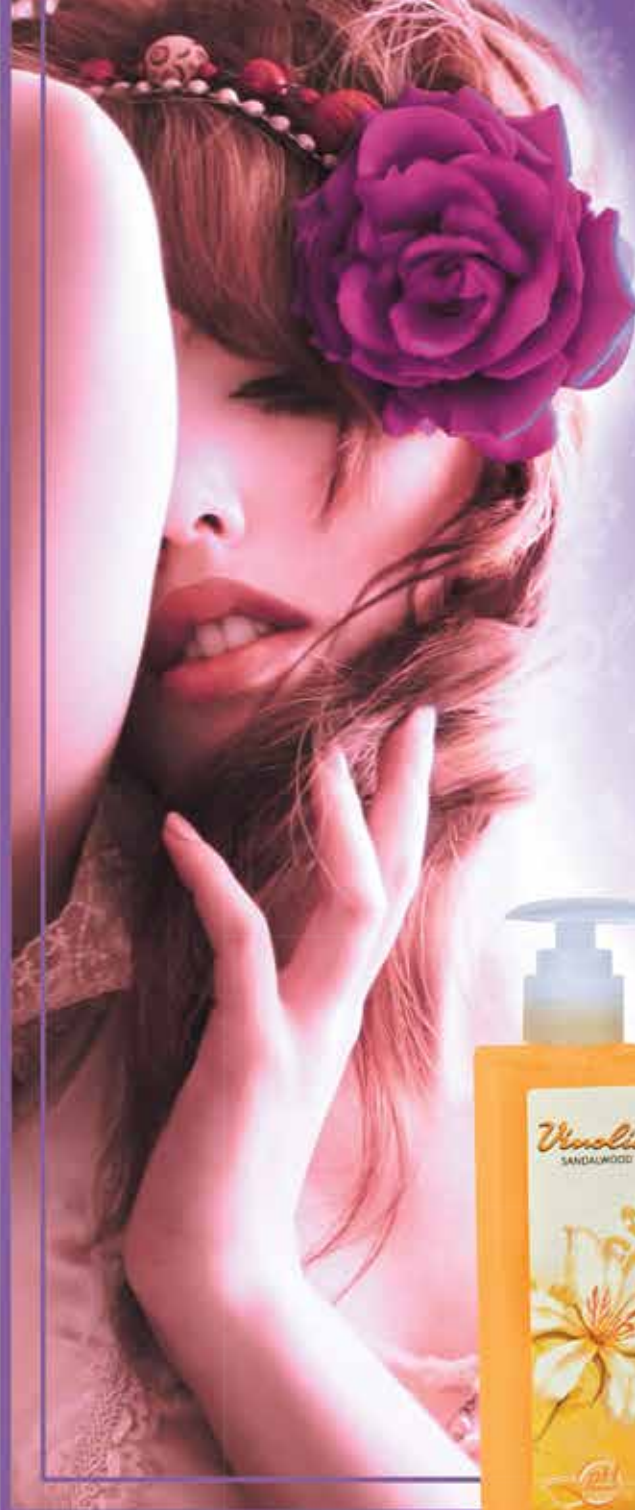
in cases where avenues for discussions are not available. Even then he stresses that in external relations between states, the rights of war must be strictly observed. For Cicero, the only excuse, therefore, for going to war is that we may live in peace unharmed; and when the victory is won, we should spare those who have not been blood-thirsty and barbarous in their warfare.<sup>36</sup> Basing his treatise on his understanding that human nature and human reason abhorred war, Cicero argued that there was no acceptable reason for war outside of just vengeance or self defence – in which he included the defence of honour. He also argued that a war could not be just unless it was publicly declared and unless compensation for the enemy's offence had first been demanded.<sup>37</sup> A necessary condition for war was therefore to exhaust possibilities of negotiated resolution, consistent with the fundamental code of human beings and nations. Cicero styled war a contention by force.<sup>38</sup>

Hugo Grotius adds that "war is the state of contending parties, considered as such"; Thomas Hobbes highlights the attitudinal dimensions of war. "By war is meant a state of affairs, which may exist even while its operations are not continued"; Denis Diderot comments that war is "a convulsive and violent disease of the body politic"; for Karl von Clausewitz, "war is the continuation of politics by other means", and so on.<sup>39</sup>

Warfare has now been transformed into a holistic enterprise beyond what the military alone or mere brute force or muscular bravado can handle. In the fourth industrial era, war is more about the application of daring scientific operations conducted from seats of technological power in impregnable bunkers whose walls are lined with a vast bank of flashing computers manned by emotionless generals very much attuned with Einstein's theories under the command of warped political overlords. Far removed from the immediate unfolding human tragedy and the true madness in the theatre of campaigns, the prospect – ushered in by the fourth industrial revolution – of emotionally sanitised conduct of warfare outside the traditional battlefield poses a mortal threat to all humanity. ■

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## SOCIAL POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

# A call for social re-engineering?

Since South Africa is a country that was heavily “socially engineered” for centuries, the author calls for a **“holistic social re-engineering”** to be implemented in South Africa by the state via transformative social policy:

By Ndangwa Noyoo

2014 marked 20 years of freedom and democracy in South Africa. After more than three centuries of colonial domination and apartheid, all citizens of this country – irrespective of their race, gender, ethnic origin or sexual orientation – were for the first time recognised for their worth as human beings and not because of the aforementioned classifications. This was a significant milestone for the country given its tortuous and painful

past. In the said period, South Africa had been governed by the African National Congress (ANC), which fought against colonialism and apartheid. Although the ANC government made concerted efforts in the last two decades to erase the remaining traces of colonialism and apartheid, as exemplified by, inter alia, high levels of inequality and poverty, unemployment, social and economic exclusion, violent crime and destitution, the living conditions of many South

Africans continue to remain extremely dire. For a period of 23 years, the South African government has implemented a wide array of social policy measures primarily aimed at transforming South Africa and also raising the quality of life of the citizenry, especially and more importantly, those sections of the country that had been excluded and marginalised in the previous colonial-apartheid socio-political and economic dispensation. Nevertheless,

social policy during this period, even though it was focusing on transforming the country and also empowering vulnerable South Africans, has not been able to erase the residues of the colonial-apartheid order.

Given the foregoing, the objective of this article is to interrogate the social policy agenda of post-apartheid South Africa and critique its inability to totally transform the South African society. It calls for the social re-engineering of South Africa via social policy. Therefore, its main contention is that the tools which were employed by the post-apartheid state, in driving the transformation process, were not in all cases transformative and emancipatory in content and outlook. It is observed that the ideal state instrument that can humanely and democratically socially re-engineer the South African social fabric is social policy. It is further argued that social policy has not been able to effectively transform South Africa because it is not couched in a paradigm of social re-engineering.

Notably, the post-apartheid social policy approach only staves off chronic deprivation through palliative interventions like social grants. The cited measures do not have emancipatory capacities, which can build the capabilities of the citizenry and totally transform their lives. Crucially, the transformation agenda was not predicated on the notion of creating a new society altogether, which is taken in this article as something akin to the “good society”. Instead, the post-apartheid state has mostly been preoccupied with the task of trying to erase the remaining traces of the colonial and apartheid order, whilst relying on the inherited institutions, state instruments and political economy from the colonial-apartheid order. Also, it seems as if a variant form of capitalism that stemmed from colonialism of a special type is still in place in South Africa 23 years after the supposed demise of apartheid. For Noyoo (2017) social policy in present-day South Africa continues to reproduce colonial and apartheid socio-economic outcomes due to path dependency and this path dependency has largely been shaped by colonialism of a special type. He further notes:

*Before the democratic elections of 1994, South Africa’s social policy and welfare regime were underpinned by the values and ethos of colonialism and apartheid. Given this past, it is worth considering how the country “won” its freedom. It can be said that in the end, the main protagonist against the apartheid state, the African National Congress (ANC), emerged as the sole negotiator for the country’s freedom. Thus, the ANC had to engage with the former apartheid political functionaries of the National Party (NP) and begin laying the foundation for a new post-apartheid society. This process inadvertently resulted in the ANC inheriting the colonial-apartheid state-template from the NP which it then used to create a post-apartheid society. In short, power was not wrested from the apartheid*

**“It can be argued that social assistance which is delivered mainly through social grants is a government intervention which is only palliative and not transformative.”**

*rulers, but it was negotiated and then transferred to the ANC, with attached conditions (Noyoo, 2017, pp. 3-4).*

Hence, the present social policy approach cannot fundamentally socially re-engineer South Africa into the “good society”. In this context it is transformative social policy that needs to be explored.

#### **Why social re-engineering?**

Why should South Africa consider social re-engineering through social policy as a viable option? Arguably, the country’s social policy has to a larger extent militated against the creation of a new society, namely, the “good society”. Indeed, in the post-1994 era, government strategies which were employed to fight against human deprivation did not seek to

radically address the root causes of the country’s many social ills which are deeply rooted in South Africa’s colonial and apartheid past. Such an approach was inadvertently promoted by the government, in what is referred to in government parlance as “quick wins”. With this approach, which was focusing on “quick wins”, social policy became more of a technocratic, bureaucratic and “compliance” related type of intervention, rather than a long term approach that sought to create a new society altogether.

For example, it can be argued that social assistance which is delivered mainly through social grants is a government intervention which is only palliative and not transformative. Despite having close to 17 million South Africans depending on social grants for their livelihood, many of these individuals’ capabilities have been built or fortified. Notwithstanding the large numbers of children and the elderly as the main beneficiaries of the social grants, the former are touted by many academics, researchers and politicians as “poverty alleviation” mechanisms. However, the crux of the matter is that these grants have not changed the material conditions of these population groups. Again, in the main, these conditions were carefully crafted by colonialism and apartheid. That is why the numbers of social grant beneficiaries has expanded exponentially in the democratic era. This shows that the root causes of poverty and inequality are not being addressed.

For instance, in 2001 there were 12,494,000 people in employment and 3,993,133 people receiving social grants. In 2016, the number of people receiving grants had increased by 328% while those with jobs increased by only 24% according to the Institute of Race Relations (IRR, 2017).

Twenty three years after the fall of apartheid South Africa continues to be one of the most unequal societies in the world with a Gini coefficient of 0.69. This is a number between 0 and 1, where 0 indicates total equality and 1 indicates total inequality. This value is based on expenditure data (per capita excluding taxes) and income data (per capita including

salaries, wages and social grants). According to Statistics South Africa (2014a) it was calculated in 2011. Furthermore, more than half of South Africans were poor in 2015 (2017a). Unemployment continues to bedevil the post-apartheid government's efforts to develop South Africa. For example, in the first quarter of 2017 the unemployment rate peaked at 27.7 per cent (2017b). Unemployment is one of the major challenges confronting South Africa today and particularly its youth. Approximately 3.4 million (32.9 per cent) of the 10.4 million of the youth aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training in the Second Quarter of 2013 (2013). This situation did not improve much the following year. It is also important to underline the fact that youth unemployment is nuanced by a racial dimension. According to StatsSA (2014b), the rate of unemployment among black African youth was 4.1 percentage points higher than that of the youth in the Coloured population group, and as much as 23.7 and 29.8 percentage points higher than that of the Indian/Asian and white groups respectively.

In addition a large number of young people simply drop out of the education system. The majority of the youth are dependent on either the state and its institutions, or families. Also, the approximated overall HIV prevalence rate is around 10%, with the total number of people living with HIV estimated at 5.26 million (in 2013). For the ages 15-49 years, an estimated 15.9 per cent of the population is HIV positive (2013). The phenomenon of child poverty, which is usually underreported or lumped together with adult poverty, by both politicians and policy-makers, is also another very serious societal challenge. In many respects, child poverty has been exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic as parents and care-givers have succumbed to the disease over the years.

Why are many people in this country living lives not dissimilar to those of most people in Sub-Saharan Africa's most impoverished countries when indeed South Africa is materially well off? The answer lies in the socially

and politically constructed barriers of exclusion which then created an exclusive economy for a particular race. The sculptors of this economy were the settlers who carved out a landscape of extreme opulence and privilege in the midst of extreme poverty and human dislocation. This lopsided arrangement was guaranteed by the exploitation of natural resources and African people and then the deployment of profits from the export of resources to the segregated white enclaves. Due to this overt and deviously well-planned project of social engineering, present-day South Africa continues to face a plethora of societal challenges because in the main, the country continues to use the inherited instruments of the state from the previous colonial-apartheid order. The country is failing to break out of the colonial-apartheid mould of

“The ANC government was bequeathed a society that was socially engineered, in a very pernicious way, by colonialism and apartheid.”

state formation. The former were not fundamentally and radically altered by the post-colonial government but they were only reformed.

#### **Conceptual premises for the social re-engineering of South Africa**

It is emphatically stated in this article that South Africa can only fully benefit from the democratic transition if the government puts in place a resolute programme of social re-engineering which is underpinned by the tenets of social policy. This is because the ANC government was bequeathed a society that was socially engineered, in a very pernicious way, by colonialism and apartheid. It is noteworthy that centuries of colonial rule, which was typified by the European's oppression of Africans and the dispossession of their land, culminated in the passing of

the Native Land Act of 19 June 1913 and the institutionalisation of racism in 1948. The Land Act would have far-reaching implications for South Africa's future and to date, its ramifications are still being felt across the country. After apartheid was formally adopted as a national ideology by the National Party in 1948, it was concretised through policies and legislation in the 1950s and afterwards. Some of apartheid's centre-pieces were:

- The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, No 55 of 1949
- The Immorality Amendment Act, No 21 of 1950
- The Population Registration Act, No 30 of 1950
- The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, No 52 of 1951
- The Group Areas Act, No 41 of 1950
- The Bantu Education Act, No 47 of 1953
- The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, No 49 of 1953
- The Natives Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act of 1952.

Instead of tinkering with the socio-economic outcomes of colonialism and apartheid with approaches that are palliative, this article calls for the social re-engineering of the South African society. This stance takes cognisance of the fact that post-apartheid South Africa is still a socially engineered society altogether. Hence, it needs to be deconstructed and reconstructed and social policy can play a key role in this arena.

However, this agenda can only be driven by actors who have intellectual depth and have conceptual clarity in regard to the way social re-engineering will be implemented. Social re-engineering cannot be undertaken by actors with mediocre intellectual capabilities or those who lack moral courage. For this discussion, social policy must be able to transform the South African society. Therefore, the social policy approach which will propel the social re-engineering process is transformative social policy. According to Adesina, (2010) transformative social policy plays multiple roles of redistribution, protection, reproduction, social cohesion and



nation-building. In this regard, it also recognises the symbiotic links between social policy and economic policy.

Hence, economic development that is supported by this type of social policy would combine growth with structural transformation of the economy and social relations, whilst reinforcing the norms of equality and social solidarity. In this sense, social policy would not only be an expression of normative values, but will also serve as a major transformative instrument in the process of development (Adesina, 2010). Transformative social policy is defined by universal membership and coverage in provisioning. Therefore, its instruments range from education to health-care, agrarian reform, child-care, old-age care and to fiscal instruments. Its development outcomes filter through to social and economic development (growth with structural transformation), and also political development. Transformative social policy has the potential to enhance both labour market efficiency and innovation (Adesina, 2010).

Social policy must be guided by a transformative social policy thrust that has built-in mechanisms of social re-engineering. This social re-engineering should aim at creating the “good society”. In presenting a case for the good society, Lippmann (1937) points out that when we delve into debates of the good society, we (that is those who accept that the good society is indeed attainable) have to first and foremost accept that freedom is a cornerstone of the good society. What this means is that a prosperous and peaceful society must be free. If it is not free, it cannot be prosperous and peaceful. This then supposes that the good society should be led by a certain calibre of rulers. *If this is so, then the good society should demand from its rulers that they sacrifice their personal ends to the interests and general welfare of the people* (emphasis added).

For Plato and his colleagues, a society was well-ordered when the people who governed it knew what they were doing and this “knowing what they were doing” was linked directly to finding and serving the public good (Huard, 2007). It would also be helpful if such a society could be regarded as

a community. However, the concept of a community is only viable if one treats it not as a given but as a variable. That is, some societies are much more of a community than others and their communal quality changes over time. In such a community we should therefore be concerned with *greatly reducing inequality, rather than having equality as the end state* (emphasis added) (Etzioni, 2002).

A good society would not only secure a “generous minimum” for all its members, but would also strive to cap inequality by slowing down increases in the slices of the total resources gained by the higher strata. Crucially, *in order to ensure broad and genuine adherence to values, a good society should rely on the moral voice* (emphasis added) – the informal

**“Why are many people in this country living lives not dissimilar to those of most people in Sub-Saharan Africa’s most impoverished countries when indeed South Africa is materially well off?”**

controls members of communities exert on one another – rather than law (Etzioni, 2002). In this regard, any useful identification of the good society must therefore take into consideration the institutional structure and the human characteristics that are fixed and immutable. In this way, they make the difference between the utopian and the achievable, between the irrelevant and ultimately the possible (Galbraith, 1996, p. 3). Hence, a good society must have a *good economy* (emphasis added). An evident purpose of a good economy is to produce goods and services effectively and to dispense the revenues therefrom in a socially acceptable manner. It must have substantial and reliable increase in production and employment from year

to year. Finally, a good society must have a strong international dimension. The state must live in peaceful and mutually rewarding association with its trading partners on the planet (Galbraith, 1996).

Nonetheless, the term “social engineering” is not a new term. It comes from the field of social control. Social engineering can refer to the process of redefining a society – or more correctly, engineering society – to achieve some desired outcome. The term can also refer to the process of attempting to change people’s behaviour in a predictable manner, usually in order to have them comply with some new system (Berti & Rogers, 2003). The eminent social scientist, Karl Popper, recognised the fact that most social institutions are more the product of gradual evolution or adaptation than any conscious design. From a functionalist or instrumental perspective, institutions may be designed or may be redesigned to more efficiently attain desired ends. Efforts to reform human institutions may be regarded as social engineering (Hayes, 2001).

According to Popper, social engineering can take on two distinct forms, which he termed: “holistic social engineering” and “piecemeal social engineering”. “Holistic social engineering” aims at remodelling the whole society in accordance with a definite plan or blueprint, by taking control of key positions and extending the power of the state until it becomes commensurate with society. From these key positions, the state can arrest the course of historical forces or foresee their course and adjust society to them (Hayes, 2001). By contrast, although piecemeal social engineers may cherish certain ideals that apply to society as a whole – social justice, for example, or the general welfare – they will reject as impractical any attempt to remodel society as a whole. Whatever their ends, they try to achieve them by small adjustments which can be continually improved upon (Hayes, 2001).

Since South Africa is a country that was heavily “socially engineered” for centuries, the author calls for a “holistic social re-engineering” to be

implemented in South Africa by the state via transformative social policy:

*Perhaps no other country has experienced as much and as detailed socio-political engineering as apartheid South Africa. The apartheid project impacted people's lives at every level, always with the goal of creating a set of parallel but grossly unequal spatial realities with almost no meaningful contacts between the population groups. This apartheid era legacy is one of enormous inequalities reflected in landscapes of separate, ethnically determined social worlds filled with despair for non-White South Africans (Domingo, 2011).*

After proffering arguments for social re-engineering in South Africa the next section puts forward practical ways of how this can transpire.

### Starting the re-engineering process

The following can serve as pillars of transformative social policy in South Africa that will support social re-engineering. They are not exhaustive but serve as mere pointers to how social re-engineering can be achieved in the country in a humane way as opposed to the colonial and apartheid social engineering project which was extremely corrosive.

#### *Instituting a progressive labour regime*

South African labour practices are still reminiscent of the colonial-apartheid order. Labour relations are still underpinned by the archaic migrant labour system. This outmoded labour system still militates against the transformation of the South African society. Hence, a progressive labour regime, which intersects with transformative social policy, would abolish the migrant labour system forthwith. This labour practice is not only just a labour related problem, but one that has negative consequences for other sectors of the South African society, for example, the African family. While economists are busy talking about "flexible" labour laws, not many are mentioning the content and character of this labour system and its deleterious effects on the country's social fabric. According to the Green Paper for the Family:

*The migrant labour system, based on the carving up of "African reserves" which, in turn, guaranteed a steady supply of cheap labour to the emerging industrial and capitalist enclave, was a direct product of industrialisation. This form of labour was regarded as temporary and connected to the reserves. The main assumption of both the political establishment and business at the time was that migrant labourers would be guaranteed social protection by their extended families and that they would return to their communities, once their labour was no longer required. However, this system led to the manifestation of various social problems in the country that had a direct bearing on family life. One such problem was the absence of able-bodied men*

**“One issue that needs to be stressed here is that universal education is self-sustaining and must be seen as an economic imperative and not regarded as a drain on the economy.”**

*in African villages, which greatly undermined the extended family in many ways (Department of Social Development, 2011).*

Another aspect of this sector that would require state intervention is the area of absorbing large pools of unemployed and lowly skilled South Africans into productive ventures. Usually, this role is not for the private sector. Thus large reserve armies would need to be channelled into for example, agriculture, manufacturing and the construction sectors. However, these sections of the economy need to be deliberately tailored to engage in labour-intensive economic activities until such a time that some of these individuals would have been skilled and graduated to the next sector. Therefore, a labour regime that will be up to the

task of "socially re-engineering" South Africa must be multi-tiered. It must be noted that employment avenues must be created and guaranteed by the state and not left to the markets. It should be directly linked to an education sector which has been universalised.

#### *Putting in place a country-wide programme of universal and high quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the poorest communities*

Transformative social policy would help to define the rolling out of universal and high quality ECD in South Africa in the poorest communities. If well planned and managed, ECD which is driven by transformative social policy has the capacity to create a new South African citizen two decades from now. The issue here will be to "catch them whilst they are still young". Competent and highly trained ECD facilitators should be recruited for this endeavour and deployed to mainly rural and depressed areas of South Africa. Inculcation of certain values and a progressive ethos into the young minds would also ensue. This is where issues of gender relations, respect and national service, would begin to be inculcated into the minds of young South Africans.

The home situation is not always the best for nurturing young people in South Africa and the state can play a decisive role here. Parts of the Cuban ECD model could be emulated here by creating better conditions for the socialisation of young South Africans at ECDs. Cuba provides an excellent example of a population-wide programme that takes a preventative approach to foster the health, education and development of children from the earliest stages. A critical player in the country's successful approach to maternal health and early childhood development is what Cubans call Polyclinics. These establishments ensure the integration of science, knowledge transfer, parent education, primary healthcare and community mobilisation. They are multidisciplinary and focus on prevention; regularly undertake universal screening initiatives and strongly encourage immunisation (Senate Subcommittee, 2008).

### *Rolling out Universal high quality education from ECD to tertiary levels*

Now that the South African government has endorsed the policy of free tertiary education for the first time since 1994, there must be more thinking put into this noble undertaking. For starters, free tertiary education needs to be anchored in a transformative social policy paradigm. Otherwise this type of education may not reap its intended dividends. To this end, free tertiary education should not be the ultimate goal of the ANC government but this type of education should begin at ECD level. In this regard, it would hinge on a resolute and expansive recruitment drive of competent, highly trained teachers and lecturers across the country, who would be working in rural areas.

The first phase of this agenda would see the building of new primary and secondary schools of excellence, and agricultural colleges in mainly rural areas. Many of the highly qualified teachers would also be paid “risk allowances” and provided with more incentives such as housing, and car allowances. This is to make sure that market-based salaries and other benefits “lure” highly competent teachers to the deep rural and poorest areas of South Africa. In a way, this approach would also serve to stem the rural-urban migration tide. Such approaches had been attempted in several post-colonial African states, especially during the successful first decade of independence. In fact, one issue that needs to be stressed here is that universal education is self-sustaining and must be seen as an economic imperative and not regarded as a drain on the economy. Those who have gone through this system would need to pay high taxes in later years that would in turn buoy up this type of education. An educated and highly skilled citizenry is less of a burden on the state.

### *Fostering high levels of social solidarity across all sectors of South Africa*

Transformative social policy cannot be implemented in a fragmented and racially divided society such as this one, where most of the country's wealth is still in few white hands.

After two decades of democracy, there still seems to be not one South African identity, but arguably, the same colonial-apartheid classifications define the essence of being a South African. The national question has not been answered in its entirety in this country. Many citizens still seem to prefer their laagers. The notion of “I am my brother's or sister's keeper” is still not embedded in the national psyche. Therefore, lessons can be learnt from the nationalist agenda in the early years of independence in some post-colonial African states. For instance, such countries had made sure that refugees and freedom-fighters from Southern Africa, especially South Africa, were looked after in countries like Tanzania and Zambia, and benefitted from these countries' free and high quality education, among other benefits (Noyoo, 2010). This solidarity needs to be fostered from ECD all the way to tertiary level. The education curricula at primary and secondary levels should also be tailored in such a way that they respond to the national question.

Furthermore, business, labour and government still have to arrive at a social compact, which seems not to be there despite the existence of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). Labour and especially the unions must be conscientised over the fact that violent and protracted strikes are not good for business and conversely, big business or the private sector must be responsible enough to know that archaic labour practices such as the “dope system”, slave wages and the migrant labour system etc., are also bad for business. Equally, the government needs to create an enabling environment that is conducive for all parties to benefit so that the tax base is expanded and that the collected revenues are able to shore up the aforementioned universalised education sector. All the foregoing can be defined and guided by transformative social policy.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude this article, it can be asserted that even though South Africa is said to be the most advanced economy on the African continent, countries with

lesser resources have done better than this country in past epochs in regard to how they managed to raise the quality of life of the previously colonised and oppressed African masses. South Africa can learn from countries like Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe that managed to transform themselves ten years after independence. Nevertheless, social re-engineering can only be effected in South Africa if there is a clear vision on the part of the government, politicians and policy-makers, and more importantly, if the former are guided by a clear ideology. The implementation of social re-engineering in South Africa by the government is necessary because the country continues to be a product of the colonial and apartheid project of social engineering. Therefore, for South Africa to begin to aspire to become the “good society”, it must be socially re-engineered. It was noted that the most democratic and humane state instrument to effect such a process of social re-engineering would be social policy and specifically transformative social policy. ■

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## How can we Promote Reading and appreciation for African arts, culture, heritage and history and World arts and heritage on our Continent?



It is my suggestion that what we were supposed to do in Ghana was not to be an event but a process. We must therefore emerge from there with an interim steering committee to be backed by the AU, the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and the Pan African Writers' Association.

By Mongane Wally Serote

This is not the theme which we were supposed to explore, launch and roll out at the symposium hosted by the African Union (AU), the Thabo Mbeki Foundation (TMF) and the Pan African Writers' Association (PAWA) in Ghana this March (2018). The theme was: "Promoting African Literature and Reading: The Role of African Writers in Enhancing African Identity, Shared Values and Integration." The task facing us, which is not stated in the theme, in my view, is much broader and much more urgent than the theme suggests. The three organisations (AU, TMF and PAWA) provided an extremely important platform for African writers to enter into dialogue with each other on what I consider a

contradiction which, if resolved, would let an important discourse emerge. This would result in a rupture away from a morass into dynamic discourse for deep change on the continent.

The challenge for the African writer is: on the one hand, that the struggle for the liberation of the continent has recorded major and deep changes away from the impact of the Slave Trade; on the other, compared to the dialectic of development in the world, (the first, second, third and now the fourth industrial revolution) we are most backward. We are a creative sector of one of the greatest continents of the world, but we are characterised by tailism. This was my struggle with the theme. I struggled to internalise

and to transform this theme which I have had to use as a reference point to explore a very important challenge facing us as Africans.

The theme does not put the responsibility as it should, squarely on the shoulders of the writer, but also more importantly, on the collectives of the creative sector on the continent. I do not think that as writers we must be involved in tailism. We must creatively search for the continent's way out of the cesspool in terms of consciousness and discourse, into fresh air where the masses and the vanguard of the African struggle are, in search of the African revolution.

The theme as a statement is more of an indictment on African academics, intellectuals, non-governmental organisations and governments – the conventional intellectuals – than it is for the masses of our continent. The masses stood their ground, knowing that the odds were great against them. They the masses have never ever failed to respond to take the front line when the clarion call was sounded. The pinch of the shoe has been on their feet and toes forever.

Because the question is an indictment, there are serious questions which we must ask and which we must answer. The questions are: Why did we not answer this question sixty-one years ago when Ghana liberated itself from British colonialism? Or: even many more years before that, when what is now called Sudan was the first African country to liberate itself? Or: even after more than two decades after the New Democratic dispensation in South Africa – if ever the question was raised, that is where it ended, as a question and nothing else!

There is no "promoting reading in school curriculum and appreciation for African and world literature..." as a mandatory position in South Africa. I will therefore approach this question from a different perspective. If we agree that the arts are an expression and reflection of history and heritage and, as Amilcar Cabral asserted four decades ago, that "...culture is simultaneously the fruit of history... and a determinant of history, positive or negative..." then we must as a people, as Africans, throughout the continent and the world, take stock by asking a few

guiding and basic questions, namely: What did the OAU, which was established, spearheaded by none other than the late and former founding president of Ghana, President Kwame Nkrumah and his peers, Nyerere, Nasser, Lumumba, Cabral, Tambo and others, achieve in over three decades? Was that positive history and heritage after a negative history and heritage of over sixty decades of the Slave Trade and colonialism on our continent? We must at least record the important gains which emanated from the processes of the OAU. So as not to divert from the core subject of my thought processes, a brief sketch: by 1994, almost all African countries had wrenched political power from the various colonial powers like Britain, Portugal, Spain, from white domination and apartheid.

Unending and costly efforts have also been exerted against the imperial forces, which have persistently sought to entrench and maximise exploitative systems across our continent for the benefit of their individual and collective countries.

There have been attempts by African compatriots across the continent to use the gained collective political power to wrench social, cultural and economic power and to further deepen the political gains which were achieved using different methods. This has been a fierce and concerted struggle for the emancipation of the African voice on the continent and in the world. In addition, very importantly, the African narrative and discourse was transformed when it was informed by explorations for the unification of Africa. Is it not correct to state what, before colonialism, during colonialism and post colonialism, the most oppressed, the most exploited African men and women did – as African organic intellectuals – besides fighting against the greatest odds and laying down their lives in anti-colonial and anti-exploitative struggles throughout the length and breadth of the continent?...Did they not also sing, produce sculptures, paintings, poetry and novels, in different African and colonial languages, as also they produced photographs and films, theatre and dance productions? They

kept the record.

They printed their finger print on the continental and world page. What happened, where are these artistic productions? Are they available and accessible to the nation and future generations as a creative record and as evidence of the heart beat and spirit of the nationals of the continent?

This in my understanding is the same question as the original theme of the conference suggests. The implication of that statement is: If we, who are educated so to speak, us the conventional intellectuals, ask these very serious questions now, so many decades after the political liberation of the continent, we who were educated by the poor of the poor generations

“Did they not also sing, produce sculptures, paintings, poetry and novels, in different African and colonial languages, as also they produced photographs and films, theatre and dance productions?”

before us, who educated us at great cost, who decided that education is a weapon of struggle, if we now put this very serious statement: “promoting African Literature and Reading: The role of African Writers in enhancing African Identity, shared Values and Integration”, is the demand for us not to engage the two pillars of one of the most glaring creative contradictions in the discourse of Africa?

On the one hand there is a deep consciousness on the continent, among the masses, informed by the unrelenting and concerted struggles against all forms of oppression, exploitation, injustice and discrimination and collaboration with the enemies of Africa, by some among us; on the other, a total lack of reflection which must have been mounted and catapulted to the level of a collective consciousness and expression which is present and

available at all times, in all forms of the arts to nurture culture as expressed by Cabral?

That because we must at this hour of history know and forever remember that besides the fact that artificial intelligence, which is one of the tools of the fourth industrial revolution, is at the verge of catapulting the world within the universe to where it has never ever been, we must choose whether we will now either be subjects or objects of that rupture – the fourth revolution.

In other words, we are once more offered a choice by the history of human kind – to “...submit or fight.” I take it that it is most obvious to us that we will not submit. That would be a ghastly phenomenon to contemplate! Our history as a people of the world, denies us that thought.

That is why I pose the question as I have posed it: **How can we Promote Reading and appreciation for African arts, culture, heritage and history and World arts and heritage on our Continent?**

I take it that we are noting that time has run out on us; that generations who are coming after our own will be at a great disadvantage if they are not knowledgeable about who they are, because then they will have to become professional students about themselves and about the world, as has been the trend thus far.

That is because for any nation to know anything about anything else, it must first know itself.

Cabral, as did the founding fathers and mothers of the OAU, elaborated on how Africans must “promote... a ...curriculum... to being... African.”

Given human experience, and given the unique African history, we had to know and be human first, so that we can then know what it is to be African. The OAU was founded after a long nightmare of colonialism, inhuman systems, devised by human beings against other human beings. We also had to devise various measures and systems of waging struggle, so as to liberate ourselves throughout the length and breadth of the continent so as to claim our being human.

This and the struggle against that most inhuman system by humans

against other human beings, besides it having had to claim the best among us, left a high toll of loss of life and sanity of people. For more than three decades, after the founding of the OAU, we were as Africans still in struggle to claim and to announce to other human beings, through many means including through the supreme sacrifice – that we will not submit – that we are human.

We are at the crossroads once more. We count among the youngest continents (our people are mostly young) – I wish I could say: we count among the youngest countries in the world, instead of continents, precisely because we are now at the advent of a major rupture in human experience as I have indicated. If Africa were united now, that is what I would say, we would speak of a United Africa, a country! But then the English have a warning saying which states that if wishes were horses all would ride.

There is nothing wrong in dreaming; but then if one dreams it is also incumbent upon the dreamer to engage in reality. That is the challenge of the creative sector – those who must reflect on a warning that one must deal with reality. We dream when we ask the question: what must be done?

However, because that question has been made a historical question by harsh realities of struggle, strife and of sacrifice and great deeds of human kind in search of justice and freedom, it is also a harsh command for Africans to act and to march towards reality.

I take it that those who convened us in Ghana did so because they are aware and have heard the historical command for Africans to deal with the harsh realities of the twenty-first century. Even as I have barely scratched the surface of our great history of six hundred years of struggle as Africans, I must claim that we have never, whatever the odds, failed as Africans to respond to that revolutionary historical question.

Let us dream then!

More than two decades ago the African Union (AU) was born. Since then, Africa talks about Nepad, the five regions of the continent and the sixth – the diaspora; the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM); one and a half billion citizens, the majority of

whom are the youth and therefore a very young continent (country); gender equity; illicit flow of finances from the continent; even as I am being selective in naming the processes for the fundamental transformation of the continent, they are a reflection of some strides Africa has taken to ensure that the gains of the revolution on the continent become irreversible.

And finally, the concepts and advocacy, which are perennially on the African agenda – the African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism – must once more, as it was ten years ago, spearheaded by leaders like Mwalimu Nyerere, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Thabo Mbeki, Olusegun Obasanjo, Abdoulaye Wade, and others, be put not only on the continental agenda, but also on the global one. They must not be the issue of governments, but

“Given human experience, and given the unique African history, we had to know and be human first, so that we can then know what it is to be African.”

be carried together with organs of civil society among whom are the creative sector whose work must continually ask the most creative beings the masses: is this you? or is this you? or is this you? in search of the reality of the aspirations of the revolution as the various artforms emulate a mirror in front of the masses. I select these phenomena precisely because they would be a correct reference for the subject at hand, per statutes of the AU.

I have done a bare historical sketch of the struggle for being human by Africans by turning the theme of my exploration upside down. It must be a question. The creatives must answer it, even better, through their work-actions in word or other forms. If it is, and if we are not only to be condemned and not also be indicted, given the history I have sketched above, our question must then be:

### How can we Promote Reading and appreciation for African arts, culture, heritage and history and World arts and heritage on our Continent?

It is my suggestion that what we were supposed to do in Ghana was not to be an event but a process. We must therefore emerge from there with an interim steering committee to be backed by the AU, TMF and PAWA. The interim committee must take charge of the processes I am suggesting. I must hasten to state that I am aware that this is a mammoth task. It is especially so when we consider where both the material and human resources will come from. Generally speaking we must look at the resources from among Africans throughout the world, the International Community, African, European and the American governments and all active private sectors on the continent. In as much as as a continent we are part and parcel of the global financial portal, a world which shrunk from a soccer ball size to become a golf ball size, to transform nations of the world to be come closely knit neighbourhoods, we must, as the Setswana saying suggests, state that *mamepe aa foo ke mamepe aa ka kwana* – that is, we know and must all agree that all of us must agree to share the sweetness which each has.

Besides the steering committee having to replicate itself in the six regions of the AU, through regional committees under the AU, TMF and PAWA, it must adopt Nepad positions and policies fine tuned for advocacy as a means to reflect on the being of Africans as human beings.

There must be a deliberate and conscious effort to mobilise the participation of youth and women in the processes – so as to not only seek human resources but also contribute to African material and politically trained human resources for the continent and diaspora, through the youthfulness of the continent and gender equity.

Internet and information technology must be set up in the six regions to enhance the motive force and become a locomotive force which must drive the process and projects. Equally all the six regions must, at the onset, be subjected to an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to continuously



assess the progress of these processes, as also it will inspire progress. Progress as assessed through the APRM must also be to answer the question: how have we successfully nurtured an African Renaissance and Pan African consciousness – an African Patriotism, which will be an unrelenting enemy to the African culture of collaboration with the enemies of Africa?

The regional interim committees which will spread across the continent and the sixth committee (the diaspora), must therefore have a broader mandate on online arts, culture, history and heritage centres. This, by also linking the arts, culture and heritage to the history of the regions where they are set up, but also of the continent and the world.

The objective of these online centres must be to promote, protect, innovate and to put on the human agenda, the history, arts and culture and heritage of Africans.

They must also be linked to the AU committee or commission which is charged with the responsibility to trace the systems which lead to the illicit flow of funds from the continent and the repatriation of the arts which were removed through pillage from the continent from time immemorial.

These internet and information technology links, of the arts, must also have as their objective to detect the illicit expatriation of historical, arts, culture and heritage products, as also they seek to put in place the systems for the distribution of the heritage products on the continent and in the world.

As we all know, the arts, culture and heritage of our continent are more available in Europe and North America than they are here. This is as a result of the pillaging policies of Europe and America.

Those efforts were assisted and abated by corrupt and selfish Africans the same way as those who aided and abetted the Slave Trade, by collaborating with the slave Masters (see *Saltwater Slavery*, Stephnie E Smallwood, 2007). The African philistines and corrupt and selfish beings they were and are, collaborated with slave masters, murderers and thieves who, while despising Africans,

valued and sought the creative treasures of the continent at the lowest price to sell them to the highest bidder.

The challenge put before us by the question I pose therefore is: how, in the first place, must African and world history and heritage be accessible to the different African and world generations?

What I am going to suggest, I am certain, will not be and is not new to most people on the continent. What is a reminder in what I am saying, is that:

On the one hand the collective experiences we gathered in the struggle for justice and peace even against the neo-colonial phase, must and have created firm bonds among us so that we can form collaborations across the continent for our own freedom and for the freedom of coming generations;

**“The objective of these online centres must be to promote, protect, innovate and to put on the human agenda, the history, arts and culture and heritage of Africans.”**

and emancipate citizens of other countries from a collective guilt of being nations of thieves.

On the other hand, in the same way as the concept of the African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism have been for decades on the agenda for the majority of countries on the continent and in the diaspora, so has the agenda for the creation of a common revolutionary consciousness on the continent and in the diaspora, to participate in the freedom and justice struggle for human kind.

This consciousness exists on the continent, in the diaspora and among many millions of other peoples of the world. The question which the theme raises is: how do we continuously nurture and sustain the Pan-African Consciousness among the masses of Africans and in the world?

The first lesson from that is, we must

not reinvent any wheels. That is not to say we must not be creative. We have a history and therefore also an experience of mobilising and engaging in heightening consciousness. The continent and the world are ready for that, if the immensely negative impact of the rise of terrorist activity, reactionary forces, oppressive and neo-fascist activity is any indication to go by in the world.

How must we introduce internet and information technology to the processes we set up in the six regions, so that we can harness and enhance this struggle consciousness to spread across the continent as we also link them to the arts, heritage, culture and history of the continent and the world?

An attempt to execute this possibility exists in Southern Africa, spearheaded by the South African History Online (SAHO-[www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za)), which was founded eighteen years ago in South Africa. I suspect that there are similar initiatives and efforts on the continent and in the diaspora, which were founded for different, and also, for similar objectives.

Can we be creative in linking them for the purposes of... promoting access to an artistic, cultural, heritage and historical curriculum for African and world progressive consciousness...?

Can we, as the SAHO initiative suggests, link organs of civil society, schools, universities, libraries, museums, memorials and archive centres, through information and internet technology – all of which will, of course, link to personally owned computers in homes?

This to create a seamless process of education on the continent, while also not compromising the levels and standards of education.

One of the greatest problems of education on the continent, arising out of a lack of mother tongue education, is that home education – that is pre-school and primary education – and the education systems are severed. That is where the formula for a possible deep self-knowledge of Africans, emanating from our history, manifested and still manifests itself.

Can we, through the six regions of the AU, reclaim African languages, by borrowing and learning from the AU

Language Academy processes based in Bamako? Would this be the reference for the creation of communication, with an African cultural content which would also address the scourge of tribalism on the continent? Would this be the regenerating, reclaiming and recreating process for the culture and heritage inherent and intrinsic to the African languages and culture which, as the concept, in part, of the African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism imply, issue the African creative acumen on the continent which would contribute to the global discourse which must state that the world is not a mono but multi and diverse cultural expression?

Is this the moment when Africa must introduce Swahili, as the official African language? However that must not mean that the other African languages must be killed. As they are nurtured, simultaneously, can Swahili be nurtured as the official African language? Is this not to be one of the ways to bring down the artificial cultural borders, created by the colonialists, exploited by collaborators with the colonialists, and promoting tribalism?

We would therefore also begin to mobilise for the repatriation of all the creative arts products which are held in different European and American monuments and museums which must be relocated in the regional centres, as those art products are a form of cultural language and legacy. They must be made accessible to Africans and humanity, wherever they are, through the visual means which are enhanced by the internet and information technology?

Would the infrastructure which must be created to embrace the processes, projects and content, at these centres, be a means to create jobs among the poor, the discriminated against and the unemployed on the continent and in the diaspora?

Since the subject and issue of reparation has been dropped from the agenda of the United Nations and therefore of the world, is it not time to put it back on the agenda of humankind – are there allies for this? The Anti-racist, Anti-sexist, Anti-imperialist and anti-fascist, the Green and Environmental Movements can

become and are allies of this possible expression for peace of humankind.

Does internet and information technology occupy the youth's imagination on the continent and in the diaspora?

If we learn from what television did by impacting on the imagination of this youth, seizing their imagination, which is living out what the mind sees and says, should we not challenge the TV networks to engage the youth by... promoting access to an African and world artistic, cultural, heritage and historical curriculum for African and world progressive consciousness... through what occupies the imagination of the youth – the internet and information technology?

Is this not, in terms of adverts of all those who make business on the

“As we all know,  
the arts, culture  
and heritage of our  
continent are more  
available in Europe  
and North America  
than they are here.  
This is as a result of  
the pillaging policies  
of Europe and  
America.”

continent also the manner to finance this very important project? All of these questions, in my view, would be a necessary and worthwhile research programmes and projects to engage.

I have above referred to the Internet and Information Technology, the means for communication and exchange of ideas faster than a click of the finger. I have also contemplated on the implications of Artificial Intelligence and by implication, robotics and by implication also the fourth industrial Revolution – to ask another question which the African creatives, the cultural workers, must reflect upon, ponder over and answer:

**How can we Promote Reading and appreciation for African arts, culture, heritage and history and World arts**

### and heritage on our Continent?

Would this project, if successful, result in a rupture, which breaks down barriers, whatever they may be, which exist on the continent and in the world to reveal the humanness of Africans and the Africanness of being human among human beings in the world?

“...SAHO's innovative website, student internship and archive programme has changed the way people view and use knowledge in the technology age. The success of the SAHO website can be gauged from the fact that in 2017 close on 5 million visitors used our website, and we have had a 35% increase in traffic to the site. In 2018 we have had sixty million (60 million) views...” (SAHO's CEO).

What would we say to each other,  
when the false curtains which were  
shut around us are forced to fall  
around us  
and when we are revealed to each  
other  
by the wires which like blood vessels  
or nerves  
spread beneath the earth  
everywhere  
and into the depths of the seas  
transporting our ideas to each other  
and to the world

How would we see the world, and  
how would the world see us?

Would this say to Shakespeare we,  
we are no monster  
we are Caliban though  
and you must know

Would we say to us in jest as every  
scar on our limb declare  
look how Caliban we are  
we are not Prospero nor Gonzalez  
nor Miranda or Ferdinand we  
would say  
but we are Caliban tempered in the  
tempest of this vast land  
dubbed Africa for Africans where  
humanity must be welcome  
here we come

listen to our footsteps as we enter  
the 21st century to be part of the  
4th revolution  
here we come as humans of a  
humane change. ■

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## THE NEW SOCIOLOGY OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE III

# Property Rights and Property Wrongs

Black dispossession and white possessions will require orderly and sensible realignment. These goals are reflected in the property clause (section 25) of the New South African constitution.

By Ronald Suresh Roberts

The current expropriation debate demonstrates Nassim Taleb's observation: news adds noise while it subtracts information, so that the more newspapers you read, the less informed you become (Taleb, *Antifragile*, 2013).

Former *Business Day* editor Tim Cohen has confessed for instance that "sometimes in the national debate you just don't know where to start".

However, this bewilderment did not prevent him from confidently denouncing the National Assembly's current acceleration of property rights reforms as a "desperate, terrible historical mistake" (5 March).

Then came more noise in "expert" guise, when Pieter Niehaus, head of real estate at the law firm, Norton Rose Fulbright SA, warned that "If expropriation without compensation is

passed into law, it would give rise to serious difficulties both for property owners and banks which lent money against security over properties" (*Fin24*, 1 March 2018). Again, none of that is true. But in order to grasp this, one needs to look past the fake "current affairs" discourse of the last few months and instead align the track record of the last twenty-four years against the anti-apartheid critique of the decades before that. I do so below.

### New Rights

Property rights transformation under the 1996 Constitution began promptly with section 3 of the 1998 National Water Act, afterwards replicated by section 3 of the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act of 2002, which consolidated an approach that is long overdue to go viral in urban and rural land reform.

The intellectual heavy lifting on the associated constitutional and practical challenges was done twenty years ago. Today's ideological "Fight Back" by such voices as Cohen, Niehaus and Tony Leon is in truth a pale echo of the more formidable opposition such constituencies (including Leon personally) mobilised twenty years ago, when they first lost these same debates. EFF Chairperson Dali Mpofu shrewdly made this point in debate with the present day DA. (Dali Mpofu@16:28: "we did it with water": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vsjm0xHrS0>).

The current sociology of discourse has entered a pre-Polokwane "time warp", complained Nicole Fritz, who founded the US State Department-funded Southern African Litigation Project and is currently CEO of the Rupert-funded Freedom Under Law (on FUL's funding, see "Law and Dogma: The Illiberal Elite", *Mail and Guardian* 23 October 2009). In an ironic illustration of the difference between durable truth and noisy news, Fritz deleted her own 11 March tweet on March 12th.

As the power of South African public discourse turns away from the "mainstream" propaganda of such "regime change" NGOs as SALC and FUL, and back towards such irrepressible historical claims as land rights, our past is indeed our best

resource. The property owners and banks to whom Niehaus refers would therefore do well to examine – and then to tweak rather than tweet – the basic approach set out in section 34 of the National Water Act, read with Part 8 of the same legislation.

The net effect of these provisions, from the analogous water rights context, is that once the law comes into effect, the existing pattern of land use and security would remain transitionally unchanged, while designated priority areas of “resource stress” are spotlighted for urgent transformation in accordance with available administrative capacity, socio-economic urgency, and related factors. Meanwhile, Niehaus will discover that the practical requirements for orderly and bankable land leases are already set out in principle, by analogy and implication, in sections 27 and 28 of the National Water Act. Beyond the hysteria of the news cycle, he might apply his mind to such concrete questions as: should we, for the land context, tweak the Water Act’s stated maximum 40 year tenure cycle? Would 80 or 99 years be preferable in land?

In truth, despite journalistic and “expert” noise, the introduction of a finite time-bound land leases merely aligns local urban and rural tenure with the ancient wisdom of the United Kingdom, a jurisdiction ordinarily beloved of local illiberals. As Niehaus might readily learn from his London colleagues, it is utterly commonplace in London property markets for time-bound leases to pass between buyer and seller, with the underlying freehold separately and continuously held (in fractions or as a whole) by a third party aristocrat, entrepreneur or individual. Far better to have the state as third party custodian in the public interest.

UK property markets are, moreover, demonstrably able to price both long and short term leases, across all land use and market price segments. Buyers of opulent Belgravia property for £20 to £30 million, for example, generally take a mere long term lease, with the freehold rights retained by aristocrats such as the Duke of Westminster, or by third party entrepreneurs (see “Who Owns London”, *Evening Standard*, 2 April 2002: <http://www.>

[standard.co.uk/home/who-owns-london-6308427.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/home/who-owns-london-6308427.html).) Such leases may even remain saleable with less than a year to run, albeit at an appropriately drastic pricing discount (and often for cash buyers only), such as the following Belgravia bolt hole that was on a London property website in February 2018 at £295,000, a calculated fraction of its longer term value: <http://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-for-sale/property-64147759.html>

By contrast with the foregoing, *Business Day’s* rather breathless package of “Seven articles that you must read to understand land expropriation” (2 March, 2018) offered more noise

“The noisy amnesiacs of twitter and the talk shows now seek to rewrite the 1996 Mandela-Mbeki ANC as an ideological captive of sentimental togetherness.”

and less information than its readers would have received had they instead quietly delved into London property markets today, the water rights reforms of twenty years ago, or venerable anti-apartheid truths from even further back, to which I now turn.

#### Old Wrongs

The anti-apartheid movement, more than any twentieth century cultural or political formation demonstrated the stark difference between property rights (legitimate ownership) and property wrongs (primitive accumulation). The 1996 SA constitution, and especially its property clause, deliberately rights these wrongs.

“The Historical Injustice” (1978), by Thabo Mbeki, is the anti-apartheid movement’s modern critique of apartheid’s expropriations, beginning with, and moving beyond, Marx whom Mbeki quoted: “the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence and

from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital.”

Speaking shortly before the apartheid regime’s Wiehahn Commission recommended recognition of black trade unions, Mbeki contrasted the evolution of British capital on its UK home ground, through progressive voting and trade union rights, against the intensification of primitive accumulation in South Africa:

*Here [in SA], the capitalist inherited the rights of the feudal lord and appropriated to himself the right to determine where, when, at what price and under what conditions the African shall sell his labour power to the capitalist. He also appropriated to himself the right to decide ‘what is good for the native.* (<https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/anc/1978/historical-injustice.htm>)

Against this backdrop, the ANC designed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a platform for the transformative public discourse that would in turn fuel the radically anti-apartheid 1996 constitution, for transformation of apartheid property and other relations. This TRC design was set out in the ANC’s August 1996 submission to the TRC, and was amplified in *Reconciliation Through Truth: A Reckoning of Apartheid’s Criminal Governance* (1996) which Kader Asmal, Louise Asmal and I published four months after President Mbeki launched the 1996 Constitution, and an associated poetics of reconciliation-as-transformation, in his “I am an African” speech in the National Assembly. Mbeki followed up by speaking at the launch of *Reconciliation Through Truth*, a text that carries the only Foreword that President Mandela ever published under the formal letterhead of his Presidential office.

It is necessary to belabour this lineage because the noisy amnesiacs of twitter and the talk shows now seek to rewrite the 1996 Mandela-Mbeki ANC as an ideological captive of sentimental togetherness. They for instance conflate Mandela’s ANC with Desmond Tutu’s Rainbowism. Such critics need at least to reckon with the

actual historical record, in which the ANC vigorously contested where Tutu and his Deputy, Alex Boraine, ended up in their final TRC report. (I will address these larger tensions between TRC and ANC visions for reconciliation in a subsequent instalment of this series; here the focus is upon property rights alone).

*Reconciliation Through Truth* contained a dedicated chapter on the need to “place property upon a legitimate footing”. It emphasised that “existing property distributions in South Africa are saturated with the logic and history of white supremacy”. The book expressly problematised “innocent” beneficiaries such as a young couple who were attracted to Triomf (formerly Sophiatown) by “[t]hese brand new houses around R5000 each” and who asserted: “our move here was not politically oriented, we were just poor young folk who bought here because we could”.

Tony Leon’s illiberals of course defended the accumulated property wrongs of apartheid, seeking to dignify these as “rights.” This “Fight Back” gambit obliged the Asmals and I to remind Leon, in our book, that “in a comprehensive sense, apartheid denied property rights not only to blacks but ultimately also to whites”. We wrote in 1996:

*for whites, apartheid abolished merit. It delinked pay and performance. It therefore removed the possibility of legitimate rewards for effort, an idea that is integral to the concept of property – the idea that separates property from theft. This is what Democratic Party leader Tony Leon overlooks in saying that his ‘policy and political approach commences with an understanding that the quality of a person’s life will approximately reflect the quality of effort you put into it.’ That can only be a statement about some utopia elsewhere; it certainly does not apply to South Africa’s past nor (as yet) its present. Under apartheid blacks were dispossessed while whites had possessions, but not property. Only now, in the new South Africa, is a regime of property rights dawning for the first time. As it dawns, black dispossession*

and white possessions will require orderly and sensible realignment. These goals are reflected in the property clause (section 25) of the New South African constitution . . . [which we then cited verbatim and analysed in the manner that journalists have very belatedly begun to do] . . .

Beyond fine rhetoric, this promptly became the live constitutional logic of the 1998 Water Act, which duly nationalised water rights without compensation. A similar logic can be seen in the EFF’s credible multi-step methodology towards “Expropriation of land without compensation for equitable redistribution”: <https://www.effonline.org/on-land>

Whatever its populism and offensiveness on numerous other issues, this specific EFF policy

“Beyond fine rhetoric, this promptly became the live constitutional logic of the 1998 Water Act, which duly nationalised water rights without compensation.”

statement on land rights in fact credibly approximates the pre-Polokwane ANC’s own constitutional analysis on water rights, from which the Zuma-era ANC had gone adrift. When journalists such as Stephen Grootes stereotype the EFF as simplistically populist on this particular issue, they are yet again elevating noise over information (*Daily Maverick* 23 March, 2018): <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-03-23-analysis-the-eff-vs-.....-insert-next-enemys-nameacronymdescription/#.Wrf4HbaZPOQ>

#### New Normal

Genuine radicalism, unlike simplistic populism, becomes the new normal. When Helen Zille disingenuously thanked farmers for their supposed “donation” of massive water rights

during the recent water crisis, she paradoxically underlined the DA’s longstanding intellectual surrender in the constitutional jurisprudence, if not in political rhetoric, of water rights. Farmers will doubtless shortly “donate” land in the same way, reconciling themselves to a revised place within a transformed national consensus. By contrast, Andile Mngxitama tweets that “Land expropriation without compensation which doesn’t upset the agricultural sector is like beer without alcohol”.

One final curiosity cannot be evaded: why didn’t the pre-Polokwane ANC complete, in the land sector, what it achieved in water (1998) and in mineral rights (2002)? As late as July 2017 (!), Derek Hanekom, who as Land Affairs and Agriculture Minister had clashed with Asmal on the property rights analysis inside the Mandela Cabinet, was still characterising nationalisation without compensation as “rubbish”, “seriously unjust” and “nonsense”. Hanekom was reshuffled from harm’s way after the 1999 election, but this then inaugurated all manner of contestation between his and other old and new guards in and around the Land Affairs Department, the Land Bank, and so on (See Marinda Weidman, “Who Shaped South Africa’s Land Reform Policy,” *Politikon*, November 2004). Then, as such contestation subsided, Polokwane fatefully intervened.

The upshot, as has been widely noticed, is that substantive land reform peaked in 2008 and then sharply dropped off, alongside the rise of intoxicated rhetoric, since then. In 2006, President Mbeki had explicitly announced the review of the “willing buyer, willing seller” principle (*Fin24* 3 February 2006). After Polokwane, he reiterated the need “to speed up land reform” (*property24*, 8 February 2008). He has returned to the point in the *El Pais* interview, now.

We therefore continue to count the costs of the ten lost years of corrupt and demobilised statecraft since September 2008. ■

*This article can also be accessed in the Newsletter of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation.*



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# Political thuggery - a tool to whip everyone into line...



At the core of this set of politics is money, an insatiable appetite for power and control of the levers of the state as an instrument of patronage and intolerance.

By Chris Matlhako



Over the recent period, the menace of political thuggery (the criminalisation of politics) has reared its ugly head more forcefully in democratic South Africa's polity. We have witnessed instances of blatant political thuggery, intolerance and demagoguery, which bear all the hallmarks of the gradual denuding and distortion of almost everything our struggle was about, in pursuance of petty political points, and an insatiable appetite for power.

Our history of a violent past hasn't as yet totally succumbed to the processes of South Africa's democratisation, though we must admit that we've been spared the all-too-common electoral violence that has characterised much of the continent's post-independence elections. However the thuggery creates the space for a set of politics which borders on fascist tendencies.

There also exists an unfortunate belief that unless a strike and/or protest action is associated with violence, nothing can be achieved. However, we must also point out that the authorities and others have not responded in the most appropriate and humane manner in many instances when confronted by these situations, they have tended to revert back to apartheid-kragdagheid methods. In a democratic dispensation, where various avenues exist through which dissent, different viewpoints, displeasure and disapproval can be registered, the basis for violent actions is non-existent.

No aspect of our society has been spared the prevalence of violence in the recent past; as university students and others descended unto our cities' streets and embarked in what one can only describe, as an 'orgy of destruction and looting'. This set of politics also characterised the fascist Nazi-prototype National Party (NP) en-route to capturing state power in the early years of consolidating apartheid South Africa by stealth in the 1940s. In fact, this provided the base for the subsequent enactment of the battery of racist and segregatory legislation that constituted what the world came to describe as a crime against humanity – apartheid!

Today, however, we've not been

assisted by the stubborn endemic and systemic challenges of structural poverty, unemployment and inequality, and lack of democratic governance. These factors catalyse the unemployed and underemployed youth in the main, making it easy to mobilise them in this effort. Because of the persistence and widening of these fissures, youth and youthful organisational rhetoric perceived (and pretending) to advance youth-interests, has become the refuge for the marginalised youth and others, who feel left out of the mainstream of both the politics and transformation processes underway in the country. Unemployment among youth and its attendant poverty has made them willing tools for thuggery at the hands of, in some instances, desperate politicians. This exacerbates the desperate 'do or die' politics among others, and the

**“The revelations at the Moerane Commission confirm the dangerous slide we are in, which could encompass the entire country very soon.”**

negative impact of money-driven politics in the country's nascent democracy.

Indeed, the continued crisis of neoliberalism accentuates and has widened the gaps, particularly severe in the Third World and the continent. “Neoliberalism” argue Hart and Henn, “has influenced youth political participation through its critiques of collective democracy, by the subsequent transformations in political practice that it has contributed to, and through the economic marginalisation that has resulted from its shaping of governments' monetary policy” (Neoliberalism and the Unfolding Patterns of Young People's Political Engagement and Political Participation in Contemporary Britain. 15 November, 2017).

As early as the inter-trade union rivalries of AMCU-NUM, which resulted

in the tragic events at Marikana in 2012, inter and intra-organisation conflict has become a key part of the problem. This has resulted more often than not, in political thuggery and all that is associated with it. The ANC Youth League organisational processes were key sites of battles and overt obscene violent acts, now finding expression in the Economic Freedom Fighters' organisational-political strategy.

In fact throughout the leadership of the current core at the helm of EFF today, during their tenure as the ANCYL leadership, violence characterised all engagements. Protests and campaigns of the ANCYL across the country entrenched the use of intolerance and thuggery as a political strategy. The highlight of this was the intolerant storming of the ANC's Policy Conference in Durban, where the YL attempted to force through the nationalisation of mines as the 'radical' position that the ANC needed to adopt. It is not the policy position per se that was an issue but the unruly and intolerant manner in which the then YL leadership core – now EFF leading figures, stormed and sought to bulldoze the entire meeting, despite the fact that there needed to be thorough debates in the entire ANC and its Alliance partners and consideration of the correlations of forces. This was subsequently followed by the spectrum of violence engulfing almost all protest actions, including the #FeesMustFall, the #RhodesMustFall and many others. The unfortunate scenes outside the Union Building when the #FeesMustFall descended there was one of the lowest ebbs of those protest actions.

Since the widely beamed scenes on our television screens, in particular, of the Economic Freedom Fighters' disruptions and subsequent physical ejection from the National Assembly, incidents of political thuggery have been more widespread, prevalent and actively cultivated. It is not only the more 'in your-face' EFF's thuggish political strategy that we should be wary of, but a seemingly pervasive violence in our polity which is a cause for concern. The ANC Eastern Cape's 'chair-throwing conference' is a stark reminder of the lowest levels of intolerance we have moved into as a country. There was also a real threat of the ANC's 54th national



conference descending into chaos, which was characterised by fierce pre-conference campaigning.

The thuggish behaviour displayed has its roots in the politics that have evolved since the dawn of our democracy. At the core of this set of politics is money, an insatiable appetite for power and control of the levers of the state as an instrument of patronage and intolerance.

And more critically, it is a cynical view of transformation and the changes occurring in our society broadly, as more and more people seek the easiest way to wealth and material accumulation. By all means, seems to be the mantra, as one former ANC youth leaguer remarked - 'uzo i'thola kanjani u hlele corneni!' Suggesting a race to the bottom, which will be won by the strongest and the weak will be losers! No solidarity or collective endeavour as a method to address these issues is provided.

The unending political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, threats attributed to King Zwelithini regarding 'the Zululand' matter, marauding 'mabutho' in the streets of Durban threatening violence in support of former President Jacob Zuma, political thugs in the North West breaking up anti-corruption civil society initiatives and meetings, and in principal, the EFF's political strategy to remain relevant – employing both threatening rhetoric and so-called 'radical political posture', such as '... cut throat of whiteness', to demonstrate its radical character, are but just some of the collective manifestations of this pervasive nature in our polity.

Though not a great fan, Stephen Grootes argues about the EFF "... that its leaders are growing more desperate: they need attention, they need political power, they need an ENEMY (my emphasis). The hunt is now on for a new enemy through which they can gain a real foothold in the national debate" (*Daily Maverick*, 23 March 2018). Dr Vishwash Satgar wrote back in 2017 "Deepening crisis through disruptions is a political strategy... the EFF's mode of often violent disruptive engagement is becoming central to its political practice and this is also diffusing as a societal norm" (*Mail & Guardian*, April,

**“Part of the solution therefore, is to counter such acts by deepening the participation of the masses in decision-making processes.”**

5 2017: 'EFF's wrecking ball politics is fascist rather than left!').

The danger of all this is muted response from, in the main, key political figures and organisations. At the rate at which these incidents are taking place, there's the real possibility they will be embraced as a political culture, which will forever blot the democratisation process in our country and open the door for the levels of political violence and criminality witnessed in the elections in Kenya and Nigeria, and elsewhere in the continent. The imposition of candidates by powerful cliques within political parties and the use of thugs to compel obedience and install fear in the majority of party members are all too common practices of late.

Therefore, thuggery has become a serious threat to democratic consolidation in the country and could

**“More specifically, generative politics refers to practices that entail navigating conflict and building consensus with a view to creating resources for the poor, where 'resources' are understood broadly to include social networks, information and confidence as well as jobs, assets and money.”**

give rise to proliferation of arms and militarisation of the political space. This will result in the increase of unresolved politically motivated assassinations and diminishing the evolving democratic culture. The revelations at the Moerane Commission confirm the dangerous slide we are in, which could encompass the entire country very soon.

Such acts are usually undertaken by organisation(s) which either lack people's support or have negative attitudes towards involving the people in their decision-making processes. When such organisations get desperate, they resort to violence to try to force their ideas on everyone, no matter how absurd they are. Part of the solution therefore, is to counter such acts by deepening the participation of the masses in decision-making processes. This will help to isolate the reactionaries from the revolutionaries. We must note, however, that these organisations (or individuals) always use the very issues that affect the people to mobilise.

Therefore, we want to argue that what is required urgently is the cultivation and entrenching of a generative politics in our society. Research in India and elsewhere in the global South, has demonstrated the efficacy of this set of politics and to possibilities of youth politics and the vitality of civil society in these societies.

Generative politics is understood as forms of everyday political action that are not primarily about the allocation of scarce resources or competition for goods. "More specifically, generative politics refers to practices that entail navigating conflict and building consensus with a view to creating resources for the poor, where 'resources' are understood broadly to include social networks, information and confidence as well as jobs, assets and money", argues Prof Craig Jeffrey of Oxford University. The possibility of youth mobilisation and encouraging powerful institutions to view young people not simply as problems, potential voters, or volunteers but co-creators of democracy and a better life for all is critical for a developing nation like ourselves. ■

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## JURISPRUDENTIAL ANALYSIS OF EVICTIONS AND TENURE SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

# Dissecting Interpretation Lessons of Section 26 of the Constitution, 1996 in light of the *Baron* Case



The main societal challenge which causes instability in most of the rural demarcated areas is the vast majority of black people who live under insecure arrangements on a privately-owned piece of land belonging to private individuals.

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By Gaopalelwe Mathiba



Empirical evidence shows that eviction plays a significant role in effecting the realisation of the transformative potential of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* on housing sector and tenure security. This is so because it serves as a precursor to the invocation of the constitutional socio-economic right to adequate housing. Eviction is the only available conventional remedy at the disposal of the property owner when dealing with an unlawful occupant who refuses to vacate the property after the legal basis for lawful occupation has been terminated.

Notably, evictions occur in the intersection between social and civil rights, viz. on the one hand, the right of the property owner to freely enjoy usage of his property undisturbed and not to be arbitrarily deprived of his ownership entitlements over a property and, on the other, the right of the unlawful occupant to adequate housing. Therefore, the question asked here is whether the current constitutional regime reflects the true intention of the Constitution on the housing sector. Alternatively put, whether section 26 of the Constitution in its holistic sense, was aimed at institutionalising ‘unlawful intrusion’ by the illegal occupant on the property of the owner, notwithstanding that the latter is protected by section 25(1) of the very same Constitution ensconcing the contradictory former (section 26).

The main societal challenge which causes instability in most of the rural demarcated areas is the vast majority of black people who live under insecure arrangements on a privately-owned piece of land belonging to private individuals. It is usually the case that they have no alternative accommodation, thus being compelled by these unfortunate circumstances to capitulate to exploitative and inhumane demands from the owner because in the absence of capitulation from their end, forced eviction is an unavoidable outcome. Upon eviction, these victims have nowhere else to go and they get to suffer subsequent terrible hardships stemming from homelessness and destitution.

In the context of the above this article seeks to critically discuss the judgment that was taken by the Constitutional Court on 13 July 2017 in

the case of *Baron and Others v Claytile (Pty) Ltd and Another* [2017] ZACC 24. Central to this judgment, among others, lies the most controversial interpretation approach to section 26 of the Constitution on what constitutes ‘adequate accommodation’ in eviction matters and the duty resting on the State to make alternative accommodation available [subject to the availability of resources], to the person against whom eviction order is sought. Moreover, the judgment has accurately determined whether it is ‘just and equitable’ to evict applicants from the privately owned dwellings in terms of the *Extension of Security of Tenure Act 62 of 1997*, notwithstanding the unavailability of alternative accommodation.

The availability of alternative accommodation, it is submitted, shall be a pre-condition of the granting

“The question which ultimately arises is: against which scale is the adequacy of an alternative accommodation counterweighed? Is it not of the property that they have just been evicted from?”

of an eviction order. To that end, the article will provide the historical context of evictions, followed by the legislative framework governing evictions. Also discussed are the negative effects stemming from the state’s failure to timeously fulfil its duty to provide alternative accommodation on the property owner’s interests with reference to decided case law. At the end, recommendations to ameliorate the state of affairs and pave a progressive way out will be provided.

### The Pre-Constitutional Context of Forced Evictions

According to Terreblanche (2002:6), the modern historical setup of South Africa displays the interwoven collective streaming between land, power and labour. The horrendous phenomena

of colonialism created the conditions for the monopoly of economic power which resulted in white farmers enriching themselves at the expense of the natives since mid-17th century until the late 20th century. Moreover, Van der Walt (2005:285) points out that it is historically evident that during the apartheid regime a number of racial-based laws regulating evictions were constructed and applied in a partisan-like fashion (Rugege 2004:1). The heart-rending, pathetic and disastrous pattern of our past is exemplified by the most notorious *Natives Land Act of 1913*, which contributed immensely towards black economic downturn and the impoverishment of Africans (Modise and Mtshiselwa 2013:5). The latter legislation accomplished its purpose of pushing the vast majority of black South Africans off their aboriginal land titles and into the farms which were predominantly owned by white people, where they were accommodated in the ‘indecent’ outskirts. In response to the latter conditions, Hall (2013:1) submits that the democratic government constructed legislative measures and policies to secure the tenure rights of farm dwellers as part of its national land reform programme.

It is noteworthy that during the apartheid regime, the remedy which was available to the property owner faced with unlawful occupants was the common law remedy of *rei vindicatio* (action for vindication), as opposed to the current remedy of eviction. According to Wilson (2009:270), by *rei vindicatio*, as was then interpreted, it meant that the property owner had an absolute right to evict all unlawful occupants from his/her property regardless of their housing need and other personal circumstances. This gross lawlessness was possible because there was neither the constitutional right to adequate housing nor the duty on the state to provide alternative accommodation to the evicted, which could have somehow counterweighted the owner’s proprietary rights over the unlawfully occupied property (Van der Walt 1990:32).

### Constitutional and Legislative Framework on Evictions

According to Hall (2013:1), section

26 of the Constitution affords everyone the right to adequate housing and this right is the most contested and litigated socio-economic right in South African courts. This situation is the unavoidable consequence of the South African housing regime which is characterised by a deeply-divided citizenship and societal inequalities. Hall (2013:1) further observes that the overwhelming black majority groups are unevenly denied access to adequate housing opportunities and other basic amenities of life, and this has undoubtedly led to many underprivileged black households being exposed to unbearable hardships and perilous living conditions in the 'slums', notwithstanding a constant risk of forced and illegal eviction at any time.

The thrust of this article, as already highlighted above, is that section 26 of the Constitution, which affords everyone the right to adequate housing, is starkly positioned in conflict with the pervasive realities of forced removals, housing deficits and evictions, hence the right has been frequently invoked in courts during litigation and hence there is an urgent need to devise proactive, programmatic and coherent responses to alarming cases of evictions. Given the complexity of this constitutional provision, the section is unpacked and discussed below per subsection.

*Section 26(1) of the Constitution*

Quite evidently, section 26(1) of the Constitution affords everyone the right of access to have adequate housing. In the case of *Grootboom v Oostenberg Municipality and Others* 2000, the Constitutional Court stated that the wording of section 26(1) must be understood from a critical point of view where the meaning of the right to adequate housing is not restricted to mean only 'housing' in a literal sense of the word, but that the scope amounts to "more than bricks and mortar" since it requires firstly, the acquisition of land wherein the house can be constructed, services by the responsible municipality and other additional arrangements which might arise. Moreover, Muller argues that the Constitutional Court erred in adequately explaining what it meant by "more than bricks and

**“The horrendous phenomena of colonialism created the conditions for the monopoly of economic power which resulted in white farmers enriching themselves at the expense of the natives since mid-17th century until the late 20th century.”**

mortar”, thus leaving a substantial gap between the true intention of the provision and a thorough understanding thereof.

Similarly, Bilchitz (2007:135) observes that section 26(1) lacks substantial content and sufficient particularity as to what scope the right is weighed against, upon which reasonableness of the state's measures is to be tested. However, reflecting on the ongoing contestation of ideas by various scholars as to what constitutes 'adequate housing', guidelines have been derived in reliance from theoretical discoveries and these foundations capture the wide range of interests of the unlawful occupiers (Fox; 2002:9). These innovative guidelines, it is submitted, have opened up a wide spectrum of new considerations that the courts can take into account when determining the scale of justice and equity of an eviction matter. Hence it is important also for this right to be given substantial content in order for the

**“In a nutshell, this subsection serves as the primary source of protection for unlawful occupiers of a privately owned property against the abuse of power and arbitrary evictions.”**

society and evicted persons to know how and what can be claimed in terms of this right.

*Section 26(2) of the Constitution*

The positive duty on the state is imposed by section 26(2) of the Constitution and this duty entails that the government must adopt reasonable legislative and other measures to achieve the progressive realisation of the right of access to adequate housing within the range of its available resources. This subsection, it is submitted, must always be read inseparably with subsection one because it delineates the spectrum of the right in subsection one. These rights have ample substance in common in that they both create an obligation for government to observe and provide access to adequate housing within its available resources. Concurrently, this right also denotes a great sense of reluctance on the side of the state to sanction eviction orders against unlawful occupants if it is reasonably perceptible on the circumstances that such sanction will lead to homelessness (*Port Elizabeth Municipality v Various Occupiers* 2005).

Concomitant with the above exposition, Yacoob J in the *Grootboom* case, stated that the positive duty provided under this subsection did not necessarily impose an unqualified and/or absolute duty on the state to provide access to adequate housing.

*Section 26(3) of the Constitution*

As a matter of fact and law, socio-economic rights, including the right of access to adequate housing, could at the very least be "negatively protected from improper invasion." In addition, Yacoob J stated that the latter negative obligation is best spelt out in section 26(3) of the Constitution, which states that "no one may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances..." In a nutshell, this subsection serves as the primary source of protection for unlawful occupiers of a privately owned property against the abuse of power and arbitrary evictions. In multiple occasions where the Constitutional Court had to deal

with section 26(3) of the Constitution in greater detail, it has undeniably erred in not providing thorough elaboration as to what actions would under normal circumstances amount to the observance or otherwise of the right of access to adequate housing (Liebenberg; 214).

**Case Law Analysis and Critique**

In the *Baron* case, the Constitutional Court had to clarify a matter concerning whether it is just and equitable to evict applicants from a privately-owned property in terms of the *Extension of Security of Tenure Act* 62 of 1997 (ESTA), notwithstanding the non-availability of alternative accommodation. The employer (Claytile (Pty) Ltd), sought an order evicting his former employees from his private units prior to the termination of their employment contracts and this was in accordance with the provisions of ESTA. Subsequently, an eviction order was granted and later confirmed by the Land Claims Court and the latter effect led to applicants refusing to vacate the private dwellings of their former employer because should they have vacated, this would have resulted in homelessness and it must be borne in mind that by then the legal basis of their occupation, which is employment, was terminated. To that end, two main shortcomings have been noted from this judgment.

Firstly, in terms of section 26(1);(2) of the Constitution, the responsible municipality of the City of Cape Town (the 'municipality') had a duty to provide alternative accommodation to the applicants upon their eviction, based on its available resources. Contrary to the latter constitutionally-imposed obligation on the municipality, it (municipality) indicated on two separate occasions where it did not fulfill its aforesaid duty due to unavailability of alternative accommodation. For the duration of this 'stalemate' by the municipality, the employer was then implicitly forced to accommodate the applicants (unlawful occupants) on his private units until the municipality provide alternative accommodation for them, since there was absolutely no way that they could vacate in the absence of alternative accommodation.

It is against this backdrop that this article argues that the property owner's right to not be arbitrarily deprived of his property, in terms of section 25(1) of the Constitution, was unjustly tampered with. This article further argues that the burdening of the property owner by the municipality was legally unjustified, unless the contrary substantial view can be made.

Secondly, it is evident from the facts of the case that the municipality has later on made a tentative offer of alternative accommodation at Blikkiesdorp to the applicants. However, the applicants rejected this offer arguing that it was not suitable and adequate. Be that as it may, again this article holds a 'stubborn' view that the Court did not drill deep in providing a much-needed clarity as to how one can safely strike an equitable balance

“ The unavailability of alternative accommodation should not bear any negative effect on the ownership and proprietary rights of the property owner, let alone the constitutionally protected interest. ”

between, on the one hand, applicants who were at the edge of being rendered homeless and, on the other, applicants who were provided with an alternative but rejected it because of its inadequacy. The question which ultimately arises is: against which scale is the adequacy of an alternative accommodation counterweighed? Is it not of the property that they have just been evicted from?

**Conclusion**

The task of interpreting eviction laws and to harmonise these two competing rights are more often than not left to the judiciary to deal with. However, the courts have been quite indecisive in its interpretation of the circumstances to

be considered before an eviction order can be granted and the averments that are necessary to reach the threshold of 'just and equitable' consideration on eviction. This was only clarified by the judgment in the *Baron* case where the Constitutional Court shed light on how best the latter indecisiveness can be curbed. The *Baron* judgment is very important in two separate respects

In the first instance, it thoroughly articulates various circumstances under which eviction will be said to be 'just and equitable' in the absence of alternative accommodation and goes further to analyse, in the circumstances of the applicants, what will be said to constitute 'suitable adequate housing' on eviction matters. This judgment also clarifies that the positive obligation on the state to provide alternative accommodation is not an absolute and abstract provision, but that its implantation will, in most cases, depend of the availability of resources. It is in this context that this article argues that the unavailability of alternative accommodation should not bear any negative effect on the ownership and proprietary rights of the property owner, let alone the constitutionally protected interest. ■

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**TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE****A Black Jacobin in the Age of Revolutions: Rewiew**

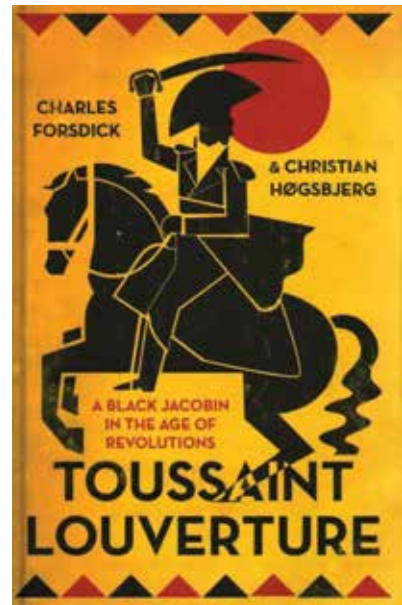
Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803) leader of the Haitian independence movement during the French Revolution, ultimately died in 1803 in a prison in France.

By Bhaso Ndzendze

“Today, in the shadow of Toussaint Louverture, I declare: by overthrowing me, they have cut down the tree of peace, but this tree will grow up again because its roots are Louvertrian.”(p148) So said Jean-Bertrand Aristide upon his arrival in the Central African Republic, the

site of his exile upon being deposed from his presidency in Haiti in 2004 following a military coup d'état. Having been forced out of office, he evoked the name of the leader of the first successful slave revolt in history, who had also lost the elusive Haitian reigns some 200 years earlier, in 1802.

But what was the Louvertrianism to



which the fallen leader was referring to? Such a question defies a narrow answer, and as well-meaning as Mr Aristide's tribute was to his illustrious predecessor, it was also quite simplistic in the face of the historical record. For he was many things to many people, both in life and in his "afterlives." It is this kaleidoscope which Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg grapple with in their recent biography, titled *Toussaint Louverture: A Black Jacobin in the Age of Revolutions*, published by the Wits University Press in South Africa, and Pluto worldwide.

Composed of an introduction and six chapters, the book gives a sufficient account of Louverture's life and work, and the many lives he has influenced since his death in exile in the Chateau de Joux at the hands of then First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte.

The exact date of Louverture's birth still remains a mystery, but most accounts place it in the early 1740s. His father was a first generation slave (bossale), having made the infamous middle passage from present-day Benin to the French colony of Saint Domingue, as Haiti was then known. The family spoke both Fon, their African dialect, and French. Further, as recorded by his son Isaac, they were closely related to the ruling dynasty in Benin. The young Toussaint was the property of a plantation called Bréda, and thus his name was Toussaint Bréda until the revolution when he modified it to reflect his status as a strategist who

could make openings (“ouverture”) in any battle. Supposedly he did not do much work in the sugar fields, but was in charge of the livestock and horses. This placement, the authors assess, was what led to his fine horsemanship in the battles of the revolution. This is reflected in the book’s cover, which features an image of the leader on a horse brandishing a sword as if actively leading a battle. The law in the French colony allowed slaves to purchase their freedom, and this Louverture did in 1776. In freedom he undertook various enterprises, none of which eventually came to fruition and he went back to Bréda, this time to work as a salaried coachman where he would be until the revolution broke out.

How did the revolution erupt? Or perhaps more significant historically: as there had been earlier slave revolts which had proved unsuccessful, why did the revolution of in 1791 prove definitive? And what was Toussaint’s role in it?

As many within the colonial social hierarchy saw it, the colony, at the time the most profitable in the world (producing 40% and 60% of all European-consumed sugar and coffee respectively), should have been among the last to engineer a revolution, and eventual sovereignty. Indeed, that Saint-Domingue should only be the second independent state in the Americas, and ran entirely by blacks, was “unthinkable as it happened.”(p2) And yet it did happen. It is in explaining this very phenomenon that the authors are at their most lucid; displaying a responsible appraisal of history that takes into account not only the role of the individual, what is nominally called the “great man theory” of history, but also the vast impersonal forces and the ripeness for revolution in the system which made its overthrow possible.

The authors succinctly set the scene onto which Toussaint Louverture seemingly leapt, and for a decade almost single-handedly defined. The colony was composed of a population of 35, 000 whites ruling over 500, 000 blacks, the majority of whom were enslaved. In between these two groups, and almost numerically matching the whites, was the ‘mulatto’ grouping of mixed ethnicity who ranged in their

class make up from the very poor to the very wealthy, some of whom were themselves slaveholders. Nevertheless, inasmuch as they could amass vast sums of wealth, they had strictly limited political rights due to their skin colour. Further, there was division among the whites on account of class, itself an impetus for divisions as to the destiny of the colony. There were the wealthy (merchants and plantation owners) whites, referred to as the grand blancs by the enslaved, the majority of whom foresaw a future for Saint-Domingue along the lines of the US; eventually free of the colonial centre (against whose “meddling” they were increasingly irate), but still maintaining the profitable institution of slavery. (p26) This “meddling”, incidentally, included the occasional introduction of codes against harsh treatment of slaves,

**“Today, in the shadow of Toussaint Louverture, I declare: by overthrowing me, they have cut down the tree of peace, but this tree will grow up again because its roots are Louvertrian.”**

and had early (1762) seen a rebellion by colonists who sought to enslave the free black and ethnically mixed population). There were also the *petit blancs*, who were less wealthy, and who ranged in their occupations from sailors to vagrants.

They situate the subject of the biography not only in his social standing, but also within the global historical context, as explicitly revealed in their subtitle. The late eighteenth century gave the world three of its most ground-breaking revolutions, first in 1776 in the Thirteen Colonies which became the United States, then in 1789 in France and finally in 1791 in Haiti. And yet, despite the intricate linkages among all three, historians have tended only to focus on the first two, to the extent that, as the authors note, when

Robert Roswell Palmer set to writing the two-volume *Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, (Palmer, 1959) only a single page is dedicated to the Haitian Revolution, whereas ten pages are dedicated to the failed Polish uprising of 1794. And yet, in light of the manner in which it took place and the outcomes it sought to produce, the Haitian revolution, conducted and executed by slaves against some of the most powerful states in their era, France, Britain, and Spain, was perhaps the grandest in its scope and ambitions.

When the revolution broke out in the Parisian metropole, the conditions were ripe for a collapse within the structures of the colony itself. Firstly, the authors deduce, the ruling class was “sufficiently at loggerheads with each other”, having spread themselves too thinly in a struggle which proved “beyond their strength”. This was in the form of the class division between the rich master planter class, seeking free trade with other European states such as Britain, against the colonial bureaucratic elite, who were direct representatives of the monarchy and who “governed in the interests of the metropole.”(p 27) By 1789, therefore, the white planters joined the war on the representatives of the crown; thereby splitting white society between supporters of the revolution and counter-revolutionaries, much like France itself. Secondly, the ethnically-mixed population saw the French Revolution as a chance to “stake their claim as ‘men’ and so challenge the rule of white supremacy on the island and at last get politically equal.”(p28) Their cause soon got traction in France, “where a transformation of mass consciousness was now underway, against not only the aristocracy of birth but increasingly also against racism, the ‘aristocracy of the skin’.” This is not to say their cause went unchallenged by the white elite, who resisted early on in late 1790, a year before the break out of the revolution, when the Vincent Ogé, leader of the failed uprising, was publicly executed to set an example and discourage any revolutionary sentiment. This in turn triggered the passing of a law in May of 1791 that gave rights to second-generation free

mulattoes. Thus post-monarchy France asserted itself as the metropole centre still with authority over the island, and in the process also rang home the message to the white plantation owners that France could just as easily abolish slavery and free the enslaved blacks.(p29)

The fighting first broke out in the south of the island, at first between the free mulattoes and the whites, with neither making any moves towards ending slavery; indeed the mulattoes were intent on “replacing the whites as the ruling planter class of Saint-Domingue,” with the result that they failed to win over the potentially decisive slaves in their massive numbers, and this “left them as a group helpless and exposed.”

Thirdly, there was the enslaved population itself “whose miserable existence, being forcibly worked to an early death on the sugar plantations meant they were generally somewhat predisposed to... demanding revolutionary emancipation from their condition at all times.” Indeed the disequilibrium in the society between the enslaved and those who meted out “relentless injustices” against them (16 to 1) had always “looked to far-sighted observers as though it was a sleeping volcano that could erupt into social revolution at any moment.”

Thus all three of these factors played a decisive role in tilting the mode of the colony to revolution. The story of the French Revolution got to Saint-Domingue and “took little time to enter the informal communication circuits of the enslaved themselves,” especially through those working in the domestic contexts who “listened to the tense debates among the master planter class” and in time construed the revolution in a manner relevant to them.(p30) As they saw it: “The white slaves in France had risen, and killed their masters, and were now enjoying the fruits of the earth...they had caught the spirit of the thing. Liberty. Equality. Fraternity.” One irony, at least in the early days (pre-1794 when slavery was abolished), is not lost on the authors: “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen in 1789 did not mention slavery, just as it did not mention women. Indeed, it stated

that property rights were sacred, and the enslaved were after all property.” Regardless, however, the effect was such that the island found itself in the throes of a civil war in the name of liberty.

Toussaint would later recall that he had witnessed these developments “in their wider revolutionary frame,” and “as soon as unrest began in Saint-Domingue, I saw that the whites could not last, because they were divided and heavily outnumbered.” But the authors assert that in fact he was not a revolutionary so early on, having been something of a social climber aspiring to elevation within the Saint-Domingue social structure, and having even been the owner of about 12 slaves himself. Indeed, aged 50 at the time of the outbreak, his original position had been one of moderation, seeking at first better conditions for the slaves such as an extra day of rest,

“As they saw it:  
“The white slaves in  
France had risen, and  
killed their masters,  
and were now  
enjoying the fruits of  
the earth...”

and banning of whippings. But his interlocutors proved unbending even to this, and thus full-scale revolution was the only realistic course.

But as Forsdick and Høgsbjerg make clear, Louverture’s transition from moderate to radical positions mirrors that of the story of the Haitian Revolution itself. What began in 1791 as an attempt by the *petit blancs* to seize Port-au-Prince resulted in civil war within the colony. Louverture himself joined the war as part of medical personnel, his knowledge having been acquired in his years as a veterinarian to the livestock and horses in Bréda, as part of Georges Biassou’s forces. But it was only a matter of time before he was involved in the overall planning and negotiation, especially with the Spanish, who ruled over the neighbouring colony of Santo Domingo (modern-day Dominican Republic)

and who pledged support for the slaves due to their state of enmity with the revolutionary French regime.

His transformation to a fully-fledged revolutionary was made clear in 1793, in a speech to the blacks in the colony. The French, recognising that they could not hope to win without the blacks, decreed the abolition of slavery on the 4th of February in 1794. It had the intended effect, and Louverture declared his alliance with the French and war on his recent ally, Spain as well as the British, who were at war with revolutionary France, and made their landing on the island in September of that same year. He brilliantly used guerrilla tactics against these forces, and at the same time, noting the crucial economic role of coffee and sugar for Saint-Domingue, enforced a return to the plantations for the former slaves, though as paid labourers this time around.

In 1797, to the chagrin of his ally and fellow abolitionist Commissioner of the island Leger Felicite Sonthonax, he authorised the return of his former overseer at the Bréda plantation. This was an indication of his position that the plantation owners should be brought back as they bore skills which would help the economy. This greatly irritated his more radical ally, and sparked a set of events which resulted in Sonthonax’s return to France and near-total consolidation of power for Louverture in most of the territories in just a matter of weeks; though a stubborn patch in the south, ran by his mulatto rival Rigaud, eluded him for some time before he took it as well, making use of his 13,000-strong militia to his opponent’s 8,000.

By 1798 he had already negotiated the return of Port-au-Prince from the British and later struck a treaty with the United States. Having removed personal rivals and neutralised these powerful states, he had effectively executed “the seizure of state power” as the authors deftly put it.(p73) He also, defying the orders of the officially newly-appointed (though through a bloodless coup) First Consul Bonaparte, invaded the Spanish half of the island in order to gain better defensive ground. He was now master of all of Hispaniola. This was officiated in a constitution of his own devising,



published in 1801 according to which he was Governor General for “the rest of his glorious life” (Article 28). (There was, however, a provision in Article 29 that “In the future each governor will be named for five years, and can be continued every five years for reason of good administration.”)

But he came short of declaring independence, which would not take place until New Year’s Day in 1804, after his death, when it was declared by Jean-Jacques Dessalines. The constitution also pre-empted Bonaparte’s aim of returning the island to slavery so as to have an economic engine for his overall goal of reasserting France in Louisiana. As such, Article 3 of the constitution makes clear that: “There can be no slaves on this territory; servitude has been forever abolished. All men are born, live and die there free and French.” Article 4 propounds even further that, “All men can work at all forms of employment, whatever their color.”

Temporary peace with Britain in 1801, however, meant that in 1802 the French gained an opening to send troops to the island, about 20,000 in total. Months of fruitless fighting ensued. On 6 May, the man who had declared himself Governor for Life retired to his plantations. It was here that he was captured and deported to France, where he arrived in early July and was soon transported to the obscure Chateau de Joux, specifically for the purposes of keeping him as far away from the sea as possible as he might escape.(p118) He died just nine months later. The site has since become a site of pilgrimage for Haitians (and the African diaspora at large), who finally declared independence in 1804, doing away with ‘Saint-Domingue’ and instead taking up the name of the island used by the original Taíno who had been wiped out by the Spanish when they originally arrived in the island, led by Christopher Columbus.

Having told his life and works in painstaking, though pithy detail, the authors weigh the historical legacies of the revolution and of Louverture himself. They find his legacy in a myriad of revolutions and revolts which took place in the wake of the Haitian Revolution: Trinidad in 1804, in Cuba

in 1812, in Barbados in 1816, in the various slave rebellions in the American south between 1822 and 1836 and the rash of independence wars all throughout Latin America, and even the United Irishman rebellion in 1798 along with the twentieth century wars of independence, including Ethiopia’s 1935 battle against Mussolini’s invasion as well as the Cuban Revolution and Ho Chi Minh’s resistance against the US in Vietnam.(pp 129-131) As we have seen with Aristide’s echoing of his famous departing speech, his influence runs even into our own century.

These “afterlives” of Toussaint have also meant that he comes under retrospective scrutiny, however. Particularly striking is the drawing of a lineage from him to the likes of Castro and Ho Chi Minh. This has elicited numerous criticisms centred around one issue: the lack of commitment to democracy in the Haitian Revolution, even as an ideal. As David Geggus put it: “Far from being driven by democratic ideals, the revolution that grew out of the slave uprising was authoritarian from beginning to end... it is perfectly clear that the succession of gifted ex-slaves who emerged from the 1791 uprising and later took Saint-Domingue to independence never displayed the slightest regard for democracy. In addressing this honest critique the authors emerge as first-class historians: they begin by admitting the “unapologetically dictatorial” nature of the Revolution and the Haitian republic (as seen in Louverture’s assumption of the Governorship for Life, as well the succession of self-declared emperors and kings and the annexation of Spanish Santo Domingo) which came in its wake, but also explaining it in its historical context. Firstly, Louverture, they recount, had had only at most a single year without warfare to try to govern and build a society from a slave society which had just emerged from revolutionary upheaval. Equally important, the colony and postcolony had had no democratic precedent, with France herself having set no such systems in place, either in Saint-Domingue or in Paris, with only the short-lived National Convention having made some steps towards that.

What is striking about the book

is the extent of its apparent reliance on a single source, CLR James’ *Black Jacobins*. One counted up to 47 pages in which this reference comes up. In a book of 150 pages (excluding notes), that means this single individual covers almost one third of the book. This, however, is perhaps an indicator of the weak and lacklustre archive and a reliance of politically-charged memoirs and eyewitness accounts – always inspiring admiration and contempt in their extremes, some described him as a “bloodthirsty black savage” and still others as “the greatest black man in history.”(p7) It is precisely because of this that, as noted in the book’s introduction, David Bell has recently posed the question: “will there ever be a truly definitive biography of Toussaint Louverture?” This book is as close a contender to that title as any text. The authors sought out to, as they put it, “challenge versions of Louverture that aim to accommodate him to the norms and values of our age” and instead “to reassert the incendiary political implications of his life, actions, and revolutionary political thought.”(p10) Further making the book heads and shoulders above many, and in relation to the ‘overreliance’ on James, is that more than a biography, it is a historiographical work seeking to elevate questions about the very nature of history, and the manner in which it comes about. If readers will read this book for a detailed narrative of the series of events that Louverture shaped and was in turn shaped by – something which could be easily obtained by going to any other book on his life – they will soon find that they leave the text having also derived incisive and self-aware commentary on the nature of history as a field of practice (and instrumentalisation), as well as the forces which shape it; from the role of the individual (especially one whose outlooks are as evolving as Louverture’s), to the interaction of forces that result in certain outcomes.

This is on brilliant display not only in their attention to detail on the events of the years between 1791 and 1804 and what took place in their wake, but also their equally surgical eye as to what has been said about them. ■

## BOOSTING THE USE OF NATIONAL CURRENCIES AMONG BRICS

# Introducing the ‘R5 initiative’



The use of national currencies among developing countries is acquiring increasing importance as the developing economies are building their own development banks and integration platforms against the backdrop of rising protectionist pressures in the developed world.

By Yaroslav Lissovolik

The use of national currencies among developing countries is acquiring increasing importance as the developing economies are building their own development banks and integration platforms against the backdrop of rising protectionist pressures in the developed world. Indeed, the creation of these new integration platforms may notably facilitate the increasing use of national currencies – one of the potential test cases is the emergence of BRICS+ – a platform that potentially could bring together the largest integration block of the developing world.

Within such a BRICS+ there may be a case for what may be termed as the

‘R5 initiative’ that targets the use of the respective national currencies of BRICS countries – Rouble (Russia), Rand (South Africa), Real (Brazil), Rupee (India) and Renminbi (China) – within the BRICS+ circle and more broadly in the world economy. The elements of such a strategy may include measures to boost trade and investment among BRICS+ (cooperation between the respective RTAs to create more scope for the use of national currencies), cooperation between development institutions in using national currencies to fund investments and long-term projects, cooperation in promoting BRICS+ currencies towards reserve currency status. Importantly, the R5

initiative (or alternatively the R5+ initiative to denote the national currencies of all BRICS+ members) needs to target greater use of all currencies in the BRICS+ circle, in order to render the R5+ network open and inclusive.

The launching of the R5+ initiative would allow the BRICS+ countries to ‘monetise’ the increasing intensity of mutual economic cooperation through the use of national currencies and a substantial reduction in transactions/conversion costs associated with the use of other currencies such as the dollar or the euro in mutual transactions. Furthermore, the BRICS+ format appears to be particularly

suitable for the implementation of the R5+ initiative. Firstly, the inclusion of the regional circle of partners facilitates the propagation of such an initiative and renders it more sustainable in time due to the relatively greater intensity of trade and investment across the respective regional integration arrangements. Also, the synergy from bringing together the cooperation between the regional development banks and the respective RFAs (regional financing arrangements) that form part of the BRICS+ framework creates additional instruments and possibilities to sustain the drive towards the use of national currencies in the regional as well as cross-regional domains.

The following five common platforms among BRICS could facilitate a more intensified use of BRICS national currencies:

- A platform for national and regional development banks of BRICS economies, with options of co-financing projects in national currencies. The group of regional development banks would comprise among others such institutions as the Eurasian Development Bank, FOCEM and SDF. The operation of such a platform would also benefit from the participation of Chinese development banks and funds. The regional development banks could be allocated additional capital denominated in national currencies in order to finance long-term development projects. The New Development Bank could play a coordinating role in the operation of such a platform of regional development banks.
- A common platform for sovereign wealth funds of BRICS economies – currently the only BRICS member without a sovereign wealth fund is South Africa (even though in terms of macroeconomic policy considerations such a Fund may be expedient given the significant dependency of the country's economy on the commodity sector).
- A common platform for the national currency and stock exchanges – this would serve to facilitate greater liquidity and volume in trading the respective currency pairs as well as the development of hedging and

other financial instruments.

- A common payment system platform, which would cover the BRICS economies as well as their regional partners through payment systems in national currencies. One of the recent initiatives in this area focuses on the creation of a common payment card system for BRICS and their regional partners. A common payment card system would complement (not replace) the existing national payment card systems of BRICS+ countries and create the conditions for increasing the national market shares in servicing financial transactions in the domestic markets (Preksin and Kazartsev, 2016).

**“In the Eurasian Economic Union, for example, the use of the Russian rouble in cross-country transactions has increased to 75% in 2016 compared to 56% in 2010 at the expense of the US dollar, whose share declined from 35% in 2010 to 19% in 2016.”**

- A platform for regional financing arrangements (RFAs), with options of financing stabilisation programmes and investment projects in national currencies. The corresponding RFAs with BRICS participation include the Eurasian Fund for Stabilisation and Development (EFSD), BRICS Contingency Reserve Arrangement (BRICS CRA), CMIM – Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation. Among these RFAs a critical element in the BRICS cooperation in the sphere of financial and macroeconomic stability is the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement that became operational in 2015. In line with Article 2 of the BRICS CRA Treaty the initial committed

resources of the CRA stand at USD 100 billion, with individual commitments ranging from USD 41 bn for China to USD 5 bn for South Africa.

There may be several trajectories of BRICS+ cooperation in the financial sphere where the involvement of the relevant RFAs could prove instrumental. One such area is mutual policy coordination with respect to international financial organisations such as the IMF – in fact such coordination appears to be already taking place. In October 2016 a high-level dialogue on the role of regional financing arrangements (RFAs) in the Global Financial Safety Net (GFSN) took place in Washington DC with the participation of the representatives of the IMF as well as representatives of AMRO (the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic research office), the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (represented by the Reserve Bank of India), the Eurasian Fund for Stabilisation and Development, the Latin American Reserve Fund (FLAR), the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), as well as the Arab Monetary Fund.

The potential for increasing the use of national currencies in the BRICS and their regional partners is significant, given the high levels of dollarisation in many BRICS+ countries. In the Eurasian Economic Union, for example, the use of the Russian rouble in cross-country transactions has increased to 75% in 2016 compared to 56% in 2010 at the expense of the US dollar, whose share declined from 35% in 2010 to 19% in 2016.

Going forward, the BRICS countries will need to explore innovative approaches to addressing the issue of expanding the use of national currencies. Potential venues in this respect could include the creation of an SDR-type currency basket of BRICS+ countries (the R5+ currency basket), which would include the most liquid currencies in the BRICS+ universe. This basket of currencies could then be potentially used in the operations undertaken by the regional financing arrangements (RFAs) as well as the regional development banks, where BRICS+ countries are members. ■



# Epistemology, the Misappropriation of History and the Construction of 'the Human'



By M Tlhabane Motaung

Perhaps in the future, there will be some African History to teach. But at present there is none: there is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness. Hugh Trevor-Roper, 1963

During classical antiquity a diffuse sense of European subjectivity that threw into relief the non-European “Other” religiously, culturally and geographically seems to have sputtered into life in a way that prefigured subsequent historical periods of racialised self-consciousness. Yet there is no cogent, discernible and intelligible historical pattern that clearly proves the existence of the racial “other” in the Greek or Roman psyche as it would be the global experience during the Age of Enlightenment from the 18th century onwards. If anything, as Frank Snowden shows in ‘Blacks in Antiquity’, ‘Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience’, ‘Before Colour Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks’, as well as other scholars on the subject, the Greco-Roman world esteemed black Africans qua black Africans. While classical antiquity provided the elements constitutive of an inchoate form of European self-reflexivity, it did not subjectively mutate into constitutive normativity nor morph into ways that led to the emergence of the current European universalism.

On balance, evidence leads to the conclusion that at some point in human history racism did not exist as we know it today. Discrimination of one type or the other may be as old as humanity itself, but historically, there is no proof of systemic theorisation of the hierarchy of races per se. Here and there one comes across comments about race from notable ancient figures but none of them came anywhere near full blown theories of racial superiority. Most of the discrimination that took place in Greece and Rome seemed to have been spurred on by perceptions of inferior culture and different religion rather than by race. This lack of racial consciousness is attested to by Du Bois’ observation that ‘the Mediterranean area had no colour bar and no name for race, and where, at least in theory, the world was a fight between civilisation and barbarism’.<sup>1</sup>

None of the outsiders who adopted

the customs and cultural manners of ancient Greeks and Romans seemed to have been singled out for racial discrimination the same way Europe would do in subsequent periods. This would explain the absence of systemic racial theorisation. Be that as it may, flashes of evidence of stereotypes of skin colour do surface here and there. For instance, the Greeks and the Romans occasionally showed low regard for the fair-skinned Northern Europeans and dark-skinned northern Africans, rather regarding themselves, with a measure of narcissism, as having the best of both worlds by dint of their mild climatic conditions. Aristotle is said to have remarked that ‘(T)he races that live in cold regions and those of

“In writing the history of a large part of Africa, the only sources used were from outside the continent, and the final product gave a picture not so much of the paths actually taken by the African people as of those that the authors thought they must have taken.”

Europe are full of courage and passion but somewhat lacking in skill and brainpower: for this reason, while remaining generally independent, they lack political cohesion and the ability to rule others’.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, both the Greeks and Romans seemed to have frowned upon fair-haired (blond) northerners whom they generally regarded as less intelligent.

Inversely, the Age of Enlightenment saw the sprouting, heightening and the consolidation of geo-political self-consciousness of the European ‘Self’ in comparison to which the cultural (and thus human) debasement of the external “Other” became, for the first time in history, a matter of course.

As Ian Morrison puts it in *Why the West Rules, for Now*, ‘In the eighteenth century British entrepreneurs unleashed the energies of steam and coal. Factories, railroads, and gunboats gave nineteenth-century Europe and America the ability to project power globally; airplanes, computers, and nuclear weapons allowed their twentieth-century successors to cement this dominance’.<sup>3</sup> It is true that ideas are rooted in the material conditions of societies and do not just emerge out of nowhere to float in the air. Race/economy nexus formed the historical framework that not only influenced the character of global affairs but became, to borrow from Antonio Gramsci, ‘an incubational moment’ for the unassailable European racial dominance.

The representation of the “Other” not only as antithetical to everything European but decidedly inferior congealed into historical consciousness through European discourse on the outsider, alterity. In this connection the trans-historical image of Africa became one that is ‘brutish, ignorant, idle, crafty, treacherous, bloody, thievish, mistrustful, and superstitious’.<sup>4</sup> While ‘The Age of Enlightenment’ heralded a new dawn in the historical process, it also threw up global duality in both geographic and human consciousness that distorted the proposition of being human.

As a historical period, The Enlightenment bore witness to the birth of a monistic view, European Universalist ontology and a solipsistic framework that inspired the germination of Europe’s totalising tendencies according to which Europe historicised its subjective forms of consciousness. What is European represented the human in terms of which everybody else was to be judged, defined and benchmarked. In his inimitable way Mudimbe says, ‘...since the fifteenth century, the idea of Africa has mingled together new scientific and ideological interpretations with the semantic fields of concepts such as “primitivism” and “savagery”’.<sup>5</sup> From this viewpoint, Africa is an existential vacuity, an interminable blackness without historical shape, form or content and hence ‘a beast of burden’.

In this context 'the European modernity grasps the real in contra-distinction to the ephemeral non-reality of non-European existence'.<sup>6</sup>

Human experience waxes meaningful only on European terms insofar as the latter is ineluctably constructed as the human ideal. For the rest, to exist in substance denotes 'a singular humanity or the singularisation of human diversity by being forced on a singular track of historical "progress" grounded on an emulation of European historicity'.<sup>7</sup> In many cases such historical anomalies thrived on the tailcoats of rank hypocrisy and double standards. Although the Iliad and the Odyssey were rightly regarded as essential sources of the history of Greece, African oral traditions, the collective memory of peoples that holds the thread of many events marking their lives, was rejected as worthless. In writing the history of a large part of Africa, the only sources used were from outside the continent, and the final product gave a picture not so much of the paths actually taken by the African people as of those that the authors thought they must have taken. Since the European Middle Ages were often used as yardstick, modes of production, social relations and political institutions were visualised only by reference to the European past'.<sup>8</sup>

Such extraneous cultural homogenisation that denies pre-existing African historicity amounts to what Homi K Babha called 'an ontological obliteration of the "Other"' to the extent that alterity is hollowed out of its innate, historical self-identity and defining self-consciousness that constitutes the warp and woof of its existence.<sup>9</sup> This divestment of the proprietorship of "Self", the ability to reflect on oneself as an independent consciousness, re-constructs the "Other" in the order of brutes. Chinua Achebe takes up this theme with lucidity in his *An Image of Africa*. In deconstructing the racism of Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*, Achebe objects to the main theme of this classic novel because 'The Heart of Darkness projects the image of Africa as "the other world", the antithesis of Europe and therefore civilisation, a place where man's (sic) vaunted

intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality'.<sup>10</sup>

As a leitmotif of global history of domination, the beastly theme haunts the historical record as the metaphorical delineation of the non-European and in particular, the African. Ubiquitous association of the African with baboonery as seen in popular culture invokes this deeply etched imagery.

The truth is that in proportion as its historical self-consciousness coagulated, Europe began to define its subjectivity in contra-distinction to the "Other". It needed the "Other" '... because the Enlightenment in its own search for the new European identity of the "individual self" also needed the "Other" as a counterpoint. The Enlightenment was more than just the dawn of European modernity. Without

**“Without this “Other”, the contrastive inferior opposite, it could not justify and legitimate its plunder and colonisation of the resources of the regions it sought to rule and control.”**

this "Other", the contrastive inferior opposite, it could not justify and legitimate its plunder and colonisation of the resources of the regions it sought to rule and control'.<sup>11</sup> Thus, at an ideological level, anthropology and the existing literature provided 'scientific' rationale while the pillaging of the world continued apace.

In its conception of the order of being, Europe would also, according to Edward Said, distinguish itself from the Orient. To put it inversely, 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'.<sup>12</sup> It is hardly ever possible to comprehend the projection of European self-consciousness to the outside world without understanding how European subjectivity has deliberately used

"Othering" for internal cohesion which, in turn, helped it indulge in external depredations, motivated by the allure of power and economic gain. This reality moved Said to state that 'My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period'.<sup>13</sup>

Well-entrenched and unchallenged, the narrativity of the primal historical essence of the Western self-consciousness as the human ideal (in the context of the scientific, intellectual and moral achievements) thus at once implicitly and explicitly calls into question the ontology of the African as human. Normative history is but the self-idolisation of the West as the ultimate model of intellectual prowess, and hence human archetype. Skin colour has over time come to encode racial value, with biological Africanity connotative of innately degraded being. At the level of discourse, none other than the philosophers of Enlightenment delighted in exalting the European character even as they openly questioned the intelligence of alterity.

In his *Spirit of the Laws*, Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brede et Montesquieu makes no bones about his attitude to alterity. He thinks 'It is impossible for us to suppose that these beings should be men; because if we suppose them to be men, one would begin to believe we ourselves are not Christians'.<sup>14</sup>

Voltaire submits that 'If their (i.e. Negroes') understanding is not of a different nature from ours, it is at least greatly inferior. They are not capable of any great application or association of ideas, and seemed formed neither for the advantage nor the abuses of philosophy'.<sup>15</sup> Not to be outdone, David Hume tossed in his penny's worth, stating that:

'I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men, (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the



whites. There never was a civilised nation of any other complexion than white, not even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers among them, no arts, no sciences... In Jamaica indeed they talk of one negro as a man of learning; but 'tis likely admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly'.<sup>16</sup>

As one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson's racial views represented the spirit of the age as well as the scope of the American racist psyche not only in owning slaves but also in legitimising the racial subjugation of black Africans. In his 'Notes on Virginia', the very first colonial state to espouse the racial subjugation of Africans in 1619, Jefferson muses that:

'Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me, that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior...and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous... Never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never see even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture'.<sup>17</sup>

How did this come about? The West's misappropriation of the (African) subaltern's history, which amounts to fabricated claims of Western epistemic provenance of modern thought, constituted the enabling pre-condition upon which the human essence of the vanquished was assaulted, devalued and neutered. Thus deconstructed and de-historied through the standard historical canon, the African subject was cast into an explanatory framework which both legitimised and delineated his/her prostrate historical condition as a rescue from existential vacuity.

Within the framework of the European mercantilist capitalism, the Enlightenment did not only see the scientific and commercial advancement of Europe but also, insidiously, the theorisation, thereby canonisation of the notion of race and culture that amounted to the assault on the human essence of the non-European. This is the time that saw 'exceptionalism in European thought about the non-

West', and a conception of the world largely based on self-identification – an identification of the other people',<sup>18</sup> Biakolo illustrates this observation.

Racialised discourse that de-essentialises alterity assumes a pronounced, coherent and permanent expression with the global ascendancy of Europe during this age of exploration and discovery. Mudimbe reminds us that '...the great era of exploration took place between 1485 and 1541. Information and description about the newly discovered "savages" found their way into the European consciousness, which strives to assert its cogito toward what "it" defines as radically different'.<sup>19</sup> A groundswell of ideas that issued forth during this point in history pivoted on the centrality of the European rational mind and the infantilised if not brutish image of the outsider.

**“It is impossible for us to suppose that these beings should be men; because if we suppose them to be men, one would begin to believe we ourselves are not Christians.”**

All current opinion agreed that there had been no philosophical and scientific contribution to the march of human progress outside Europe. Europeans began to question the provenance of every African cultural production. In this they would plumb the depth of ridicule without batting an eyelid. 'Since Africans could produce nothing of value; the technique of Yoruba statuary must have come from Egyptians; Benin art must be a Portuguese creation; the architectural achievements of Zimbabwe was due to Arab technicians; and Hausa and Buganda statecraft were inventions of white invaders'.<sup>20</sup> Mills speaks of 'Enlightenment dichotomisation of the normative theories of the period'.<sup>21</sup> White supremacy thus comes into being as a systemic force under the

putative scientific veneer within this period. Many of the admirable European figures that gave humanity some of the most sublime theories about human experience were not immune to the racist virus of their era, to whose intellectual climate, on the contrary, they contributed and thus lent a semblance of legitimacy. Thanks to philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel, David Hume, Montesquieu, and Voltaire, classical philosophy bristles with explicit justifications for the diminution of the human essence of the non-European "Other", on account of which Europe has assumed historical primacy.

As Davidson reminds us, the Atlantic Slave Trade, among the most horrible crimes against the idea of being human, was justified by notions that sought to diminish the personhood of the African. In terms of this specious but potent locution, Africans were 'savages living in primeval darkness'. Such racial conceptions, while belonging to a particular historical period, would not evaporate with the end of the period. One can usefully see the construction of otherness as a continuum with each succeeding generation taking from and building on the previous one within the unchanging racial framework of the thematic core that fragments the concept of humanity along hierarchical lines. The economic and political manifestation of the social base of the systematised racism culminated in the formal process of the colonisation of the African continent in 1830. That year, 1830, Davidson tells us, saw the elaboration of racism into a philosophic system. This newly formalised intellectual justification of racism took racism to another level from where racial slavery had left off. In this milieu, 'the natural and inherent superiority of white people over black people...began to take shape as an intellectual and allegedly scientific discourse, initially in the work of the German philosopher Georg Hegel'.<sup>22</sup> Many other classical philosophers were to follow, including Hobbes. Both the content and form of this systematised racism held up the virtues of colonisation as an answer to blacks' inherent incapability for development.

In keeping with this discourse, and

at all levels of social existence, religion, politics, education etc., Africans were constructed as 'grown-up children'. While dispossessing Africans of their land, resources and freedom, its mythic discourse, as part of the colonial racial superstructure, employed pseudo-science to argue that Africans 'might be normal when children, but regressed ever backwards once they reached adulthood'.<sup>23</sup>

At the epistemological level, even natural science, the most supposedly objective of all sciences proceeding as it does on evidence, failed to live up to its reputation.

As a result, science posited all manner of explanations to account for 'the backwardness' of Africans that warranted European intervention. It was all put down to 'fatal deficiency' of Africans' nature. Contending theories had a field day. Some argued for the small size of the African brain that made it impossible for them to build high cultures; others attributed this to 'the diminished frontal lobes'. Out of this 'scientific' climate arose the theory that sought to classify humanity into three categories. Dean Farrar thus proposed that humanity were divided into 'the savage races', 'the Semi-civilised races' and finally, 'the two Civilised Races'.<sup>24</sup>

Among the most representative racial citations about Africans inspired by this climate was the argument that: 'in the negro, we are in the presence of a being differing profoundly not merely from the white man but also from (other) human types'; or that negro... has contributed virtually nothing to the civilisation of the world'.<sup>25</sup> And so 'another phenomenon that did great disservice to the objective study of the African past was the appearance, with the slave trade and colonisation, of racial stereotypes that bred contempt and lack of understanding and become so deep-rooted that they distorted even the basic concepts of historiography'.<sup>26</sup> Implicitly or otherwise, more than two hundred years after, these ideas still persist albeit in a modified form. One only has to study the social media discourse of different countries to grasp this immutable current of thought about the benighted blacks.

From the scientific viewpoint ethnography, as shown by the London

Ethnographic Society, is among the most culpable in conniving to cut down the humanity of others, especially Africans. One of their own confessed that 'it did not occur to us, to try to relate tribal traditions to a possible actual sequence of historic events in any areas in which we worked'.<sup>27</sup>

### The Restoration of the Integrity of the Historical Record

If both the mutual appreciation of our indivisible humanity is to be rekindled and the integrity of the historical record restored at least three things must happen. The first revolves around the fairer global economic system that takes into account the

**“Many who harbour such execrable views about Africa have been disposed to such insidiously specious thought systems through the agency of formal education. Therefore, we owe it to history, to the African young, the world and indeed, posterity to set this gigantic historical lie to rights.”**

racial genesis of current disproportional power relations. The second would be the extirpation of current thought-systems that valorise the human worth of some while denigrating that of others. In this exercise humanity would need to be re-constructed in a manner that strives for new forms of human consciousness. A new humanity must come into being in the place of the current order of being that grades human worth. Thirdly, and most critically, the restoration of the integrity of the historical record has to be undertaken as a moral and epistemic imperative.

For centuries now, black Africa has

been subjected to the most horrendous forms of racial discrimination justified on the grounds of cultural inferiority. In this regard the West has denied Africa's contribution to the march of progress, mainly through delinking Kemetic (ancient Egypt) and Nubian cultures (part of modern day Sudan) from the rest of the African continent. In light of this historical injustice to the African continent, and more crucially, given the unrelenting evidence that keeps pouring forth linking the genesis of ancient north eastern African high cultures with black Africa, has the time not arrived for South African, African and indeed world education systems to teach Nilotic Pharaohnocracy as black African civilisation?

Mounting evidence placing Kemet within its African biological, cultural and historical context has made it increasingly difficult for a decent (scholarly) mind to dismiss this historical reality. Yet this epochal turn of events in the study of African history has little value if it remains locked up in Ivory Tower scholarship. The truth is serious damage to the contribution of Africans to world history has been done in mainstream global society, manifested in chronically debased image of black Africa in the daily banality of social existence. The South African social scene is suffused with racism of all kinds on a daily basis, as is the global scene, from the lowest rungs of society to the very highest. Many other social commentators give vent to racist puffery about Africans and civilisation as a matter of course. Cyberspace in South Africa has turned into a hotbed of racism.

If, as events have shown, African history has been distorted over time in accordance with the dominant socio-political and economic paradigms of Europeans is it not only fair that the correct human story be told? Anta Cheik Diop put it well in saying "the African historian who evades the problem of Egypt is neither modest or objective, nor unruffled, he is ignorant, cowardly, and neurotic."<sup>28</sup>

Where does Europe draw its inspiration today? Does not the glory of ancient Greece form the basis of the so-called Western civilisation? Is the Western cultural arrogance not seeking

to downplay all other cultures in history? The racial grandstanding of modern day racists testifies to the dominant narratives and historical assumptions about the cultural inferiority of Africans. Many who harbour such execrable views about Africa have been disposed to such insidiously specious thought systems through the agency of formal education. Therefore, we owe it to history, to the African young, the world and indeed, posterity to set this gigantic historical lie to rights.

As such one does not need to be an Afrocentric to agree with the underlying value of Professor Molefi Kente Asante's key points in his submission that:

'Afrocentricity seeks to discover African agency in every situation. Who are we? What did we do? Where did we travel? What is our role in geometry? How do we as a people function in this or that contemporary situation? But the Afrocentric does not advance African particularity as universal. This is its essential difference from Eurocentricity which is advanced in the United States and other places as if the particular experiences of Europeans as universal. This imposition is ethnocentric and often racist. Afrocentricity advances the view that it is possible for a pluralism of cultures to exist without hierarchy but this demands cultural equality and respect.'<sup>29</sup>

With the South African nation evolving into new forms of consciousness of nationhood defined by a non-racial ethos following the defeat of Apartheid, South Africa would do well to pay particular attention to the school curriculum, the body of knowledge it imparts to learners. In doing this more attention has to be paid to history, an area that has over the years suffered most devastating forms of distortions that served to undermine the historical self-image of black Africans. Throughout the era of Apartheid history was a loyal servant of the ideological master. If the white section of South Africa was to exercise dominion over Africans, the most important underpinning these social relations would have to be the belittling of the cultural standing of the latter, who was invariably depicted as little more than a beast of burden. Consequently,

modern generations look at the current level of cultural progress in the world as the sole outcome of European genius. On the other hand, Africa is not seen to have any deep historical referents to high culture. Post-colonial floundering that has seen Africa sink deep into backwaters in the context of neo-colonialism has served to buttress the view that Africans are innately incapable of civilisation.

If the dyed-in-the-wool racism that has moulded the South Africa historical self-consciousness is to be liquidated, that Herculean effort will have to be preceded by a concerted struggle in the domain of ideas. Chief among such efforts is the struggle to correct

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historical distortions that have robbed Africans of their history. Nowhere is such an ideal platform appropriate than in the domain of school education. It is at the level of school education that learners' conception of world history is malformed. It follows then that the damage, including the psychological damage to both African and non-African learners, is first done at this level.

Over the years humanity has learnt about the wonders of Classical Greece and the Roman Empire, societies whose ingenious cultural contribution are said to be foundational to Western

culture and thus, civilisation as we know it today. The West is represented as the centre of human consciousness. It is from the West that reason first stirred into existence. The West gave the world abstract, speculative thought in the form of philosophy. Currently dominant knowledge systems largely derive from Europe.

Glaringly missing in this grand human story is the contribution of the African continent. As a result, world history as conventionally understood excludes the contribution of the African people as if they were never there in history. We know of the first and second Axial Ages when great thinkers from Europe and Asia emerged to transform human conception about existence in ways that still shape our lives today. For all we know their philosophic reflections about the ontological and teleological basis of human existence equipped humanity with thought and conception, enabling future generations to transfigure human life, ushering in high level of existence both in the material and metaphysical domains. Entrenched in human heritage are the ideas of Jesus Christ, the prophet Mohammed, Buddha, Hari Krishna and Confucius. Interestingly, in the modern world where the salience of race thrusts itself onto human consciousness, the mention of the ideas associated with any of the above Axial thinkers conjures up geographically defined racial groups. On the other hand, there is nothing in the realm of ideas that Africans are known to have offered to humankind, or so we are told. Yet, on closer scrutiny, the Egyptian, by extension African impact in shaping world thought-systems is dazzling in both in its scope and impact.

Whether there has been a conscious effort to dismiss African history or just plain naivety and ignorance, what is clear is that education, the primary means of intellectual socialisation of humanity, has, over centuries now, credited Europeans, through the Greeks and later Romans, with all the amazing cultural achievement of humanity from antiquity. Unequally, westerners have projected a degraded view of the African continent that is a dark, veritably savage landmass, too blighted by racial



deficiencies to make any mark on human history. So deep are the racial prejudices towards Africa that in South Africa it is not rare to hear statements such as ‘blacks are running the country down’! It is often said that many people of African descent in Brazil actually hide or deny their African ancestry in what is commonly known as melanophobia (fear of black heredity).

Centuries of systematic depiction of Africa as a barbarous land has conditioned a large section of humanity into thinking that despite its geographic location in Africa, Egypt is not and cannot be, biologically and culturally, African. What scholars call ‘presentism’, the tendency to look at history through present lens, as if things have always been as they are now, makes it impossible to conceive of the loveliness of ancient Egyptian culture as the product of current, backward African humanity. The Arabisation of North Africa following the rise of Islam in 7th century AD has not helped matters either. Even the most well-meaning Europeans hold on to the myth that Egypt is historically Mediterranean. A widespread belief holding sway, which is almost at a commonsensical level, is that there is black Sub-Saharan Africa and a white North Africa...what G W Hegel dubbed ‘Africa proper’.

As a result, many across the world have over time developed a particular view of Africa and Africans. When European soccer spectators throw banana peels at players of African origins, this is but a metaphorical expression of this historical perspective about Africa. Many prominent western thinkers, among them G W Hegel and David Hume, have had quite nasty things to say about Africans. Such has been the pernicious spread of distorted African history through the bloodstream of global society that such deformities are no longer confined to Europeans only. It would seem that over time the image of Africa has throughout the world congealed into sameness: a culturally inferior people with no notable contribution to human culture.

Over the years dedicated African and Afro-American scholars have, with meagre resources and within a hostile academic environment, persistently searched for the truth, clearly proving

the African historico-cultural context of the emergence of Egyptian civilisation.

More worrisome is the fact that Europeans as the drivers of modernity and the dominant global social group can come up with all manner of historical distortions and get away with it. For instance, throughout the history of cinematography ancient Egypt is unashamedly depicted as Caucasian, with the face of Elizabeth Taylor self-assuredly representing Queen Cleopatra (who, through forensic facial reconstruction, has recently been shown to be of mixed racial heritage)!

Visiting Egypt in 1787, the French Nobleman, Count Constantine de Volney, was shocked to discover that

**“Attestations about ancient Egypt being a black African culture and more problematically for modern day European academic canon, Greek culture as a derivation of Egyptian culture. For instance ‘Zeus made a journey to the shores of the Ocean to feast among the blameless Ethiopians (for 12 days)”**

the Egyptians were not white as he had been led to believe. He gives a description of the Egyptians he saw then which contrasts radically with the version of white Egyptians he had learnt about in Europe. This is what Volney had to say on seeing Egyptians:

“All the Egyptians have a bloated face, puffed-up eyes, flat nose, thick lips – in a word, the true face of the mulatto. I was tempted to attribute it to the climate, but when I visited the Sphinx, its appearance gave me the key to the riddle. On seeing that head, typically Negro in all its features, I remembered the remarkable

passage where Herodotus says: ‘As for me, I judge the Colchians to be a colony of the Egyptians because, like them, they are black with woolly hair...’ “In other words, the ancient Egyptians were true Negroes of the same type as all native-born Africans. That being so, we can see how their blood, mixed for several centuries with that of the Greeks and Romans, must have lost the intensity of its original colour, while retaining nonetheless the imprint of its original mould.”

Volney concludes with imperishable epiphany, that: “Just think,” de Volney said, “that this race of Black men, today our slave and the object of our scorn, is the very race to which we owe our arts, sciences, and even the use of speech! Just imagine, finally, that it is in the midst of people (ie, Americans) who call themselves the greatest friends of liberty and humanity that one has approved the most barbarous slavery, and questioned whether Black men have the same kind of intelligence as whites!”<sup>30</sup>

In line with the mounting evidence pointing to the African origins of civilisation even the conservative mainstream Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt admits that ancient Egypt is the derivation of the African cultural sub-stratum. It goes on to say that:

“The evidence also points to linkages to other northeast African peoples, not coincidentally approximating the modern range of languages closely related to Egyptian in the Afro-Asiatic group (formerly called Hamito-Semitic). These linguistic similarities place ancient Egyptian in a close relationship with languages spoken today as far west as Chad, and as far south as Somalia. Archaeological evidence also strongly supports an African origin. A widespread north eastern African cultural assemblage, including distinctive multiple barbed harpoons and pottery decorated with dotted wavy line patterns...’

It goes on to say that ‘Saharan and Sudanese rock art from this time resembles early Egyptian iconography. Strong connections between Nubian (Sudanese) and Egyptian material culture continue in later Neolithic Badarian culture of Upper Egypt.

'Other ancient Egyptian practices show strong similarities to modern African cultures including divine kingship, the use of headrests, body art, circumcision, and male coming-of-age rituals, all suggesting an African substratum or foundation for Egyptian civilization...'<sup>31</sup>

Also included is this catalogue of cultural similarities is the use of the head-rest (wooden usually) found in African societies as far as Cameroon and Chad. It was used then and now to keep elaborate African coiffure from crumpling during sleep.

To their credit, many Greek and Roman scholars who lived during or a little after the era of Egyptian domination over the known world left us personal records about the biological Africanness of Egyptian society. Attestations abound about ancient Egypt being a black African culture and more problematically for modern day European academic canon, Greek culture as a derivation of Egyptian culture. For instance 'Zeus made a journey to the shores of the Ocean to feast among the blameless Ethiopians (for 12 days)'<sup>32</sup>. Many Greek thinkers of antiquity who attested to the black African origins of ancient Egypt include Homer, Herodotus, Iamblicus, Aetius, Diodorus Siculus, Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch, and Plato. Some of the Greek students who learnt from African Egypt according to the ancient records were Plato, Solon, Lycurgus, Democritus, Anaxamander, Anaxagoras, Herodotus, Homer, Thales, Pythagoras, Eudoxus, and Isocrates and many others. Some of them wrote about their experience in Egypt. Among the greatest of Greek thinkers, Aristotle himself, is reported to have said: "Those who are too black, are cowards like for instance the Egyptians and the Ethiopians".<sup>33</sup>

Surprisingly, more evidence keeps issuing which links the biological origins of ancient Egypt to the heart of Africa.

Among the many ridiculed claims made by Afro-Americans is that Cleopatra, the last Pharaoh and the descendant of Ptolemy, the Macedonian general who ruled Egypt after Alexandra the Great the last Egyptian Pharaoh renowned for her beauty, was part African. This conclusion resulted from the finding of her sister Princess Arsinoe's remains in

Ephesus in Turkey, by the BBC team. This was a sensational development given that Elizabeth Taylor's European Cleopatra persists in the public imagination. Once again the question that crops up is why Europeans continue to assume that ancient Egypt was white without so much as a shred of evidence. While it is true that at some point ancient Egypt was a multi-racial society, almost like the United States of America today, and that any racial types who so merited it could rise to the highest social reaches, the founding ethnic type was black Africa, as the overwhelming evidence suggests.

Even more intriguing was the recent article entitled the 'The Case of the Missing Pharaoh', in which John Anthony West argues that the Sphinx does resemble a black African. The analytic technique he and his team employed are like the methods used by orthodontists and surgeons to study facial disfigurement. Once again it is proving extremely untenable to deny the African element of this fascinating society.

It is thus neither Afrocentric nor plumbing for feel-good-history to seek to restore the African agency to the centre of universal consciousness consistent with its true historical credentials. It took the scientific world years of ponderous effort to admit to the African origins of humanity despite the thundering facts, simply because it was inconceivable that Europeans could have originated in Africa. Racial ideology continues to supplant dispassionate scholarly detachment when matters of knowledge origination incline towards the African continent.

South Africa, Africa and indeed the world have to come to terms with human history as it happened over time, and not according to the dictates of the powerful. Teaching the ancient Egypt as African culture and the basis of human civilisation is no wishful thinking but factual. Including the African origins of Egyptian civilisation in education curriculum in South Africa would go a long way towards depriving racism of its enlivening oxygen. We may not do much to wean many who harbour racial attitudes towards Africans off this deplorable system of thought but we can create

a non-racist human personality in the coming generations by putting Africa on the pedestal in terms of objective scholarship. We owe it to the historical fight against the monster of racism to do that.

It is edifying to conclude with this moving citation from the book 'The Black Genesis', which reminds humanity that:

'For many centuries the Black race of the world has either been exploited by its white counterpart or looked upon as inferior. Although many in the Western world have advanced a great deal in curbing such an attitude the truth is racial prejudice is still very much rampant in other parts of the world, and it lingers in uneducated or dark hearts in Europe or the New World. Black Genesis thus becomes not only a scientific thesis but also a testament of respect and admiration of all whose skin happens to be black and who have a direct ancestral link to black Africa!'<sup>34</sup> ■

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**CELEBRATING ADWA GREAT AFRICAN VICTORY**

# Founding Africa's World Historical Struggle Heritage



Decorated war veterans attend the 119th Anniversary of the Ethiopian Army's victory over Italian forces in the 1896 battle of Adwa

By Mammo Muchie

**I**nspiration

"After Adowa, Ethiopia became emblematic of African valour and resistance, the bastion of prestige and hope to thousands of Africans who were experiencing the full shock of European conquest, and were beginning to search for an answer to the myth of African inferiority ... To articulate West African nationalist intelligentsia of lawyers,

merchants, journalists, doctors and clergymen who had since the turn of the century persistently sought to share political power with the colonial ruler, the role of Ethiopia or Ethiopianism in nationalist thought and politics was great and inspiring ... In separate African churches, Africans did and could protest imperial rule and build articulate leadership to oppose the

domineering and discriminating actions of the colonial officials." (Taken from SKB Asante, in his study of Ethiopianism in West Africa.)

"Ethiopia has need of no one. She stretches out her hands to God." (Emperor Menelik, February, 1897).

"There was never a time when united that Ethiopians lost to an enemy; it is non-existent in history." (Emperor



Menilek II, 1909)

*"I am a woman. I do not like war. But I would rather die than accept your deal."* Etige Taitu Bitul, Wife of Menelik II

*"The focus on modern Ethiopia by people of African descent started during the age of segregation and colonialism. In an Africa partitioned by European powers at the Congress of Berlin, where no African representatives were present, independent Ethiopia represented a kingdom and a beacon for idealists who promoted the freedom of Africa and other Blacks around the world. This was emphasized when Ethiopian forces defeated invading Italians at the Battle of Adowa in 1896."*(<http://blackexpat.com/new/magazine/black-in-the-day-afro-american-and-afro-caribbean-expats-in-ethiopia/>)

It is now 122 years since the Great Adwa African victory. This significant event should have been recognised with a world heritage site a long time back. Still very little is known about the rich Africa struggle heritage let alone the need to draw lessons to build a better African future. It is urgent that the constructive and positive heritage of liberation struggles from every part of Africa be studied and resurrected in order to re-educate and wean generations of Africans to know what their struggle heritage entails. The glorious past, particularly of early Africa and resistance to numerous imperial advances, and the stolen legacy should be recovered. The battle of Adwa in 1896 epitomises successful resistance against colonialism. It has come to be recognised as one of the most significant African liberation struggles that took place during the time of the European Scramble for Africa. The victory lives on providing enduring lessons for all of us.

All Ethiopians through the depth and breadth of the land from Oromo to Eritrea were mobilised and contributed richly to the success of the Adwa victory.

This was not a victory of the leaders, or one ethnic group. This was a national victory with a wider African and indeed world significance. It was and remains an exemplary episode in demonstrating what a united people can achieve with the support of the African Diaspora

and the anti-colonialists in the Global South and even in Italy and the rest of Europe too! Adwa was a major anti-colonialist battle fought by all Ethiopians, under the skillful leadership of Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu. This victory resonated well beyond the Ethiopian and indeed the African continent. It represented the clash between colonialism and liberation on a world-scale. Every year during 'Yekatit' (February) or March Adwa can provide the occasion to appreciate fully the international significance of the Ethiopian victory over the world colonial project in Africa. The failure to put this victory in the context of the wider challenges which confronted Africa before, during and after the nineteenth century needs to be corrected.

The Adwa Victory constitutes a crucial chapter in the record of African resistance and liberation. It

**“This was not a victory of the leaders, or one ethnic group. This was a national victory with a wider African and indeed world significance.”**

armed generations of Africans with the confidence of victory to engage in resistance and liberation. It attracted attention as far as the Caribbean and the Americas, not to mention Europe and the rest of Africa. It reversed the imperial-colonial project's design to populate Africa with Europeans like they did with America. It deserves to be celebrated both as a significant episode in its own right and as a memory serving well the emerging communities of resistances in the African world never again to surrender to neo-colonial tyranny. The battle of Adwa continues to live on in the eternal river of time as the best expression of Ethiopianism for resisting effectively the world imperial-colonial project.

This struggle by a relatively small and weak country, against Italy – with also support from all the imperial powers that tore to pieces Africa at

the Scramble for Africa in Berlin in 1885 – is still relevant today. It was a united and not divided Ethiopia that brought about the victory. It was the strategic thinking of the leadership that made a big difference. The support of the African Diaspora, and anti-colonial forces across the world was inspirational.

### **Promotion of Ethiopianism on a World Scale**

According to Shepperson, the period from 1872 to 1928 is called 'the classical period of Ethiopianism because it was at this time that it exercised its greatest political influence and was most widely noticed in the European, American and African press'.<sup>1</sup> By the early 20th Century Ethiopianism emerged among African anti-colonial activists as a subtle method of challenging colonial rule by combining Christian and secular nationalist traditions to promote the idea of African capacity for organisation-building without European tutelage.

Although Ethiopianism originated as a religious movement, it was significant in establishing the demand for the emancipation of the peoples of African descent inside and outside Africa. Ethiopianism asserted that African history, civilisation and culture are sources of pride and fountainhead of European culture. After discussion with those who formed the Ethiopian church on the wider meaning of the designation Ethiopia, all agreed that according to the propesies it literally refers to all non-European people.<sup>2</sup> Glenda Kruss explained that Ethiopianism involved an awareness of the history and values of African culture. African history and culture became a source of pride with emphases laid on glorious African kings and empires and on the widely held belief that African culture and civilisation had been the fountainhead of European culture. The political aspiration of the Ethiopian leadership saw the ideal chance for its own ascent in the eviction of the European and removal of slavery from the African continent.<sup>3</sup>

### **The 1829 Ethiopian Manifesto**

The 1829 Ethiopian Manifesto was written by Robert Alexander Young,

a slave preacher, in defence of Black man's rights in the scale of universal freedom. In it, Young addresses both Black and White people. Young identifies people in the African diaspora as Ethiopians. He tells Ethiopians they only enjoy a few of their birth rights because some are enslaved.

He writes to Ethiopians and all slaves in the hope of making them aware of how mistreated they have been. Young questions how his skin colour plays a part in making him eligible for God's gift. Why is the case that white skin is considered more eligible to receive God's gift? He asks for freedom for everyone because it is given to everyone by God and not by mortal men.

When he addresses white men, he accuses them of denying slaves their rights, and lets them know regardless of their mortal riches and social standing, under the eyes of God, they'll pay for their actions in heaven. He identifies himself as being descended from Africa, and says there is a connection between all black people from all parts of the world. He says black women, men, and children have the same heritage because of Psalm 68:31 which goes on to say princes come out from Egypt and Ethiopia will soon stretch its hands to God.

### The 1896 Ethiopian Manifesto

- The 1896 Ethiopian Manifesto calls for all Africans across the globe:
- To unite together Christians of the African race and various denominations in the name of Jesus Christ to solemnly work towards and pray for the day when Africa people shall become an African Christian nation.
- To demand by Christian and lawful methods the equal recognition of the African and allied peoples the rights and privileges accorded to Europeans and to place on record the great wrongs inflicted upon the African by the racist people and Governments of Europe and America and to urge upon the Christians who wish to be clear of African blood on the day of God's judgment to make restitution.
- To pursue steadily and unswervingly the policy Africa for Africans and

“The failure to put this victory in the context of the wider challenges which confronted Africa before, during and after the nineteenth century needs to be corrected.”

look for and hasten by prayer and united effort the forming of the African Christian nation by God's power and in his own time and way. Ethiopians, in the face of their inequality even after they had appropriated Western religious and cultural forms – Christianity and civilisation – were protesting their exclusion on all levels, and without any loss of time that Africans must assert confidently they could be equal to Europeans.

The African leadership reacted to the erosion of African political power, its economic well-being and its social stability by establishing independent bodies exclusively for Africans.

Ethiopianism is for Africa is for Africans, Africans are for humanity and Humanity is for God!

### Enduring Lessons from the Great Adwa African Victory

The Adwa victory provided practical expression to Ethiopianism: self-worth, dignity, unity, resistance, confidence,

“We must all join together, learning to remove divisions and realise fully the benefits of unity. The Adwa Victory must continue highlighting Ethiopianism for Africa, the Global South and oppressed in the world.”

self-reliance and freedom from colonialism. Africans united as humans, not giving in to the tribal 'divide and rule' tactics colonialists left behind which still persists as vile ethnicism. Adwa Victory changed the relationship between Ethiopia and Europe. It is remarkable that from 1896-1906, Pan-African intellectuals like the Haitian, Benito Sylvain, visited Ethiopia four times. In 1903-1904 William H Ellis, of Cuban-American descent, visited Ethiopia twice with plans for Ethiopian economic development and the resettlement of African-Americans. Marcus Garvey immortalised Ethiopia by incorporating the spirit of resistance of Adwa in his National Black Anthem. In 1904 Haiti's 100th Centenary of Independence was celebrated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A Guard of Honour of Ethiopians volunteered and they fired several rifle rounds and shouted their slogan: 'Long Live Haiti! Long live the Ethiopia of America!' Benito Sylvain got permission from Emperor Menelik for the celebration and he represented both Ethiopia and Haiti in the 1900 Pan-African Congress. Emperor Menelik after 1896 was appointed as honorary president of the Pan-African Association.

In the same way that the spiritual values of Ethiopianism laid the foundation for Pan-Africanism to unite all Africans to fight colonialism and apartheid, these same values – self-worth, dignity, pride, agency and freedom are needed to realise the African renaissance today. This will enable Africa to emerge as an independent, strong and proud leader rather than mere follower of former colonial powers in the 21st century. We must all join together, learning to remove divisions and realise fully the benefits of unity. The Adwa Victory must continue highlighting Ethiopianism for Africa, the Global South and oppressed in the world.

All Ethiopians who are currently living in what is known as Ethiopia must appreciate they are privileged to be associated with Ethiopia. They all must know Ethiopia is more than the country it is now. They must cherish the honour of being Ethiopians forever. The least they can do is unite and

learn the culture of dialogue to make Ethiopia live ever in the eternal river of time.

### Erecting lasting heritage monuments

It is not acceptable that the great and historic Adwa African Victory is not celebrated as it should be in Adwa where the battle took place. When the European powers denounced the victory as 'a **foul crime**', there should have been serious effort to educate generations by creating in Adwa, Tigray province, a great historic heritage site. That has not been done. Let us call for all Africans to unite and establish a great Pan-African Adwa Victory heritage site on the 122 years anniversary day on March 1, 2018 or Yekatit 23, 2009. This should be recognised by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

There should also have been Pan-African efforts to promote the heritage site and its meaning by establishing a special university. Let all cooperate to establish a Pan-African Adwa Victory inspired university open to all in the Global South and the rest of the world who wish to work for the unity of all humanity by learning Pan-Africanism for completing African liberation. It must be an Adwa Pan-African University and not a Pan-African university in Adwa. It must resurrect the spiritual, struggle and indigenous knowledge heritage of all Africans in the world.

Let there be statues also erected in Adwa of all the key leaders and let there be a museum detailing how the battle was won decisively. There should be all the records, remembering the way the strategy was designed to create a decisive victory including the key quotes from the leaders by establishing a historic site with global significance. This will make Adwa become a learning site for all in the world to visit like Axum, Labella, Gondar and other historic places.

There should be a special library both physical and digital in Adwa to record and show all the African struggle histories, not just Adwa's alone. Let Adwa inspire all the struggles that we should all remember enabling the Africana world never to surrender to any form of injustice ever again.

We ask the African Union and all the African Governments from Ethiopia

to all the AU member states including the Ethiopian-African Diasporas, and all from the Global South to be actively involved and contribute without fail to highlight the 122 Years of this project. This can be done by the African Union taking the decision by making March 1 every year a Special Day for the Great African Adwa Victory and urging African states to make the month an educational month for African unity and Renaissance by learning from Africa's great struggle heritage. Let us advance the African unity and renaissance agency project identity to be fully promoted and realised before 2063! Let all learn how to combine Ethiopianism with Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance with the struggle heritage of the Great Adwa African Victory Spirit.

Let us together build a memorable heritage. All Africans can create the ability together to deal with and

“It must be an Adwa Pan-African University and not a Pan-African university in Adwa. It must resurrect the spiritual, struggle and indigenous knowledge heritage of all Africans in the world.”

respond to challenges with a united voice, rather than making 54 noises that can easily get ignored, and take action to realise African solutions to African problems by relying on and using Africa's spiritual knowledge and struggles heritages.

This makes Ethiopia go beyond becoming a mere nation; Ethiopia is a civilisation, history and humanity combined. It is not just history. It is not just civilisation. It is not just philosophy. It is not just humanity. It is a great synthesis of all of them. It gave spirituality – Africa for Africans, Africans for humanity and humanity for God. It is a great inspiration just by sheer sense of its very being becoming recognised as the provider of liberation

resources to all humanity in the world. Ethiopianism explains philosophically her historical presence as evidence providing so much spiritual strength, confidence, independence, self-worth and freedom to those who were denied their humanity and their right to worship God as Christians. Ethiopianism remains relevant now also to continue the spiritual inspiration to all the oppressed that continue to suffer from a world that is driven by ideas that are ontologically shallow and epistemologically dry. What Makes the Great Adwa African Victory unique is it reinforced this Ethiopianism philosophy across the world.

Raymond Jonas said, “Nearly a hundred years before the abolition of apartheid, Adwa set in motion the long unraveling of domination of Africa, just as it provoked a re-thinking of seemingly settled issues about race... Adwa is part of our global heritage. It was one of those events we call ‘world-historical’ because we can readily imagine the world – our world, taking a different path had events gone differently.”<sup>4</sup>

Let Ethiopia continue to provide this powerful spiritual food to the world. Let those who currently live in Ethiopia learn to protect this treasure forever by preferring a culture of dialogue to any other form of resolving any type of conflict that Ethiopia may go through from now on. Let us all unite to agree that we treasure Ethiopia to live on in the eternal river of time. Ethiopia is full of knowledge and wisdom, having never been colonised, with a distinctive identity of her destiny tied to God despite innumerable difficulties, threats and obstacles in her journey over thousands of years.

Ethiopia has a unique distinction in the universe for empowering those that were disempowered, for humanising those that were dehumanised, spiritualising those that were denied their right to worship God and inspiring and strengthening those oppressed to resist oppression. ■

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# How can Parliament be held accountable?

Our parliament's involvement in Zuma's disgraceful misrule is there for all to see.

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By Desmond Mlatha

The euphoria over the resignation of former president Jacob Zuma is understandably accompanied by great expectations and hopes on the supposedly “new” Cyril Ramaphosa administration. However, a fundamental question that needs to be answered is being glossed over in the rush to put the disastrous Zuma legacy behind us and clean up his mess. South Africa is a constitutional democracy, and there is a broad consensus in society that Zuma had to go because of his numerous constitutional violations, and suspected involvement in criminal activities that undermined the authority and legitimacy of the state.

If the removal of Jacob Zuma was about defending the constitution and the integrity of the state, as argued by some, then it will be important to take such an argument to its logical conclusion. It is common knowledge that parliament played a crucial role in defending and enabling Zuma in his destructive path over the years. Whether one talks of the Nkandla saga and how parliament reacted to the subsequent scathing judgement delivered by the constitutional court on both the president and parliament for their failure to uphold the constitution; or one talks of the contempt, in violation of the constitution, with which both the president and parliament treated the former public protector (Adv Thuli Madonsela) for her adverse findings relating to the former president’s delinquency – our parliament’s involvement in Zuma’s disgraceful misrule is there for all to see.

So, the fundamental question that needs to be answered, now that the sword has fallen on Jacob Zuma for his constitutional delinquency, is how is parliament going to be held accountable for its role in the Zuma mess? Must the country turn a new page and move on as if nothing has happened simply because we want to move out of the Zuma mess as quickly as possible to avoid the political instability and economic turmoil currently engulfing our country? Are we saying it is permissible to violate the constitution, without consequences, under certain circumstances if we deem the violators (parliament) too

big and the process of bringing them to book too cumbersome or daunting? The implications here are that we might be setting a precedent that will allow our parliament to be regarded as an exceptional institution that can get away with constitutional violations using flimsy excuses. Nothing and no one must ever be given the impression that they can violate our constitution or hold it to ransom without consequences!

The question of where or to whom parliament, the representatives of the people, account and how it should account for its violation of the constitution, in defence of Zuma’s misrule, must be answered if the country is serious about making a clean break with its recent past. State capture did not just happen under the watch of the fourth parliament; it

**“Nothing and no one must ever be given the impression that they can violate our constitution or hold it to ransom without consequences!”**

was made possible by the actions and/or inactions of parliament. Up until recently, parliament not only failed, but literally refused to hold the executive accountable and instead chose to act as the watchdog of the executive in the legislature. Now that parliament seems to be fixing the errors of its ways; should the country simply forget its role in state capture and move on for the sake of progress?

Violations of the constitution that are allowed to go unanswered, undermine the very fibre of our constitutional democracy in the long run. No individual, office or institution is too big to be brought to book.

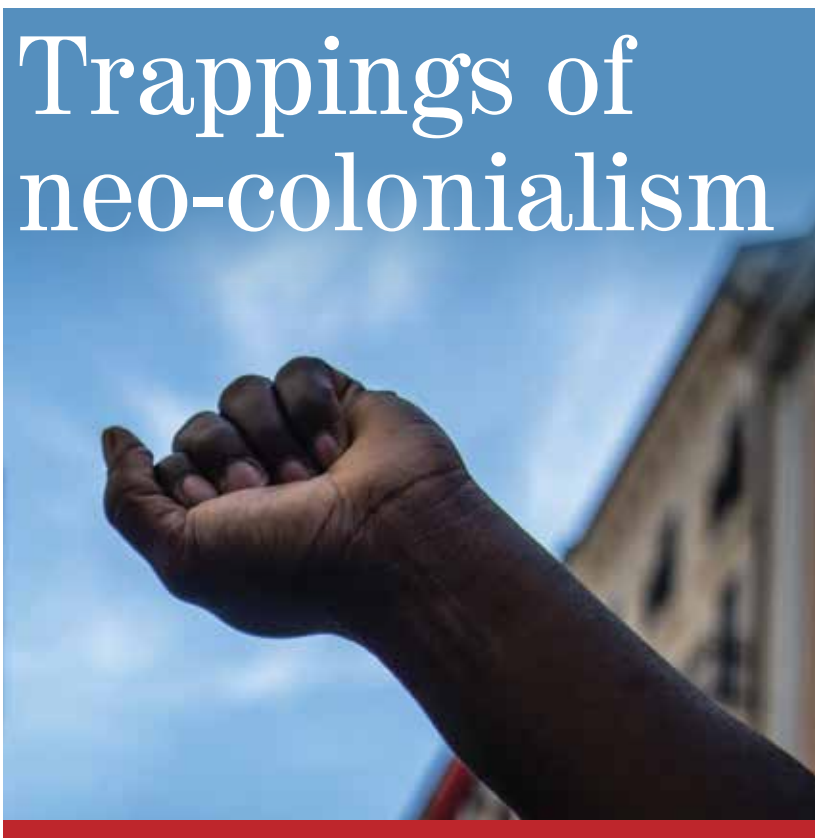
If the executive that is constituted by the president who is elected by parliament in the legislature accounts to parliament, should it not then follow that parliament, as an institution, should be accountable to the electorate (the citizens) who vote to fill the 400

parliamentary seats populated by political party representatives through the proportional representative system? Parliamentarians, as individuals, might owe their parliamentary seats to the political parties through the party list system, but parliament, as an institution, is accountable to the people of South Africa as a whole i.e. the electorate. Therefore, this fourth parliament of South Africa owe the people of this country an explanation on what it has done or intends to do about its violation of the constitution that was pointed out by the constitutional court. And, importantly, parliament cannot be both a judge and prosecutor in its own trial.

If we are to protect and nurture our democracy, and uphold constitutionalism with all its positive principles of accountability, transparency, rationality etc. then it is the constitutional duty of the electorate to hold parliament accountable as and when it violates the constitution without having to wait for the general elections that happens once every five years. The general elections are not about dealing with constitutional violations, but about electing parliamentarians into the legislature on the basis of what their political parties promise to deliver.

Equally the question of timing and resources cannot hold water as an effective scarecrow when it comes to constitutional matters. If South Africa is to deal effectively with the Zuma legacy of misrule, it must earnestly look into all the violations that took place and address them in a concrete manner that will ensure there is never a repeat of such. Whether the current parliament must be dissolved and a new parliament elected in its place or some sort of referendum be held to decide the issue might be used opportunistically by the opposition or deliberately politicised by the ruling party. But ultimately, the question that cannot be ignored or wished away, without any negative consequences for our constitutional order is: How is parliament going to be held accountable for its role or inaction in the whole state capture debacle and the general misrule under Zuma that it oversaw? ■

# Trappings of neo-colonialism



South Africa, and the continent at large, will not be free to determine its own destiny until the wealth of the country is in the hands of the dispossessed.

By Sibonginkosi Mazibuko

In Africa independence has not always been able to deliver according to the expectations of most of those that sought freedom and independence from colonialism. On the contrary, it has seen many removals of governments, largely by the military. Many of those governments fell because they were seen as corrupt. But in many other instances the military coups were orchestrated from and by the former colonial powers, thus putting a question mark on the principle of self-determination. Today the language is different. It is 'regime change' orchestrated by the western great powers. These powers are also the former colonial powers, though they now include the USA. They have

laid numerous trappings for African States to fail. To this effect, the struggle is one against neo-colonialism in Africa.

The regime change language is one of removing governments considered uncooperative with the western powers. These governments will be accused and labelled in many ways to create dissonance and dissatisfaction in their countries through the media in particular, but also by sponsoring sectarian groups to discredit sitting governments. Development aid, which has become another form of colonisation, will also be severely constrained and sometimes completely cut-off. This situation makes it difficult for many governments to pursue their own policies and goals, thereby

compromising their freedom and independence.

## Freedom from Neo-Colonialism

States can determine their own destinies if they are truly free from all forms of colonialism including neo-colonialism. To achieve that level of freedom means that the country must have its resources in full control and ownership by the citizens rather than having economic power in the hands of the former colonising groups, which is what neo-colonialism means. In his book *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*, Kwame Nkrumah<sup>1</sup> defines neo-colonialism in the following terms:

*The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.*

We see this phenomenon in many states, and it is not different in South Africa. The economy is fully in the control of former settler-colonisers while the colonised continue to function as administrators in that system with limited meaningful stake in the economy. At the same time, the overwhelming majority continue living under the most exploitative and unequal conditions as wage earners dependent on the economy still owned by their former colonisers. Yet the supposedly political leadership serve only as political fire fighters to silence dissatisfaction everywhere that it rears its head. Protests and demonstrations against the political system are not desirable because they expose the weaknesses in the system.

The Marikana massacre in the mines of the Northwest and the cold-blooded murder of Andries Tatane in the Free State, all at the hands of the police, testify to neo-colonial tendencies. The local comprador class is entrusted with the neo-colonial responsibility of being the watchdogs of imperial interests while the imperialists themselves remain behind the scenes continuing to exploit the country's wealth.

## Watch Dogs of Colonial Interests

Neo-colonialism also has the



tendency to distort the problems in the country. For example, in Zimbabwe the problem was presented as Robert Mugabe and in South Africa as Jacob Zuma. This is not different from anywhere else. It was the same in Ghana with Kwame Nkrumah, same in Congo with Patrice Lumumba, and Libya with Muammar Gaddafi. The list is endless. Anyone who tries to block the wheel of imperialism is and will be crushed – mercilessly.

This is not suggesting that some leaders are not corrupt. What it is suggesting is that the neo-colonial system is killing and it will continue to kill people in countries where people think they are free from the yoke of colonialism. It is suggesting that the neo-colonial masters who murdered true African leaders, and invaded Iraq will continue doing so as long as Africa breeds the kind of leadership it does.

Those in government in neo-colonial States will, as their roles of watchdogs of colonial interests dictate, do everything to please their masters even if it means losing credibility in the eyes of their own people while neo-colonialists remain behind the scenes with no accountability. Nkrumah<sup>2</sup> also explains this as follows:

*Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case.*

### **Pseudo-Middle Class created**

The former colonised suffer from poverty, unemployment, inequality and all other ills of a neo-colonial condition. They remain marginalised while their leaders pursue relations of dependency with the former colonial masters. Neo-colonialism therefore creates conditions of contradictions among those that suffer from it. It also

creates a false sense of class superiority among its victims since those privileged into administering the system think of themselves as the upper classes whereas they are like house-slaves because they have no ownership of anything in the economy.

In South Africa this class has been created largely through affirmative action where the former colonised are given jobs formerly occupied by their oppressors, or government tender jobs where the government has created a pseudo-system of ownership. This arrangement creates a condition where people think they have the wealth whereas they have nothing. The real economy remains in the hands of the former colonisers who go further to cheat the very system by fronting with the very former colonised who receive preference with government tenders.

### **State-Capital Alliance**

In his book *The Making of the South African Past, Major Historians on Race and Class*, Christopher Saunders<sup>3</sup> states that:

*South Africa, like other late industrialising countries, had taken 'the Prussian road', an autocratic route to modernisation, with the state intervening massively to impose discipline and to mobilise labour. State intervention had not hindered economic growth, but had been designed deliberately to promote the industrialisation process. Developing capitalism had not merely adapted itself to the racial system; it had played a major role in the creation of segregation and apartheid, the latter-day manifestations of that system. Segregationist racial policy had indeed served capitalist interests.*

The alliance between the State and capital is as old as the two themselves. They have always worked hand-in-hand to create the society that exists today. It has been always an alliance, (or State capture/Capture of the State?). It has always been imperialism at work. It means, in the first place, imperialism landed on the African shores with State support from Europe. It is therefore an absurdity to now wanting to think there is a difference between the State and the business world. It is, in

fact, that class/ group which owns the economy that rules, and not those in parliament as administrators. The State is controlled by the class that owns the means of production. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels<sup>4</sup> have explained this phenomenon brilliantly.

### **Sowing Seeds of Neo-Colonialism**

Capital started negotiations with the political liberation movement, particularly with the African National Congress (ANC), in the 1980s to ensure they focus on exploiting the economy and its people under a democratic government. This has indeed enabled them to function as business as usual without the bother of the 'noise' by the dispossessed. This explains the ever-growing gap of inequality. Former colonisers grow richer and the former colonised grow poorer. It is because the means of production remain in the hands of former colonisers. That is a situation of neo-colonialism.

How does one explain the fact that it is still the former settler-colonial section of the population that produces food for the overwhelming majority of the former colonised? How is it explained that in the presence of all the mineral wealth in the country so little is processed internally but it all comes from the developed world as finished products devalued of every significance in the value chain? A neo-colonial State must keep producing to support others while its own populations have so little to be thankful about except the flag, national anthem and a few houses the size of a single-car garage.

The issues of power, inequality, poverty, unemployment etc. represent the trappings of neo-colonialism. South Africa, and the continent at large, will not be free to determine its own destiny until the wealth of the country is in the hands of the dispossessed. A new society is required where freedom from lack of anything supersedes the abundance of democracy. This is neither rhetoric nor subversion. It is the reality of the meaning of freedom and self-determination. ■

#### **References:**

- <sup>1</sup> Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., London, 1965, p3.
- <sup>2</sup> 1966, p5
- <sup>3</sup> David Philip Publishers (Pty) Ltd, Cape Town, 1988.
- <sup>4</sup> *The German Ideology*, International Publishers, New York, 1947, p64

# Summit calls for enabling environment to support Africa's innovators



By Department of Science and Technology

Greater investment and the creation of enabling ecosystems are required to support Africa's innovators. This was one of the key messages that emerged from the African Innovation Summit (AIS) held in Kigali, Rwanda earlier this month.

The AIS is an Africa-wide initiative to mobilise investors, policy makers, researchers, the youth, innovators and thinkers into a coalition for

collective action to foster an enabling environment for innovation in Africa.

Speaking at the summit, Rwandan Prime Minister Édouard Ngirente said that initiatives such as the AIS were critical for Africa's development.

"The challenge facing Africa is building robust ecosystems of innovation," the Prime Minister said. "I am happy that AIS is helping our countries build a culture of innovation

as a way of life. It is a critical element of development and economic growth."

Delegates at the summit agreed that a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach was needed to ensure that policies, investments and enabling ecosystems were put in place to empower and propel African innovators and their solutions forward.

The summit concluded with a call to action addressed to innovators,



government leaders, the private sector, civil society and academia: "Let us throw out the boxes that have caged us".

These sentiments were echoed at a satellite AIS event hosted in Pretoria by South Africa's Department of Science and Technology (DST). While the Kigali summit focused on how the continent can innovate to address pressing developmental challenges, the DST's

satellite event focused on innovation in the Southern African region.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap was discussed in this context. The strategy seeks to promote economic and technological transformation in order to enhance the competitive and comparative advantages of the region's economies.

Anneline Morgan, Senior Technical Advisor: Science, Technology and Innovation for the SADC Secretariat, said that African countries such as Zambia, Botswana and South Africa should benefit from their material wealth instead of merely exporting it to other continents.

"African countries can get more value from benefiting their mineral resources by transforming them into high-value products," Morgan said.

Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde, Deputy Director-General: Research Development and Support at the DST, said that in order to achieve structural transformation through innovation and industrialisation, countries in the region needed to address policy deficits.

"Government must also undertake policy reforms, promote greater investment in research and development, finance technology entrepreneurs, improve access to local and international markets by small to medium enterprises, and develop indicators that will ensure impact at every level of the innovation value chain," Auf der Heyde said.

Professor Shirley Motaung of the Tshwane University of Technology told delegates that, while it was necessary to create an enabling environment for innovation, training a cohort of knowledge entrepreneurs was equally important.

"We must not limit ourselves to the classroom," Motaung added. "Policy makers need to introduce entrepreneurship as a module or school subject. Degrees offered by our universities do not prepare students for entrepreneurship but for jobs."

Fannie Gondwe of Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise, and Lilitha Mahlati of Ivili Loboya, demonstrated the socio-economic value derived from product beneficiation in their respective businesses. Malawi-based

**“Government must also undertake policy reforms, promote greater investment in research and development, finance technology entrepreneurs, improve access to local and international markets by small to medium enterprises, and develop indicators that will ensure impact at every level of the innovation value chain.”**

Perisha Agro and Packaging grows orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, which are more nutritious than ordinary sweet potatoes and have been shown to alleviate Vitamin A deficiency. Gondwe's plans include embracing the value chain of orange-fleshed sweet potatoes by adding production of juices, chips and skin lotions.

Ivili Loboya is a wool and cashmere beneficiation enterprise based in the Eastern Cape. The company uses fibre from goats to produce cashmere, which in turn is used to produce safety footwear innersoles, clothing and homeware.

Delegates at the DST's satellite AIS event agreed that more businesses need to follow the beneficiation route, as it leads to the creation of much needed jobs and economic growth.

Dr Olugbenga Adesida, co-Director of AIS, called for bolder thinking about the future and a greater sense of urgency around Africa's transformation. "Africa cannot simply be consumers, nor can it outsource its development," Adesida said. "We all must engage with a new sense of urgency to facilitate change." ■



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The Editor welcomes contributions that take into account The Thinker's vision of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and caring South Africa. Submissions of poetry and the written word should be brief. For visual material, a high-resolution document is required (300dpi Jpeg). Please send your work electronically to editor@thethinker.co.za for consideration.

# THROUGH A CREATIVE LENS

Female circumcision is still prevalent in many cultures, concentrated in 30 West, East and North-East Africa and parts of the Middle East and Asia. When people migrate, they usually continue this practice, so the problem is world-wide. 200 million women and girls alive today suffer from the effects of female genital mutilation. Below we publish two poems from Olubunmi Famuyiwa, who is a Master's student at the Kwara State University in Nigeria.

## MUTILATION

Though I knew me not the time of maim,  
I feel daily the pain in maim on main parts of mine.  
When touches around my member main denies me  
The hill where lives the pleasure main  
When I in my maim, needed to get to the main,  
But which my man understood not in his hurry to reach his main,  
When swam he, inside of my main, but feels the joy of main and  
I the pain of main,  
When he, satisfied with evidence of snore after the main  
And I feel emptiness from the pain of maim.  
Though I knew not the time of cut but find its depth felt in all of  
mine;  
Abysmal depth all day long; constant reminder of my worthlessness  
in the eye of culture,  
I am made undeserving of what joy the warmth of main could  
bring to mine;  
Pleasure to whom only a delicate body serves one purpose:  
To bare and raise offspring who knows no name of mine...  
Though I saw not the blood from me shed to give this eternal  
pain,  
I live all day to know me un-womanly, incomplete,  
And I come to accept me a fully grown anomaly  
To which no remedy could be prescribed;  
Am not I, a thing tossed up and down in your sight, oh culture?  
Made only to fill libidinal needs? And you culture, sanctioned this  
to keep me perpetually mum and maimed!

## SEXUALLY SPEAKING...

Shall we reason...?  
Sexually speaking, sensually imaginable,  
That you were that little girl  
Gifted to a man like a bundle of clothes,  
Lost in the maze of noises that seemed joyously  
felicitous on your behalf,  
I bet you didn't even comprehend.

Fear grips you as felicitations estranged you  
Far away from the maddening crowd,  
Fearful that all familiar faces thinned gradually  
into the dark air,  
Fearfully you held unto the widespread sheets,  
This sleeping place seemed like the largest field  
you ever saw,  
Then fear and tears mixed when you realized this  
rod of tyranny  
Meant to travel through your little hole...  
And you didn't even know there was a hole down  
there...

Trrrrrrh! Was that the hymen? The journey?  
Or the ride...?  
Something didn't make sense...  
The universe had conspired to bury you alive,  
And darkness descended,  
It no longer ascended.

The red-moon visitor hardly visited long,  
Before your tender womb swallowed another  
innocence,  
You hardly knew what to do with a new body,  
But the rod of tyranny always knew...  
It lashed at will;  
The rider enjoyed his horse ride with rhythmic  
regularity.

That's not funny!  
Dear Majora and Manora had been scraped  
before,  
And the "clit" cut mercilessly for nothing,  
But now that hole is torn in pieces,  
Yet another innocence came through from  
within...  
She leaks now as she walks the earth...  
Flies dance and sing around the leak...  
The horse rider can no longer stand the stench...

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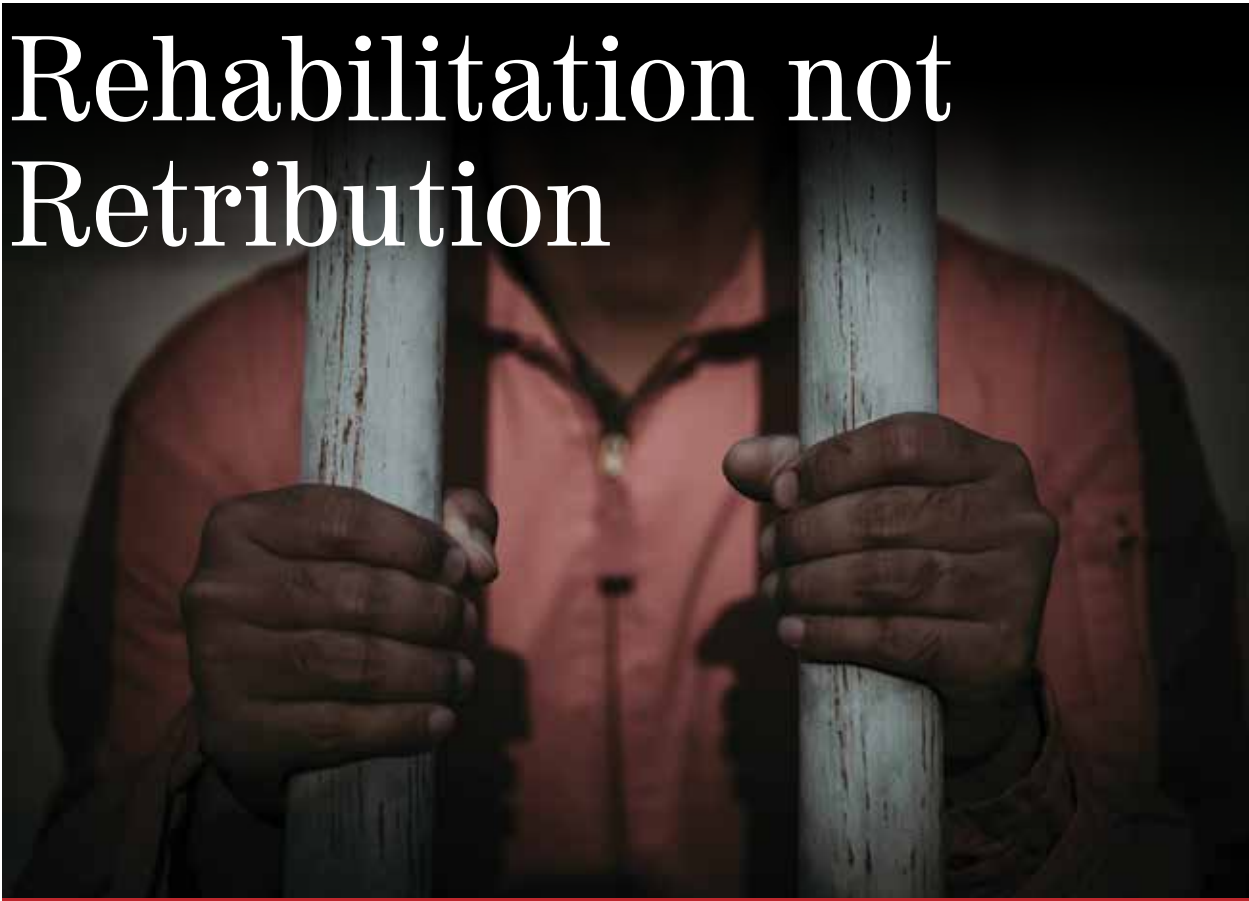
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# Rehabilitation not Retribution



By Neo Sithole

In February 2018 *The Thinker* received a letter from one of our readers, commenting on the progressive nature of the journal and how it had impacted on his life. The writer himself is in a correctional facility and wants to share his views and ideas with a wider public.

Tebogo writes on the relationship between society and the individuals in our prisons. How offenders are societal pariahs, yet simultaneously, they are in some respects products of the immediate environment, with choices influenced by the community they found themselves in. This is a collective environment that society has in part allowed to fester and expand. He states that he passed up on opportunities, openings and intentionally made decisions that now, on reflection, were poor. But, at the time, he had little alternative given the environment in which he lived.

The letter highlights the nature of

South Africa's correctional system. Active rehabilitation is scarce and so individuals who are released after serving their sentence frequently return after having repeated the offense. They had not been rehabilitated.

The relationship between conventional society and the state's correctional system should be a mutual one. He believes firmly that active rehabilitation is crucial for helping offenders to recover.

Tebogo is a part of an initiative called *As We Are* (AWA), which is an offender-led civil society initiative, inclusive of Rehabilitation, Reintegration, Crime Prevention and Social Transformation (RRCPTST). It also looks at community development.

He writes from a deep seated belief and love for the work he is a part of and strongly feels it has the potential to affect positive change in society. It is in this context that a request was made for assistance. *As We Are* is a

brilliant initiative. However it has a number of obstacles which could easily be overcome with collective effort and assistance.

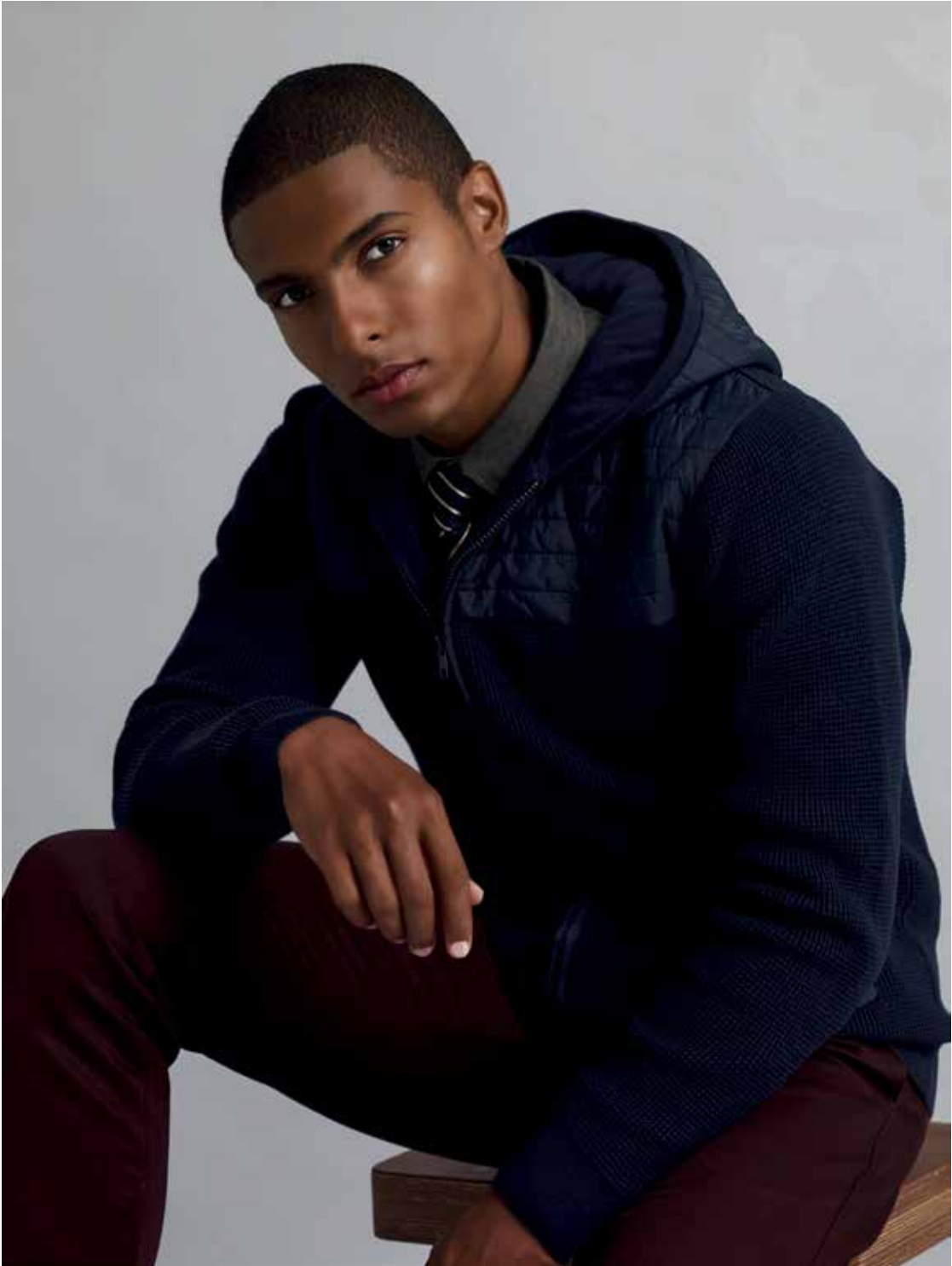
The assistance asked for is in no specific form, other than exposure and connecting to a network that can possibly assist. Working for a Progressive Journal I felt the best we could do is share Tebogo's sentiment.

We continuously speak of creating a holistic and inclusive environment, the AWA initiative is a vehicle that could help to achieve that. Please give help in any form you can. Change within our correctional services may translate to change for us all.

Contact Gloria Mahlombe (awamovement@gmail.com / 076 766 8371) from *As We Are* to get its full programme blue-print, founding document and brochure. ■

Neo Sithole is an editorial assistant at *The Thinker*





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