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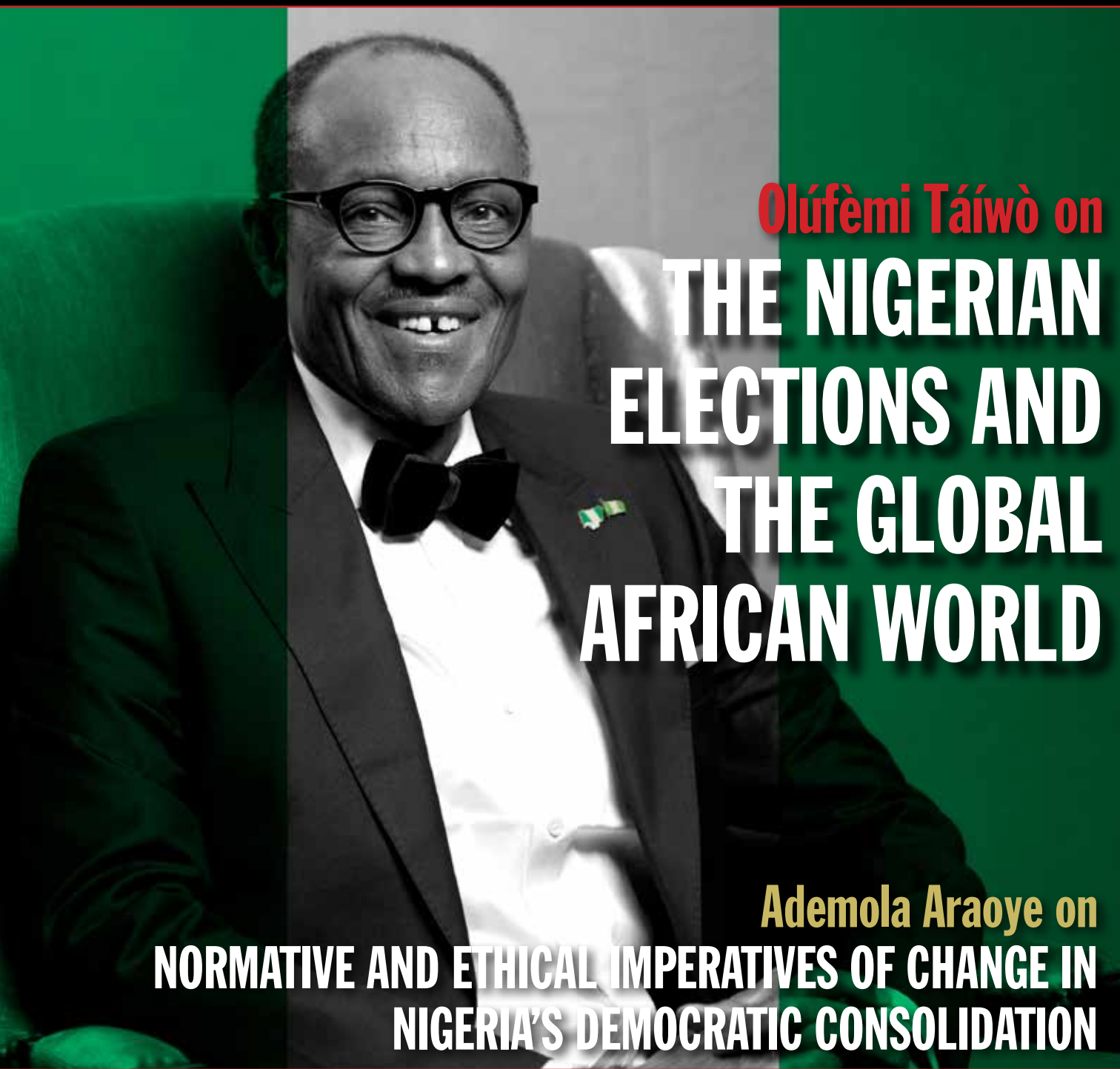
The Thinker

A PAN-AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS



Olúfèmi Táíwò on
THE NIGERIAN ELECTIONS AND THE GLOBAL AFRICAN WORLD

Ademola Araoye on
NORMATIVE AND ETHICAL IMPERATIVES OF CHANGE IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

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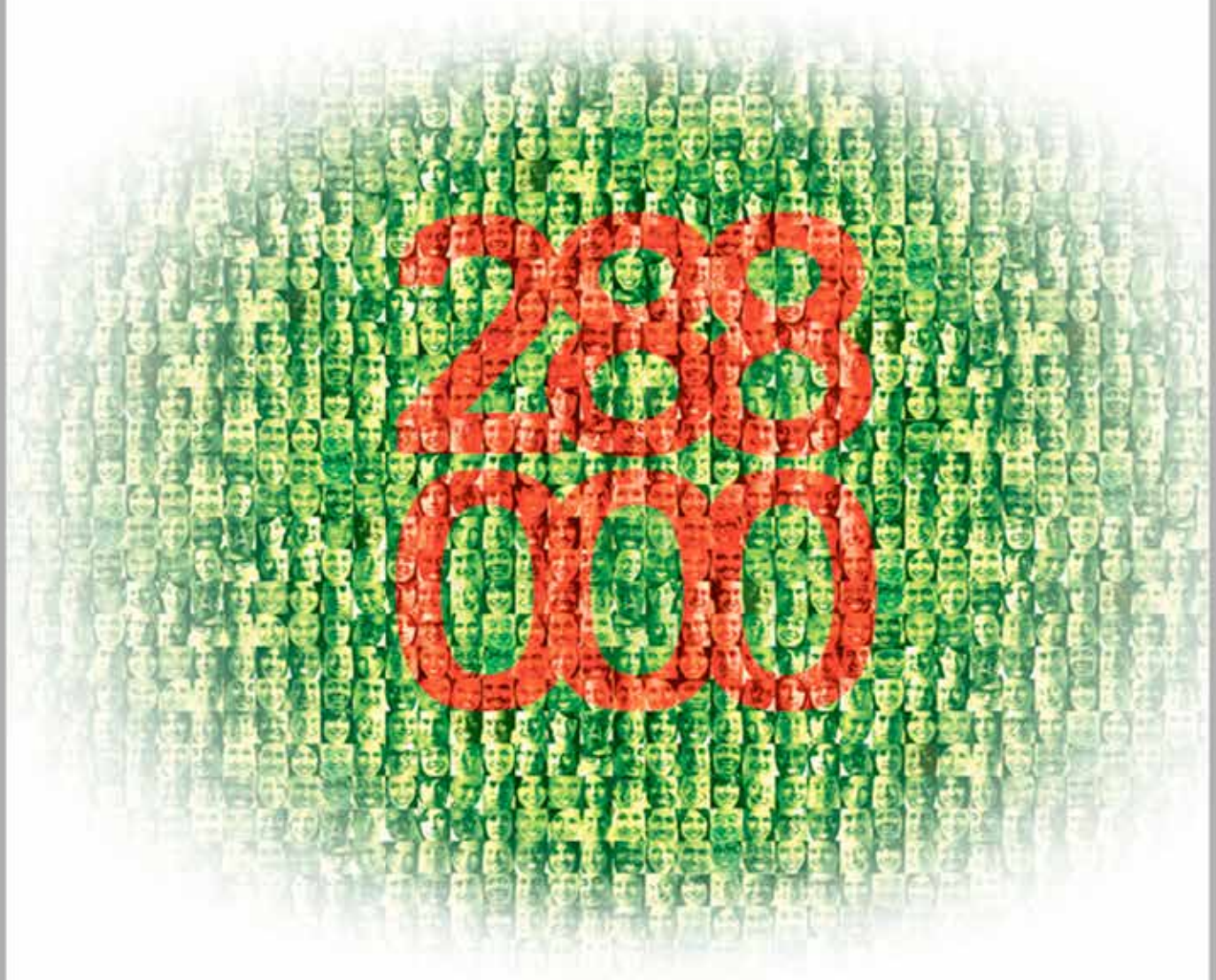
Yacoob Abba Omar Tshilidzi Marwala Charles Villa-Vicencio Na'eem Jeenah Mongane Wally Serote Ndumiso Maseko Dan Glazebrook Mats Svensson Roj Welat Sibonginkosi Mazibuko Busani Ngcaweni Malainin Lakhal Alvin Botes Thando Ntlemeza Naseera Noor Mohamed Neal Hall Zaakir Ahmed Mayet

NEW JOBS OVER THE NEXT 7 YEARS



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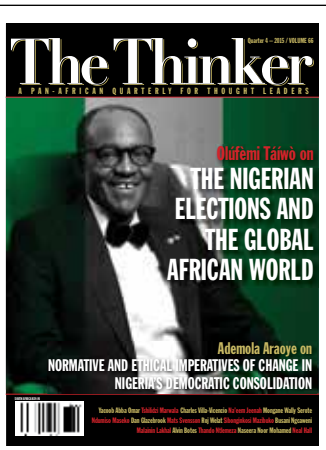

On the Cover:

Nigeria – An African Giant

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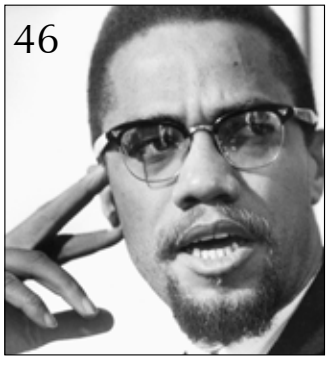

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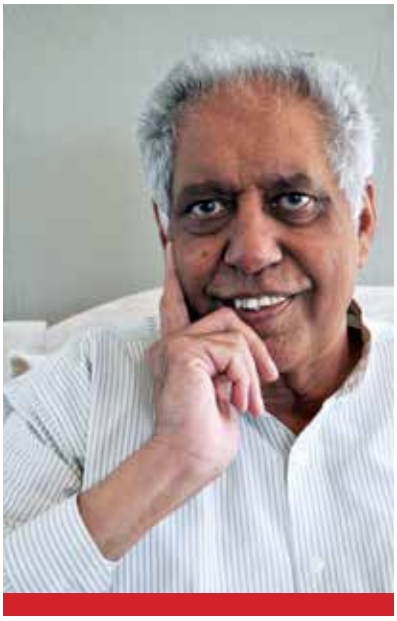
Who is the Enemy: The Syrian Government or ISIS?



The human tragedy of the hundreds of thousands of refugees streaming into Europe, many of whom perished on the way, is a devastating consequence of the civil war in Syria and the US led aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya.

As an article by Alex Lantier on World Socialist Website points out, "The main responsibility for the current refugee crisis, the greatest since the end of World War II, lies not with Assad, but with the criminal foreign policy of the NATO powers. They have not only financed and armed Sunni Islamist militias in a proxy war to install a puppet regime in Syria, but have pursued other wars around the world that forced tens of millions to flee their homes. The refugees arriving in Europe are drawn from millions of Syrians, Iraqis, Ukrainians, Afghans and Pakistanis fleeing bloodshed and social collapse resulting from these neocolonial wars."(8 September 2015)

Both President Hollande of France and Prime Minister Cameron of the UK are shamelessly using the humanitarian catastrophe to escalate the war against Assad and the Syrian government. These illegal efforts, contrary to international law, are designed to bring about regime change in Syria. Even now, they seem oblivious to the catastrophic consequences of the regime change they engineered in Libya.

Russia has increased its military and political assistance to the legitimate government of Syria. This assistance has been deliberately distorted by the US, UK and France as an excuse to threaten, isolate and intimidate Russia. Russia and Putin are correct to insist that ISIS and other extremist groups in Syria can be isolated and defeated with the active involvement of the Syrian government and military forces. Such a scenario could lead to peace in Syria and lay the basis for crafting a legitimate political solution that includes the moderate political forces.

Turkey, which is supposed to be a part of the coalition in the war against ISIS, is intensifying its aggression against the Kurds and the maiming and killing of PKK fighters and members. In an article in this edition of *The Thinker* Roj Welat points out that Turkey regards the PKK as "more dangerous than ISIS" and is compelling the Kurds to fight on two fronts. Thus Turkey is weakening the military capacity of the Kurds, without whose courageous participation the war against ISIS "cannot be won".

The anti-Russian stance pursued by the Obama, Cameron and Hollande administrations is seriously jeopardising international peace, security and stability. It should be noted that the US has military bases all over the world whilst Russia only has a naval station at the Syrian port of Tartus outside of the former Soviet Union.

Pat Lang, a former US military intelligence official, in criticising the US position writes:

> *I am told by my own sources that the dissonance within the Obama Administration's ranks has resulted in what IMO [in my opinion] is a mindless decision to oppose Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war.*
>
> *The amateurs at work in the WH, NSC and State Department continue to be incapable of understanding that the disappearance of the structure of the Syrian state will inevitably lead to the creation of a jihadi dominated state where Syria is now located. Whether or not that state would be ruled by IS or the Nusra front is unclear, but what is clear is that in either case the resulting cancerous situation will be the beginning of the end of any sort of moderation in government within the region. The example provided by the triumph of salafist jihadism would exert such a powerful "pull" on the available human potential for recruitment and subversion that IMO no government would be able to stand against it.*
>
> *To prevent that, the Russians seem intent on reinforcing the Syrian government and the US is doing all it can to prevent this. The US has pressured governments seeking a denial of diplomatic overflight clearances for Russian cargo aircraft en route to Syria. It has also sought some means with which to deny Russian vessels passage through the Bosporus and Dardanelles. What on earth do we think we are doing?"* (Conflicts Forum Weekly Comment 4-11 September 2015).

In this issue of *The Thinker* we publish an article by Na'eem Jeenah which shows that ISIS is consolidating its position in Syria and forcefully promoting the recruitment of fighters in different parts of the world, including South Africa. The UK and

France are wrong when they argue that both Assad and ISIS have to be confronted and defeated. This path of a 'balance of malevolence' is seriously mistaken since the defeat of the Assad administration would only strengthen the dominance of ISIS and other extremist groups in Syria and Iraq.

We also present an article by Charles Villa Vicencio in which he demonstrates the dangers posed to our continent by extremist terrorist organisations in Nigeria, Somalia, Algeria, Tunisia, Mali and the Central Africa Republic.

Assad has continuously called for a political solution to the civil war in Syria. He recognises that a military solution is not possible. In an interview with the US journal *Foreign Affairs* (26 January 2015) Assad was asked, "But in the context of Syria, what would a better policy look like?" He responded:

> *One that preserves stability in the Middle East. Syria is the heart of the Middle East. Everybody knows that. If the Middle East is sick, the whole world will be unstable. In 1991, when we started the peace process, we had a lot of hope. Now, after over 20 years, things are not at square one; they're much below that square. So the policy should be to help peace in the region, to fight terrorism, to promote secularism, to support this area economically, to help upgrade the mind and society like you did in your country. That is the supposed mission of the United States, not to launch wars. Launching war doesn't make you a great power.*

The policy position of the South African government was unambiguously spelled out by President Zuma when he addressed the Head of Missions and the media on 15th September 2015. In that briefing, Zuma correctly declared: "To achieve lasting peace in Syria, the international community must reject all calls for regime change in that country. The international community must not support external military interference or any action in Syria that is not in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Support for non-state actors and terrorist organisations that seek to effect a regime change in Syria is unacceptable. As immediate relief for the refugees, we call on our European Union (EU) partners as well as Syria's regional neighbours to assist the Syrian refugees, in full accordance and compliance with all Human Rights and Humanitarian laws. We pledge our support to the EU as it grapples with this challenging situation."

> "It is not for external powers to decide who and what political party governs Syria. That is the duty and responsibility of the people of Syria."

It is not for external powers to decide who and what political party governs Syria. That is the duty and responsibility of the people of Syria. Their will and choices should be demonstrated in free and fair elections, overseen by competent international bodies and in a climate that is conducive to peace, security and stability. To arrive at such a position would require serious political negotiations, in a climate of give and take and readiness to compromise. Those negotiations will require the support of the UN Security Council, regional powers and progressive forces throughout the world. ■

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Refugee camp - Transit zone Budapest, Keleti Railway Station - Hungary. August 30, 2015. Refugees at the Keleti Railway Station are arriving in Hungary on the way to Germany.

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As savers and investors, it is important to contemplate the impact of our investments on society, allowing us to ensure that our portfolio of investments is not only consistent with our personal principles, but is socially responsible as well.

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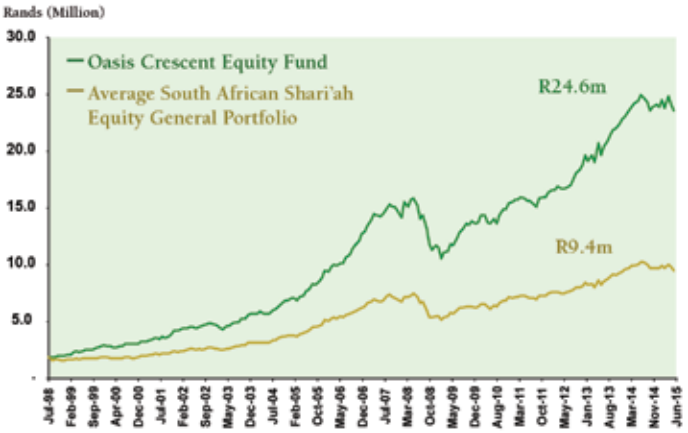
The economy at a glance

In July the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released its latest revisions to the global growth outlook, complete with country-specific forecasts and commentary. Since its annual World Economic Outlook report published in April, global growth expectations have been revised moderately lower, as the world's largest economy, the US, experienced a temporary dip in the early part of the year. By contrast, the Euro area has shown signs of renewed growth potential, while countries such as India and Spain have also had their growth outlook revised upward since the last report on the back of positive structural reform. South Africa's growth expectation remained stable at the relatively muted rate of 2% in 2015 and 2.1% next year. Until the electricity constraint is lifted and our country's labour relations environment improves, the growth outlook may remain subdued relative to other emerging markets in the near term. Over the next 15 years, however, the South African economy is particularly well positioned to benefit from continued progress in the rest of Africa.

A Word on Financial Matters

Financial market volatility has picked up during the second half of the year, partially in the wake of political and economic uncertainty in Greece, but also due to the reversal of unsustainable growth in the Chinese stock market. For many retail investors, more volatile return periods can seem overwhelming, as the financial media typically highlights the greatest risks in the market, and the general feeling of fear sets in. Very often, however, it is at these times that the best investment opportunities present themselves. Rather than retreating to the assumed safety of a bank deposit, staying invested through periods of market turmoil can add significant value to your wealth over the long term. For example, if you had invested in the Oasis Crescent Equity Fund following the global financial crisis, your wealth would have grown by 98% in the 5 years that followed. Indeed, this fund has served as a fantastic tool through which our clients have experienced consistent growth in their real wealth.



R1m invested at inception would be worth R24.6m to 30 June 2015
(Source: Oasis Research using Morningstar Direct)

In the News

The Oasis Group is pleased to announce another exciting milestone. Five of the Oasis global partner's funds are now registered with the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority. The accreditation opens Oasis to the retail and institutional market, making the Oasis global partner's funds accessible through private banks, wealth management companies, platform providers and local investment providers in Switzerland.

As part of the Oasis philosophy of giving, the Oasis Crescent Fund Trust recently donated R641 988 to the Financial Services Consumer Education Foundation for the production of consumer education tools. These tools consisting of various educational guides are aimed at empowering ordinary South Africans to manage their money in a responsible manner so they are able to build a solid financial future.

Left to Right: Adam Ebrahim, Shahin Ebrahim, Nyanisa Majavu and Nazeem Ebrahim

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Saving for a Family Home

Saving for Retirement

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All contributing analysts write in their personal capacity

Dr Ademola Araoye is a former Nigerian diplomat and author of *Cote d'Ivoire, The Conundrum of a Still Wretched of the Earth*. He is an international policy analyst with a special interest in conflict analysis and management. Araoye has significant lived experience of post-conflict societies. He trained at the Claremont Graduate University, CA, United States of America. He teaches part time at the University of Liberia, Monrovia.

Alvin Botes is the Northern Cape ANC Deputy Secretary and MEC for Social Development. He served as ANC Head of Policy and Research in the Northern Cape for ten years. He is a former ANCYL leader, having served as its Provincial Chairperson and Provincial Treasurer, and on its National Executive Committee. He served as SASCO SRC President, Deputy President and Treasurer, whilst successfully completing a BTech Degree (Business Administration) and National Diploma in Management.

Dan Glazebrook is a teacher and political writer based in Oxford, England. He writes mostly on Western foreign policy and is a frequent contributor to *Counterpunch* (USA), *Al Ahram Weekly* (Egypt) and the *Morning Star* (Britain). His first book, *Divide and Ruin: The West's Imperial Strategy in an Age of Crisis* was published by Liberation media in October 2013.

Na'eem Jeenah is the Executive Director of the Afro-Middle East Centre, a research institute based in Johannesburg, South Africa, that focuses on the Middle East and Africa. He has an MA in Religious Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand, and is currently reading for his PhD in Political Studies. Na'eem taught political science at the University of the Witwatersrand. He co-authored (with Shamima Shaikh) *Journey of discovery: A South African Hajj* (2002). His recent publications include: *Pretending democracy: Israel, an ethnocratic state* (2012) and (co-edited) *The PLO: Critical appraisals from the inside* (2014).

Malainin Lakhal is a Saharawi journalist and human rights defender born in the occupied capital of Western Sahara in October 1971. After having suffered Moroccan authorities' harassment and imprisonment in the nineties because of his political views in favour of the independence of his country, he had to flee the territory in 2000. He created the Saharawi journalists and Writers Union (UPES) in 2005 and served as it Secretary General for two terms (2005-2009/2009-2013). He is also active within Saharawi human rights organisations and cooperates with various international NGOs.

Ndumiso Maseko is an activist, blogger, motivational speaker, educator and clothing brand owner. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the University of the Witwatersrand. He started a clothing brand in 2012 called 'I am an AfriCan Clothing' which seeks to promote African consciousness among young people.

Professor Tshilidzi Marwala is the Deputy Vice-chancellor Research, Innovation, Post-Graduate studies and Library at the University of Johannesburg. He is a fellow of the Mapungubwe Institute of Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) and recipient of the Order of Mapungubwe. He holds a PhD in Engineering from the University of Cambridge and was a post-doctoral fellow at Imperial College (London). His research interests include artificial intelligence in engineering and politics. He has supervised 37 Master's and 6 PhD students, published over 210 refereed papers and 4 books, and has also lodged 3 patents.

Dr Sibonginkosi Mazibuko is the Chair of the Department of Development Studies at the University of South Africa (Unisa). He has a PhD and a Master's Degree in Development Administration. He has worked as a researcher with South Africa's major research institutes and has also worked as a school teacher. Dr Mazibuko has a range of research interests including development theory, civil society, rural development, and governance.

Naseera Noor Mahomed is a Political Science graduate. She is currently completing her MPhil in Leadership in Emerging Countries at the University of Johannesburg. In 2011 she was placed on the Dean's List of Academic Excellence (Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg). She is a tutor and skills coach and assists various students of diverse backgrounds.

Busani Ngcaweni currently heads the Office of the Deputy President of South Africa. Before that he served as Manager of Strategy and Special Projects in the same office. Ngcaweni holds a degree in Education from the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) and an MSc in Urban and Regional Planning from the School of Development Studies, Natal University (now merged with UDW to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal). He is a Fellow of the Duke and Cape Town Universities Emerging Leaders Programme. He is the editor of *Emerging Perspectives on the Centenary of the ANC* and *Liberation Diaries, Reflections on 20 Years of Democracy*.

Thando Ntlemeza holds a BA (Law) and postgraduate LLB from the University of Cape Town, where he was active in student politics. He is an Attorney of the Western Cape High Court. He worked as a Senior Researcher for the ANC in parliament. He has written many articles for various publications, including *Hlomelang* (ANCYL) and the ANC's *Umrabulo*.

Yacoob Abba Omar is Director: Operations of the Mapungubwe Institute (MISTRA). He was South Africa's Ambassador to Oman from 2003 to 2008, and then to the United Arab Emirates from 2008 to December 2012. Abba worked as the Deputy Director-General of Government Communications (GCIS) from 1998 to 2002 and prior to that as General Manager: Corporate Affairs of Armscor. During this period he was appointed

onto the South African National AIDS Council and facilitated the Presidency's Scenario Project in 2002 and in 2007.

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.

Mats Svensson had lived in Jerusalem for several years. He started by working in the Swedish Consulate. For the last two years in Jerusalem had walked the separation (apartheid) wall in the West Bank from south to north, following house demolitions in Jerusalem and settlement expansions, and documenting life under the Israeli occupation, apartheid and colonialism. He has previously worked in Congo, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Malawi, and South Africa.

Professor Olúfémi Táíwò teaches at the Africana Studies and Research Centre, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, U.S.A. His research interests include Philosophy of Law, Social and Political Philosophy, Marxism, and African and Africana Philosophy. Táíwò is the author of *Legal Naturalism: A Marxist Theory of Law* (Cornell University Press, 1996), (Chinese Translation, 2013); *How Colonialism Pre-empted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010) and *Africa Must Be Modern: A Manifesto* (Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2012). He is currently working on a monograph tentatively entitled 'Does the United States Need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?'

Professor Charles Villa-Vicencio is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, which he founded, and a Visiting Professor in the Conflict Resolution Programme at Georgetown University in Washington DC. He was the National Research Director in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Villa-Vicencio is also currently a Fellow and Emeritus Professor of the University of Cape Town.

Roj Welat is a Kurd WHO specialises in seeking a peaceful and democratic transition in Kurdistan and the Middle East. As the representative of the Kurdistan Communities Union in South Africa he regularly briefs decision makers in government, political parties and NGOSs on developments in the Middle East. ■

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The Nigerian Elections and the Global African World

Ordinary Africans never gave up on the promise of a life of dignity including, especially, governance by consent, and the fact that their governments should be their servants, not their masters.

By Olúfèmi Táíwò

The 2015 Nigerian elections have come and gone. No doubt, the world, including Africa, is breathing easier. All the dire predictions, in the run-up to the elections, regarding Nigeria's fate, including collapse, break-up and disorder, have not come to pass. And, what is more, the country has pretty much settled into a routine, as does happen in other liberal representative democracies around the world: elections are held, victors accede to office, losers acknowledge their loss and retire to change the outcome the next time around. The people wait for the new regime to show its mettle or lack thereof, and the new regime struggles to show that the electorate has not been wrong about it.

What else is there to say? It is too early to assess the new government that has just been elected. In the current case, we do not even have a government yet: the president, Muhammadu Buhari, is yet to pick his cabinet. There is little doubt that what transpired in Nigeria on May 29, this year, and the elections, especially at the national level, that made that historic day possible, harbour deep significance for not just the country itself, but as important, for the African

continent. In this article I shall explore the significance of the Nigerian elections for the African continent.

It has been fifty plus years now since most of Africa won independence from their former colonial overlords. In the original struggle for independence, the teeming masses of Africans from Cape to Cairo were promised what was generally dubbed "the fruits of independence". For the most part, people, leaders and followers alike, understood this to mean the delivery to Africans, whatever their station in life, of a life of dignity, free of want, ill-health and ignorance; one marked by hope for their progeny and confidence that they would never again suffer any of the depredations and indignities that they had associated with colonial rule.

For too long this idea was understood by too many – scholars, policy-makers, and ordinary citizens alike – in what I would call very narrow crass, material terms: building schools, tarring roads, innumerable prestige projects. The failure of these diverse investments across the board meant that the continent is today nowhere near resolving the paradox that has always marked its profile since the nineteenth century: that Africa is the richest continent while Africans are the poorest people on earth. The excessive focus on the material iterations of the fruits of independence has been responsible for the limited attention paid to the other meaning of the fruits of independence that resonated on a deeper level with those who led the struggle for independence across the continent and in the African Diaspora. This has to do with the more fundamental commitment to the idea of "freedom for all" that was the ultimate hallmark of the struggle for independence.

As Kwame Nkrumah once put it:

In our struggle for freedom, parliamentary democracy was as vital an aim as independence. The two were inseparable. It was not our purpose to rid the country of the colonial régime in order to substitute an African tyranny. We wanted to free our people from arbitrary rule, and to give them the freedom to choose the kind of government they felt would best serve their interests and enhance their welfare.[1]

He was not alone. Obafemi Awolowo, too, declared:

As we planned for Nigeria's independence, we were fully conscious that freedom from British rule does not necessarily connote freedom for individual Nigerian citizens. I and most of my colleagues are democrats by nature, and socialists by conviction. We believe in the democratic way of life: equality under the law, respect for the fundamental rights of individual citizens, and the existence of independent and impartial tribunals where these rights could be enforced. We believe that the generality of the people should enjoy this life and do so in reasonable abundance. The most detestable feature of British administration was that the governed had no say in the appointment of those who governed them. A Nigerian administration by Nigerians must be erected on the general consent and the united goodwill of the majority of the people. In my view, there can be no satisfactory alternative to this. At the same time I fully recognise that the healthy growth of a democratic way of life requires the existence of an enlightened community led by a group of people who are imbued with the all-consuming urge to defend, uphold and protect the human dignity and the legal equality of their fellow-men.[2]

> "In the past, it would have taken a mere fraction of the failings that I just mentioned to provoke intervention from our self-appointed "correctors" of errant civilian regimes: the military."

Lamentably, once independence was obtained, Africa's rulers decided that the struggle for freedom was over and done with. They proceeded to put in place diverse political contraptions designed to subvert and deny the freedom of their people, turn their citizens to subjects, substitute their wills for those of their people when it came to the installation of governments all across the continent. Any more trucking with freedom? No, they had their coats of arms, their flags, their national anthems, and so on. It was almost as if they thought that the struggle they had led for independence did not include the freedom of individual citizens to have, hold, and seek to realise their own conceptions of the good life; the proverbial freedom to be let alone, especially by their governors; the impermissibility of governmental interference with the details of their daily lives; limits on the powers of government; and the sanctity of their dignity and their life.

One thing is fairly certain, though. Through all the shenanigans of African governments, the long history of misrule by assorted governmental and personal types – from Bokassa to Gadhafi, from "empire" to a "state of the people" – even in their most penurious situations, ordinary Africans never gave up on the promise of a life of dignity including, especially, governance by consent, and the fact that their governments should be their servants, not their masters.

The struggle of the masses for these more fundamental freedoms has gathered pace since 1991 when the Republic of Bénin became the first to embody institutionally this "second struggle for freedom", by constituting a sovereign national conference that unseated a corrupt and repressive military regime.

I would like to argue that what is now clearly a momentum for liberal representative government, however inadequately it is realised, is the larger context within which we should situate what is gradually becoming "the new normal" in Africa: democratic transitions according to rules that are less and less vulnerable to whimsy and chicanery and the enshrinement of governance by the consent of the governed.

Nigeria is the latest in a growing list of African countries that are making governance by consent, expressed

primarily through the instrumentality of free and fair elections, the core principle of legitimacy of representative government and its associated control of the institutions of state. But the Nigerian situation attracted special attention for good reasons.

Nigeria epitomises the paradox that is Africa. Everyone talks about Africa being the richest continent while Africans are the poorest people. One would ordinarily think that Africa's most populous country, home to some of the most stupendous natural wealth including vast expanses of arable land and some of the most hardworking and creative people anywhere in the world, would have found workable solutions to some of life's most intractable problems. Unfortunately, not only has it failed spectacularly on these scores, it has not even managed to establish peaceful governance and justice for its citizens.

Since its independence in 1960, the country has spent the most of its existence as a sovereign state under rule by its military. This military exploited the "presumptive legitimacy" created for its intervention by the repeated misrule of civilian administrators which made it a sometimes welcome and for the most part, a legitimate participant in the political order.

Nigeria survived a bloody civil war from 1967-1970 which claimed millions of lives and raised the spectre of genocide against one its major national groups, the Igbo. Its economy, dominated by a singular reliance on oil, has only recently begun to reflect some serious diversification although government revenues continue to be most determined by the vagaries of the oil market. On all indices of a good life, the more abundant life that was for so long identified with the fruits of independence, the country has regressed from its position at independence in 1960: in the areas of health, education, standard of living of its citizens, Nigeria now sits on the bottom rungs of the ladder compared to peer countries like Indonesia, Mexico, and Brazil.

This was the background to the transition to civilian rule in 1999 and the expectations that attended that transition on the part of many Nigerians. With a former military ruler, Olusegun Obasanjo, at the helm of a democratic regime, popularly elected, the country was set on a new path, a new chapter in the perennial struggle to deliver on the promise of independence for Nigerians. His party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), would remain in power at the federal level till May 29, this year. In 2003, 2007, and 2011, the PDP got the better of the other numerous parties arraigned against it in all federal elections. Although none of those elections escaped charges of rigging and unfairness, the 2007 version being the most egregious in this respect, by all accounts, the opposition parties licked their wounds and reset for subsequent ones. In the meantime, the economy kept going down and the scourge of corruption became worse year after year.

It was becoming obvious by 2011 that PDP, regardless of its boast and swagger – at one point, its former chairman declared that the party would rule Nigeria for 60 years – could be beaten. The elections in 2011 merit special mention because many of the issues that would dominate the most recent elections were presaged then. The bane of the Nigerian opposition had always been disunity in the face of cabal-like ruling parties that are often able to combine in themselves different segments of Nigeria's otherwise fragmented ruling class into electoral juggernauts united only by their direct access to the spoils of power. But the history of the country has also shown that the division in the ranks of the opposition always plays into the hands of the ruling parties and, to a great extent, makes the electorate come to believe that any vote not cast for the ruling party was, effectively, a wasted vote. But 2011 was slightly different. Here is why.

> "The lesson is clear: African countries and their citizens must begin to look at their multiple pluralisms as a strength, not as a weakness."

A sea-change had been initiated with the conclusion of Obasanjo's presidency. With term-limits making it impossible for Obasanjo to succeed himself, his exit marked a significant milestone in the political history of post-independence Nigeria. For the very first time in the political history of post-independence Nigeria, the country's political landscape did not have any dominant national figures. Yes, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua succeeded Obasanjo but he was not a political national heavyweight in the mould of the founding fathers of the country like Ahmadu Bello, Nnamdi Azikiwe, or Obafemi Awolowo. Neither did he have the long history of being a part of the founding or immediate succeeding generation of politicians.

Even among the ex-military rulers who were dominant in the political parties, the man who would become the new president in 2015 was no more than a regional leader and his party then, the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), was a party with its strength mostly in the north western part of the country. In the south western part of the country, the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) held sway while in the eastern section the All Progressives Grand Alliance was the local champion. But as the PDP was fond of pointing out, it was the only party that had national spread and still won elections at local levels in different parts of Nigeria.

This was the context for the 2011 elections in which Goodluck Jonathan, the erstwhile deputy to Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the then incumbent, having taken over the presidency on the death of his principal in 2010, emerged the president. Although I cannot make the case here, the failure of the opposition parties to consolidate their support paved the way for the emergence of a truly "accidental president" – apologies to Nasir el Rufai – if ever there was one. He was a man with clearly no constituency who had gone into his last two positions by default. First, he was a deputy state governor who became governor on the impeachment of his boss; then he was a vice president

who became president on the death of his boss. No doubt, had he been a different kind of person, it might have worked out for him. But as it turned out he rode in on the back of his party and was never able to put his stamp on his administration or the massive country he was elected to rule.

When Jonathan assumed the presidency in 2010, Boko Haram was limited to practically one state, Borno, in the northeast. The insurgency did not originate under him but under his former boss. By the time this year's elections came around, Boko Haram had almost the entire northeast region of Nigeria under its misguided rule and the Nigerian state seemed at a loss to know what to do. I do not intend to retell the saga of Boko Haram in a piece whose main aim is to reflect on the implications of the Nigerian elections for the African context. The fate of the Chibok girls, kidnapped for the past seventeen months, is a singular testament to the inability of the Nigerian government under Jonathan to perform the most basic function of any state, however it is constituted: the protection of lives, limbs, and property of its citizens. Their kidnapping is the most symbolic of the reign of mayhem that Nigerian citizens of the northeast region have had to endure throughout the tenure of Jonathan. There were, in addition, bombings across the entire northern region, pipeline vandalisation, and just widespread insecurity in the entire country that created the general impression that the government of the day had lost its way.

Then there was the exponential growth in the incidence of corruption. This also made people think that whatever little progress that had been made under Obasanjo had been lost. Finally, the economy was failing, fuel shortages were rampant, and the power supply had fallen to its lowest levels in decades.

In the past, it would have taken a mere fraction of the failings that I just mentioned to provoke intervention from our self-appointed "correctors" of errant civilian regimes: the military. It is a sign of the tremendous progress that the continent has made that there was no whiff of a pending coup even when it appeared that the PDP was acting with such impunity that one was tempted to think that Jonathan and his group were wishing a coup on the country. The deepening of the democratic temperament is palpable in the fact that coups d'état and other forms of extraconstitutional rule, including illegitimate tenure elongation, are no longer entertained in the continent.

Additionally, in line with what we pointed out above, the masses of Nigerians were lying in wait for the incumbent regime, determined to show their dissatisfaction, fully charged to perform their near-sacred duty of choosing who was going to rule them come the next election cycle. They were not going to be provoked into the streets when it appeared that the PDP government was desperately looking for a way to stem the momentum of the opposition in the dying days of the electioneering campaign by postponing the elections by six weeks, citing as its justification the same security situation in the northeast that it had allowed to fester for four years.

> "A well-run continent would be a magnet for Diasporic Africans in the same way that both India and China have become for their long-dispersed Diasporic citizens."

It is one thing for the electorate to do their part; it is a completely different thing to have institutions dedicated to procuring free and fair elections. Even in so-called advanced democracies, there never is a time when we can stop being vigilant, for there are those who will do whatever they can to disenfranchise others or discount their votes. The ongoing saga regarding voting restrictions in the United States designed to disenfranchise or reduce the impact of the vote of non-white groups is an object lesson that we fail to heed at our own peril. In the history of Nigeria, the career of our national electoral bodies has not been a sterling one. This is where one of the decisions taken by Jonathan early in his presidency turned out to be one of the brightest elements of his legacy.

The appointment of Attahiru Jega, a professor of political science and an illustrious past president of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), as the head of the Independent National Elections Commission (INEC), against determined opposition from portions of his own party's leadership, was an important piece of the drive to deepen the institutionalisation of democracy in Nigeria. Needless to say, when you have all sides of a contest criticise you at different times for being partial, you must be doing something right. And Jega surely did a lot of things right.

Again, the empanelling of a truly independent commission under Jega's leadership must be put on the same level as the institutional changes that Kenya put in place after the 2007/2008 electoral debacle and the ensuing mayhem — a new constitution, a new top-level judiciary, etc. This ensured that when the elections were held in 2013, even though Raila Odinga lost again, he and his supporters had more confidence in the courts and in the process, generally, and we saw Kenya strengthening its democratic bona fides as a result.

It is heartening that this is another trend that Nigeria just instantiated following the pattern in other African countries such as Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Zambia, Benin, and Senegal, where trust in electoral contests has benefited from the play of impartial arbitrating institutions. One only laments the fact that Nigeria is a late arrival to this realisation. As I have written elsewhere, "To grow the trust of African citizens in the institutions that govern their lives is the ultimate challenge that African countries have faced since colonialism ended and they received what was, at best, flag independence, and lack of practice at developing the requisite temperament for the practice of representative government. It is only now that, having lived and suffered under and held back by myriad forms of misrule – one-party autocracies, military dictatorships,

misbegotten radical regimes – that cared nothing for the consent of the governed, Africans are more committed than ever before to ensuring that they only live under governments that they themselves have chartered with their votes, freely cast."

The final piece of the Nigerian electoral puzzle is the opposition. I shall refrain from going into the dynamics of population politics in the country. It suffices to say that in an electoral map drawn by the BBC after the 2011 elections, it became clear that a new political reality had taken hold in the country. Before then, the belief was that no one could win the presidency of the country without winning the north of the country. Jonathan managed to pull off that feat in 2011. Buhari, who ran then on the platform of the CPC, won the north and Jonathan, on the PDP platform, won the south and central parts of Nigeria. His election then made him the first democratic ruler of Nigeria to not come from within the ranks of the "Big Three" national groups that dominate Nigerian life and politics: Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba. The key back then was the southwest, dominated by the Yoruba nation. The ACN tried but ultimately failed to come to an understanding with the CPC to run a joint ticket. When the negotiations collapsed on the eve of the presidential elections, the ACN national leadership instructed their members to split their votes: vote CAN locally for governor and state elections; vote Jonathan, not the PDP, for president. Jonathan then was seen as a breath of fresh air and a person that they could trust even if they could not embrace his party. That was Jonathan's path to the presidency in 2011.

Having realised the futility of running as a divided opposition against a united juggernaut, the CPC and the ACN, with a smaller portion of the APGA and many other smaller parties, eventually came together in February 2013 to form a single party, the All Progressives Congress, to confront the PDP in the 2015 elections. With the populous southwest firmly taken away from him and with Buhari's standing in the north even more enhanced than in 2011, there was no clear path to the presidency or even a plurality in the national assembly for either Jonathan or his party. The outcome of that strategy is now well known: Buhari is president of Nigeria and the APC is firmly in control of both chambers of the national assembly.

Again, we can find parallels with other African countries, the most important being Kenya. Zimbabwe is not a good example because of the absolute and suffocating Shona dominance; no unified opposition can succeed there that does not peel away a significant percentage of the Shona population to its side. One may quibble about the lack of principles or ideological orientation in the coming together that produced APC in the Nigerian case. But the lesson is clear: African countries and their citizens must begin to look at their multiple pluralisms as a strength, not as a weakness. They must create links across the many fissures: institutions, especially political parties, that will eventually become vehicles for real electoral contestations and alternative conceptions of the good life that should hopefully animate future regimes in our various countries.

> "Buhari is president of Nigeria and the APC is firmly in control of both chambers of the national assembly"

Without the APC, and the ancillary curbs placed on personal ambitions and individual glories among its principal functionaries, Nigeria would have continued under the dissolute rule of the PDP.

But why should all this matter? Put differently, why do Nigerian elections matter for Africa and the global African world, generally? It is not enough that Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Only when the country begins to fill the role that that historical accident has assigned to it will it have earned the respect that is due to a putative leader of a resurgent Africa. As I have shown above, many of the things that we celebrated in respect of the recent Nigerian elections are now almost routine in other African countries. Ghana has witnessed transfers of power from one party to another and back to the earlier ruling party. Benin has done this more than any other country. Senegal has done it going back to Abdou Diouf's handing over to Abdoulaye Wade. Now that Nigeria has witnessed a peaceful handover of power by one civilian regime to another without a detour into military "correction" we know that even big and complex Nigeria can manage pluralisms and complexity within a democratic ambit.

Now that the new government has dedicated itself to fighting corruption and cleaning up the polity, the consequences for doing business or even relocating to the country to live can only be better because, as I have pointed out on other occasions, the primary reason South Africa and Ghana suddenly became preferred destinations for Nigerians looking for more control over their lives without having to deal with the incubus of racism in Euro-America is because they are two countries that have made giant strides as rule of law polities.

Finally, given Nigeria's resources and economy of scale, a well-run country cannot but contribute to changing the global perception of black people everywhere. A well-run continent would be a magnet for Diasporic Africans in the same way that both India and China have become for their long-dispersed Diasporic citizens. That is the ultimate significance of a Nigeria on the move for the rest of Africa and the global African world.

Nigeria's elections are yet another giant step in the progress towards the institutionalisation of a liberal democratic tradition of organising political life in Africa. They move us closer to that day when articles like this will no longer be required because elections have become so ordinary that we will need to refer to the present only in the history classes of the future. ■

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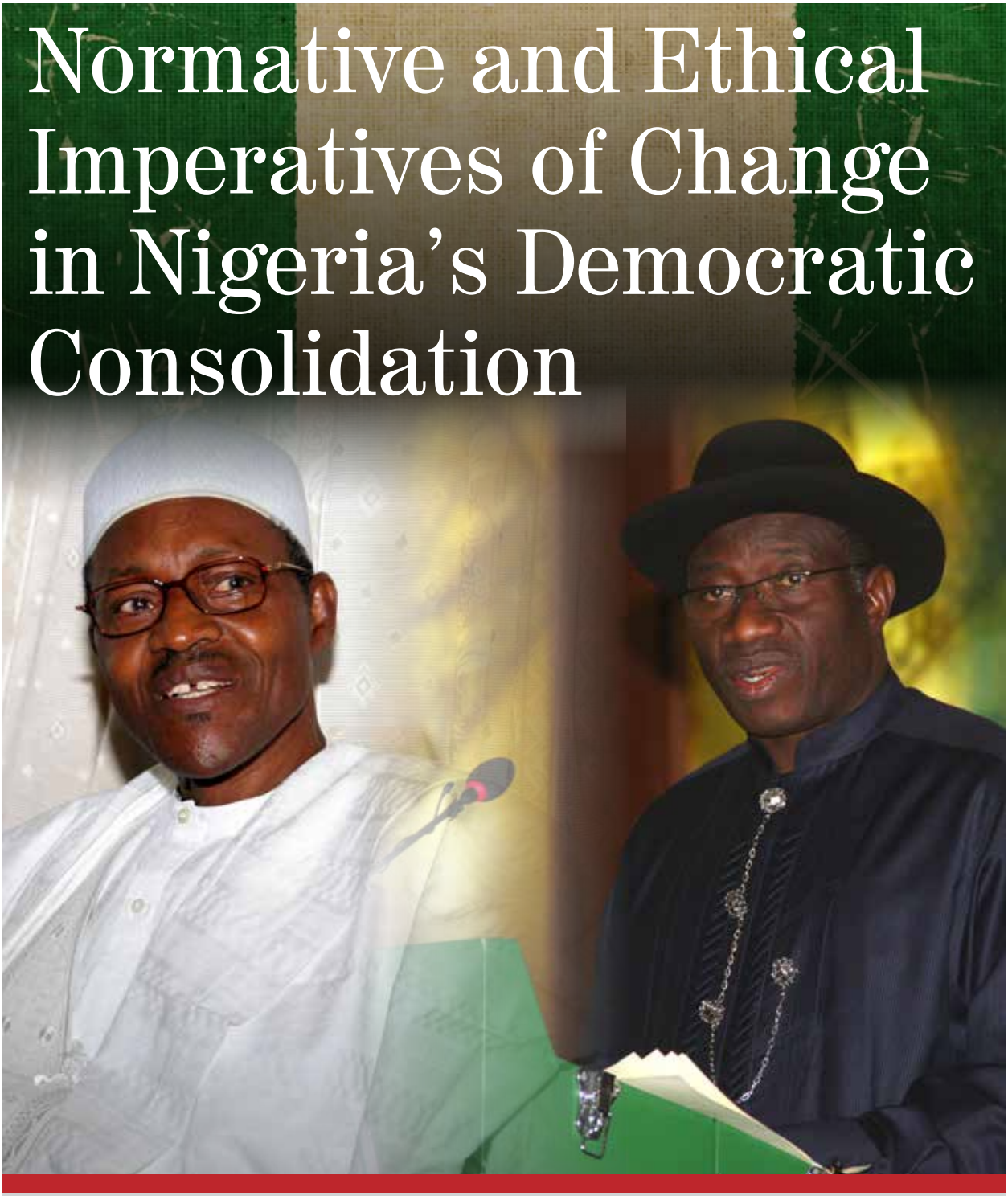
Normative and Ethical Imperatives of Change in Nigeria's Democratic Consolidation



The real challenge is whether this putative new order has the motive force to galvanise the necessary popular support for this more ethically grounded democratic dispensation in Nigeria's public life.

By Ademola Araoye

The 2015 national legislative and presidential elections in Nigeria last March were a historic watershed in many respects. The elections exposed the elitism and conspiratorial underpinnings of the subsisting political settlement in the country to serious questioning. Yet, the prebendal political settlement based on patronage among a faction of the social, administrative, business-cum-entrepreneurial elite, working in connivance with the political class, has long provided the glue holding together the clashing and divergent elite interests across the amalgamated multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-national geo-political space.

The political settlement was negotiated around power-sharing and the structure of the rentier state. These were secured through the alternation of political power between the predominantly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south and the relative neglect of minorities by the larger triad of ethno-regional forces as an informal strategy to mitigate the country's polarisation. In a perverse manner therefore, the agreed informal and formal political bargains among the elite implicated in this settlement moved Nigeria closer to overcoming, but not quite, the Lucien Pye classic multi-dimensional crises of the post-colonial state. This is the crisis of identity, integration, participation, distribution and of critical salience, of penetration.

In essence, the common understandings forged between the rapacious prebendal elites offered the chance of freezing, at least in the short-term, the fundamental challenges to the legitimacy of the construction of the Nigerian state space and its internal dynamics and workings. But the terms of the settlement were not founded on any distillation or rationalisation of the popular praxis and were accordingly elitist as they were not designed to advance the interests of the Nigerian state and its people.

Given the contrived nature of the political system, crisis had always characterised any general election in Nigeria, and there had been no general election since independence in 1960 that did not end in serious disputations, crisis, violence and even bloodshed. Today, it appears that Nigeria is not capable of conducting free and fair elections that do not end in chaos and violence.[1] As Frantz Fanon observed in the trials and tribulations of national consciousness, instead of being the coordinated crystallisation of the people's innermost aspirations, instead of being the most tangible, popular mobilisation, national consciousness in the post-colonial context is nothing but a crude, empty, fragile, shell.[2] The Nigerian experience has so far validated this acute observation.

In concretising these Fanonian directives, building and sustaining a well-governed state requires responsible leaders accountable to the people. It requires leadership characterised by a level of statesmanship and it needs a social contract formed by a committed government.[3] The political settlement emerging from the Nigerian empty shell was thus anti-people. It violated established principles behind the good governance concept that the obligation of governors and governments is to perform their functions so as to promote values of efficiency and responsiveness to civil society or the people they are answerable to. By doing so the government is expected to limit corruption or ensure non-corruptibility, equitable distribution of goods, and transparency in the allocation of state resources.[4]

> “The establishment routinely undertook strategic cleansing of its own ranks and of opposition forces through assassinations that became a part of the political culture that was institutionalised under the Sani Abacha dictatorship.”

But as Joy Alemazung notes, this is problematic where the system is deficient in the right kind of democratic constitution and political arrangements necessary to safeguard constitutionalism, as well as lacking a good leadership acting in the interest of the people and not for the leaders. She further argues that even though good governance and democracy are far from being synonymous, they are necessary for any successful political system aiming to establish and promote economic and socio-political development in Africa. Finally she cites Anthony Giddens' definition of power in a general sense as the capability to intervene in a given set of events to alter them. Giddens terms this the transformative capacity. In democratic governance, the leader or the government exercise the power they receive from the people to govern for the people. This power is granted to the governor based on trust that the state will represent and fight for their common interest.[5]

The entrenched Nigerian dispensation practically foreclosed the possibility of an inclusive social contract of all for all on the terms of governance of the Nigerian state until, hopefully, the last 2015 elections. The prevailing political settlement merely temporarily put in abeyance the critical dilemmas, including the security dilemma, that are pervasive in most culturally heterogeneously constructed post-colonial political spaces.

To sustain this political arrangement, the establishment routinely undertook strategic cleansing of its own ranks and of opposition forces through assassinations that became a part of the political culture that was institutionalised under the Sani Abacha dictatorship. This cleansing extended into the Olusegun Obasanjo PDP administration with the political assassination of major political elites, including the Attorney General, Bola Ige, and other prominent citizens such as Harry Marshal, reaching its routinised crescendo. The orchestrated political killings under the Obasanjo administration remain unresolved.

The deficiencies in the political arrangement, the absolute lack of transformative capacity of the elite, set the course for the emergence of a Nigerian expression of a Weberian

state where the state was merely a set of instruments of domination. The regimes, applying the underhand rules, principles, norms and modes of interaction that governed the interaction among contesting and contending social groups and the state organs that emerged delegitimised this normative Nigerian state. These paradoxes drove the last elections.

The opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) reflects a realignment of political forces and is stronger than any of its predecessors that ever challenged the established Nigerian political settlement and status quo. The outcome of the elections constituted the first democratically sanctioned major assault on this contrived Weberian national order and also saw the emergence of the first political organisation of a national character to overtly repudiate the integrity of the fundamentals of the formal and informal unethical internal operating principles of the Nigerian state. Credible attempts to institute profound change in the governance paradigm and to reconfigure the national ethical plane in the past had been violently quashed and frustrated, with dire consequences for the evolutionary path of the Nigerian state and society.

From the March 2015 elections emerged clearly defined national normative and ethical imperatives against historic impediments that have militated against the Nigerian sense of nationhood: ethno-regional and religious affinities. It may be surmised that a clear power transition from a very destructive status quo elite constituency has taken place in favour of a perceived progressive ethical political charge in Nigeria. This is ready to deconstruct the extant political settlement with a view to dismantling the entrenched regime of national governance as well as upending a political culture rooted in an atrociously efficient Nigerian national prebendal order. It is in this connection that, according to Muhammadu Buhari, his mission is to stop corruption and make the ordinary people, the weak and the vulnerable, the new top priority.

The real challenge is whether this putative new order has the motive force to galvanise the necessary popular support for this more ethically grounded democratic dispensation in Nigeria's public life. This recalibration of the normative and ethical impulses of state and society in Nigeria naturally encapsulates the most salient dimensions of a consolidated democracy: holistic social emancipation and the freedoms inherent to this emancipation; morality in public space; transparency, accountability; altruism; universality in national operating principles; and meritocracy. Against this background, the parameters of Nigeria's consolidated democracy have therefore to transcend Schumpetarian notions of mere process focused periodic electioneering that is the norm in most of Africa and has been the hallmark of Nigeria's mangled engagement with the caricature of democracy that was institutionalised under and by the colonial forces that led to independence on 1 October, 1960.

> "Allowing corrupt officials to benefit from their crime has a degenerative effect on the institutions of governance, human rights and the rule of law."

Described by Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka as the "most expensive, most prodigal, wasteful, senseless, I mean really insensitive in terms of what people live on in this country" and "the real naira-dollar extravaganza spent on just subverting, shall we say, the natural choices of people,"[6] the March 2015 elections presented many haunting paradoxes. These paradoxes were in perceptions of diametrically opposed symbolic representations, and in actuality, of the incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan, and his challenger Muhammadu Buhari. The former, as the public face of the post-Abacha national trauma new republic, that is in actuality signposted by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, Goodluck Jonathan was caricatured as personifying the entrenched decadent status quo founded on a discredited political settlement. The latter, a former military dictator, was cast as a born again opposition democrat who was popularly perceived as leading the vanguard of an emergent new hopeful and sanitised Nigerian democratic dispensation.

The line was drawn in the sand. Observers suggested that the historic antagonists of the Nigerian state and society were said to be bold, bogus, gaudy, vainglorious, pretentious and shameless. They had no scruples whatsoever. They were bandits blatant in their debasement. They were rapacious, predatory and plundering. They were ferocious, voracious and furious. They were marauding, murderous and mendacious. They were deceitful, deceptive and duplicitous. They didn't give a damn about Nigerians or Nigeria as a country as long as they were able to loot without let or hindrance. They coveted and chased power by all and any means necessary to be able to impede the long arm of the law and protect their plunder.[7]

Therefore, at a more defining level, the elements of these paradoxes included sharp moral dichotomies and tensions that cascaded from the unambiguous clarity of the ethical and normative gulf that was implicit in the ethic-driven populist change mantra of the opposition and the defence of the status quo by the extant administration.

These sharp ethical differentiations notwithstanding, the counter poise to these imperatives was the convenient horse trading and the calculated, and some would say strategic, defections from the core caucus of the status quo forces. Such defections carried with them threats of undermining not only the very fundamentals of the change of revolutionary proportions envisaged, but also compromised the very vessel of a change that was most unwanted by the beneficiaries and guardians of the troubling Nigerian status quo. Popular definitions and perceptions of the normative and ethical obligations demanded, as well as the task of national rejuvenation, were associated with already established and acknowledged populist moral

benchmarks to be attained for national redemption. These paradoxes and the challenges integral to them have remained at the heart of a dampened and sluggish momentum for the anticipated change so far generated by the process.

Scott Sonenshein, in investigations focused on the corporate world, provides an interesting conceptual framework to explore the challenges of the normative and ethical imperatives of change in Nigeria's democratic consolidation. In the context of strategic change, he described the emergence of three ethical issues and builds a theory to explain how this emergence unfolds. He found that some employees reframe the meaning of strategic issues as involving ethical implications because of trigger points, ambiguity, and the use of an available employee welfare frame. Sonnenshein argues that employees take the meaning of strategic issues and reinterpret them as either leading to harmful consequences or the violation of a right. In summing up the relevant literature on this issue, he highlights the fact that main primary literatures addressing how ethical issues arise converge in primarily treating ethical issues as objective properties, that is, as existing in the environment independent of individuals' meaning constructions, and also as something individuals respond to rather than create.[8]

Sonnenshein's framework helps to understand the framing of the normative and ethical challenges of the status quo in Nigeria, especially in the run up to the presidential elections. The trigger points or issues in this instance were abundant and undoubtedly impacted on the welfare of Nigerians with their harmful consequences. The change mantra had ceased to be philosophical. It had acquired an existential salience for the very concept of the Nigerian state. The change wasn't about displacing the People's Democratic Party (PDP), or even getting victory at the polls, but about managing the difficult choices called for in the normative exigencies facing the nation, and in accepting the ethical realignments for greater good. That is change.

But that exactly expressed the problem of a nearly compromised vessel for change in an APC as status quo forces entrenched in its ranks bared their fangs almost immediately after the inauguration of a new democratically elected President Muhammadu Buhari.

Bisi Akande, former chairman who for the most part directed the navigation of the APC through the many minefields laid by the PDP during a difficult registration process, noted that the ultimate aim of forces behind what he described as a rebellion within the APC was to make nonsense of the full-scale war against corruption promised by the Buhari-led administration. He explained that most of the northern elite, the Nigerian oil subsidy barons and other business cartels who never liked Buhari's anti-corruption political stance were quickly backing the rebellion against the APC with strong support. "While other position seekers are waiting in the wings until Buhari's ministers are announced, a large section of the South-West sees the rebellion as a conspiracy of the North against the Yoruba," he added.

> "On assuming office, President Muhammadu Buhari summarily slashed his and the Vice President's salary by 50% even as he refused the offer of four armoured limousines at the cost of four hundred million Naira."

Akande alleged that the destabilisation plot against the APC actually began shortly after the party won the presidential poll, with some members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) extraction in the merger party holding a secret meeting in Abuja on how to hijack the party. He observed that many of those calling themselves businessmen in Nigeria act like leeches, sucking the nation's blood through various state governments and particularly through the PDP-led Federal Government. While all these schisms were going on in the APC, those who were jittery of Buhari's constant threat of an anti-corruption battle began to encourage and finance rebellions against the APC's democratic positions, which led to the emergence of Senator Saraki as the candidate of the PDP tendencies inside and outside APC.

This driving template for the much awaited change was forged in the crucible of a damning historicity of the Nigeria state process that was predicated on the seemingly intractable permanence of a harmful anomie characterising its society.

In this expansive and dense den of all pervading quackery, resting on entrenched systemic illogic, false and omniscient self-serving political hegemons and bestriding impostor social oracles multiplied. These produced retrogressive projections of crude affirmations of sub-national quotas, bogus communal and massively deformed individual spirituality thriving in hues of vacuous national salvations peddled by ubiquitous morally moronic Tartuftes as well as ascendant fresh brother Jeroboams still wearing their talismans and large golden crosses, engrossed in patented commercialised political religiosity. These are retailed in the dilapidated cathedrals of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), in second hand markets stalls with the tantalising glitz of unbridled and naked sensuousness and collapsed brothels of synagogues of false vendors of Pentecostal abracadabra.

To this mix is added the utter devastation of communities and individual fortunes in the senselessness of the bloody campaign of Boko Haram that had long rejected the status quo in imitative preference of a resurgent global millennial madness expressed in the form of an Islamic caliphate. These were to be fulfilled through a horrific killing machinery of externally inspired and locally grown Islamic fundamentalism. These constituted the dominant foundation blocks of the

rejected status quo.

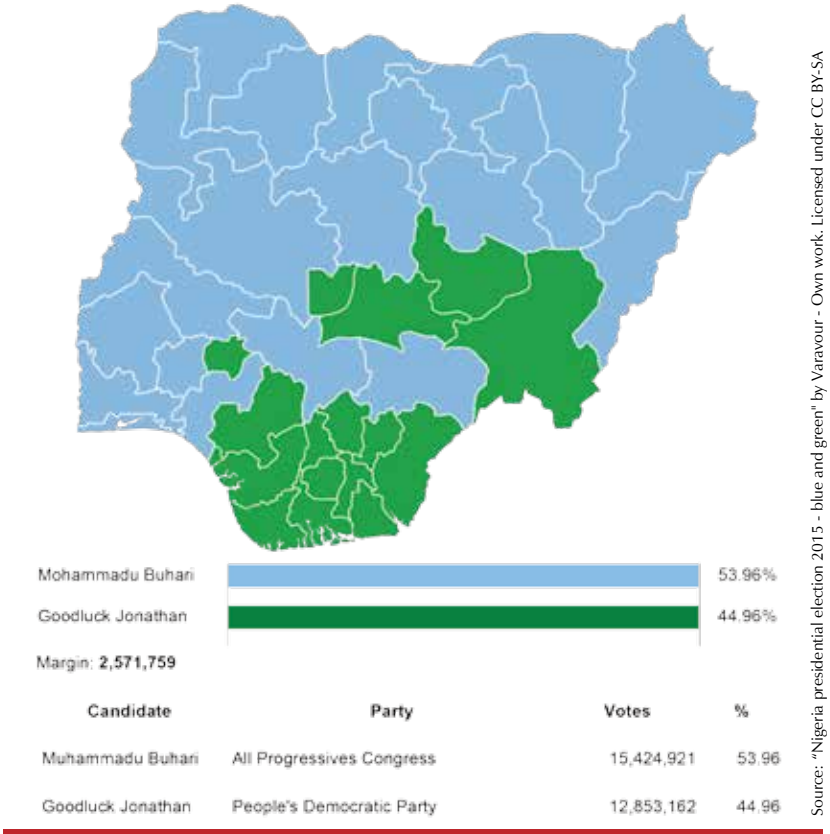
The old political settlement was deconstructed through many prisms. A people-fashioned template, a mental strategic blueprint for integral and holistic emancipation in the imagination of the desperate lumpen masses stuck in the very pit of national dispossession, was constantly pitched in confrontation with the systematically orchestrated suffocating systemic odour and the moral and ethical turpitude that defined the Nigerian state and its society.

Many in diasporic bewilderment waxed mythological and biblical about the horrendous ledger of the status quo. It was exuded in these constituencies of faith healers that any party with the name People's Democratic Party was doomed forever in the history of Nigeria. Repeatedly, it was affirmed that the PDP will never win elections at the centre, never, ever again in the history of Nigeria. Its members were challenged to write down a biblical memorial. "These are the words of the Lord to the remnants of the PDP as contained in Exodus 17: 14: 'Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.'[9]

Others, more secular and practical, with their feet rooted in terra firma, observed the consequences of corruption in bringing the Nigerian state to its knees. In this connection, Kolawole Olaniran noted that the near bankruptcy of the Nigerian state could be traced to a sector of the economy: institutionalised corruption. He said that Nigeria was broke and the fact that several of its 36 states had not been able to pay their workers' salaries was hardly surprising given that for many years the country had fallen victim to systematic stealing by career politicians and soldiers dabbling in politics. Previously considered a matter of "little brown envelopes" he noted that corruption had metamorphosed into a "profitable business" for politicians (and their families and friends, the so-called go-betweens or 'looting pipes'), corporations and financial institutions and centres.

Waxing moral on the debilitating state of the economy, Olaniran asserted

Geographic Distribution of Votes in 2011 Presidential Election



Geographic Distribution of Votes in 2015 Presidential Election

that stealing was odious, illegal and immoral but that stolen funds don't stink, as corrupt officials continued to empty the public treasuries for personal gains – to amass luxury cars, buy extravagant homes, and enjoy exotic vacations – to the amazement and anger of millions of Nigerians. Images of government officials lining their pockets with the treasure of the poor are stark and raw. The abundance of wealth of the ruling class stood in stark contrast to the poverty of the majority of Nigerians. Finally, he proposed that allowing corrupt officials to benefit from their crime has a degenerative effect on the institutions of governance, human rights and the rule of law.

Meanwhile, an elite constituency of the damned in Nigerian public life was further defined by Remi Oyeyemi. He asserts that this group, who also camouflage as friends of the President, are willing to use President Buhari as a sacrificial lamb for their end goal. And that is exactly what they want, to pave the way for their own diabolical plans. He described them as possessing a lot of resources they stole from under the nose of Olusegun Obasanjo-Onyejekwe. Some present and past governors belong to this group. They are generous to a fault and are ardent believers in Babangidaism – a philosophy that everyone has a price and can be bought! They will spend any amount of naira, pounds sterling, dollars and euros to win and achieve their objective. They are crass opportunists. He concludes that the leading lights of this group have international criminal records and are pariahs in some Western countries.

This debilitating public perception of the status quo was corroborated by the unending blight of scandals that engulfed the pivotal economic institutions. By 2011 speculation was rife that that the proceeds of an alleged bribe by Nigerian big oil players may have helped to finance a twenty million dollar Vienna home whose purchase was traced to the country's Minister for Petroleum Resources. By late 2014, the central bank found that between January 2012 and July 2013 NNPC lifted 594 million barrels of crude oil valued at $65 billon, and out of that amount NNPC only repatriated $15 billion, representing 24 percent of the value. That meant the NNPC was yet to account for, and repatriate to the Federation Account, an amount in excess of $49.804 billion or 76 percent of the value of oil lifted in the same period.

While this played out, key allies of the President in the administration were drowning in all manner of allegations of scandalous transactions. In April, 2014, Minister of Aviation, Stella Oduah, was invited by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to shed light on the purchase of two BMW bulletproof cars by the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority at a controversial sum of N255m. In October, 2014, the House of Representatives urged the President to review the continued engagement of the Minister of Aviation for having contravened the Appropriation Act, 2013 by exceeding the Ministry of Aviation's approval limit of N100m in the purchase of 54 vehicles valued at N643m. By July 2015, the former Head of Service of the Federation, Stephen Oronsaye had been docked over his alleged complicity in a money laundering and contract scam amounting to about N1.9billion.[10]

> "Surveying the depressing situation, the Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, who has acquired the toga of a national conscience, decried the Nigerian legislature as a "nest of thieves".

The most cited evidence was in the salaries and perquisites of the President, through to legislators, and down to operatives at the local government level. On assuming office, President Muhammadu Buhari summarily slashed his and the Vice President's salary by 50% even as he refused the offer of four armoured limousines at the cost of four hundred million Naira.

Meanwhile, the post PDP national resurgence suffered a setback when allegations surfaced that the key defectors from the PDP to the APC had forged the internal rules of procedures of the Senate in order to produce a PDP-aligned Senate President. This was interpreted as a sharp move by reactionary elements with a view to undercutting the profound change agenda that threatened the discredited political settlement which had been repudiated at the polls.

The details of the remuneration of a Nigerian Senator is detailed below;

* Basic Salary monthly (BS) – N2,484,245.50
* Hardship Allowance (50% of B.S) – N1,242,122.70
* Constituency Allowance (200% of B.S) – N4,968,509.00
* Newspapers Allowance (50% of B.S) – N1,242,122.70
* Wardrobe Allowance (25% of B.S) – N621,061.37
* Recess Allowance (10% of B.S) – N248,424.55
* Accommodation (200% of B.S) – N4,968,509.00
* Utilities (30% of B.S) – N828,081.83
* Domestic Staff (70% of B.S) – N1,863,184.12
* Entertainment (30% of B.S) – N828,081.83
* Personal Assistants (25% of B.S) – N621,061.12
* Vehicle Maintenance Allowance (75% of B.S) – N1,863,184.12
* Leave Allowance (10% of B.S) – N248,424.55
* Severance Gratuity (300% of B.S) – N7,452,736.50
* Car Allowance (400% of B.S) – N9,936,982.00
* TOTAL MONTHLY SALARY = N29,479,749.00 ($181,974.00)
* TOTAL YEARLY SALARY = N29,479,749.00 x 12 = N353,756,988.00 (US$ 2,183,685.00)
* EXCHANGE RATE: $1 = N162

In comparative terms, a Nigerian senator earns more in salary than President Barack Obama of the United States and David Cameron of the UK. An Indian lawmaker must work for at least 49 years to earn the annual salary of a Nigerian senator. In the United States, while the minimum wage is $1,257 (N191, 667), a US lawmaker earns $15,080 (N2.3m) per month. In the United Kingdom, a lawmaker earns $8,686 (N1.3m) monthly while

the gross national minimum wage is $1,883 (N283, 333) per month. Also, Nigerian lawmakers earn higher than their counterparts in Sweden. With a monthly pay of $7,707 (N1.2m), a lawmaker in Sweden will need to work for over 12 years to equal what a Nigerian senator earns per annum. The president of the United States takes home an annual salary of $400,000 (N64.156,0m), including a $50,000 expense allowance making the president the highest paid public servant in the US. The $400,000 includes everything and $350,000 out of it is taxable.

In terms of lawmakers' salaries as a ratio of GDP per capita, the gap is even much wider. While the salary of a Nigerian lawmaker is 116 times the country's GDP per person, that of a British member of parliament is just 2.7 times. The average salary of a Nigerian worker based on the national minimum wage is N18,000.00, So, the yearly salary is N18,000.00 x 12 = N216,000.00 ($1,333.00). The proportion of the yearly Salary of Nigerian Senator = $2,183,685.00.to the Nigerian worker is $2,183,685.00/$1,333.00 = 1,638. It will take an average Nigerian worker 1,638 years to earn the yearly salary of a Nigerian Senator. Surveying the depressing situation, the Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, who has acquired the toga of a national conscience, decried the Nigerian legislature as a "nest of thieves".

Given the threat to the pecuniary dimensions of the political settlement, the fight back by the PDP elements ensconced in the Buhari APC change machinery, through the subversion of party primacy and superiority, is consistent with the history of the turbulence that has been associated with previously attempts at radical change in Nigeria or, in the words of the laureate and national sage, to reconstruct and address some really fundamental issues of society, the danger of a lurking sinister force, a very sinister force in control and a sinister cabal for that matter, that could derail the change process.

This apprehension has remained a permanent feature of the emerging political process. The 1966 coup of the three radical colonels, controversial though it remains on its true intents, was quashed and directly led to the civil war. In 1976, national hero General Murtala Ramat Mohammed was assassinated in broad daylight for his daring vision of a progressive Nigeria. Again in 1985, status quo elements, led by articulator of northern hegemony and self-proclaimed military president, General Ibrahim Babaginda, removed equally northern aligned reformists Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon from office to pave the way to national depravity that culminated in the rise of the rampaging maximum ruler General Sani Abacha. Sani Abacha is also reputed to be an irrepressible thief of all time. In the course of meetings between the Nigerian team and authorities in about four other jurisdictions as well as the team from the foreign legal firm, it was discovered that a lot of underhand dealings must have taken place in the recovery of the Abacha's loot. This was largely responsible for the under-declaration of what has been recovered so far by three successive governments and worse still what is still trapped in offshore accounts, which, in the most current estimation, based on the last meeting with the engaged foreign team, stands at US$210 billion!!![11]

> "The election then was at once at a profound level the contest of an already popularly delegitimised status quo power versus oppositional forces repudiating the extant ethical and moral construction of the Nigerian state and society."

In the prevailing political settlement of which the three PDP administrations were legatees, national monuments are still named after Sani Abacha, the judicial murderer and assassin of Ken SaroWiwa and many other prominent national resistance figures, among whom were Alfred Rewane and Kudirat Abiola, wife of the Moshood Abiola who is generally regarded as the only Nigerian president to have emerged through transparently conducted elections on 12 June, 1993 with a truly nationally acclaimed mandate. Sani Abacha's family and Major Al Mustapha, leader of Abacha's North Korea trained killer goons, like many other odious characters in the public domain, were rehabilitated by President Goodluck Jonathan, consistent with the internal workings of the old settlement.

These political conveniences were all in consonance with the protocols of Nigeria's national debauchery deriving from its nebulous political settlement. Therefore, the stakes in the change calculus are high and the management of the process of dismantling these normative and ethical complexities import potentially determinant consequences for the evolution and overall trajectory of the Nigerian state and society. This is more so against the troubling implications of the recrudescent slide to primordial allegiances that were manifestly clear in the last elections. All the northern states voted as in the past in the direction of northerner Muhammadu Buhari. The ethno-regional votes in the South East and the South South geo-political regions were monolithic in favour home boy incumbent Goodluck Jonathan.

The real arrowhead for change would then be interpreted to be the South West political zone, easily recognised as the regional constituency with the most cosmopolitan and sophisticated political sensibilities that had not ventured to partake in governance at the federal centre throughout Nigeria's political evolution until the March 2015 elections. The robust internal discourse on the elections in this region was reflected in the outcome of the elections both at the legislative and presidential levels where the change train had only an edge over the incumbent president. In fact the incumbent President Jonathan won in Ekiti state in that political zone. On the basis of this, some have argued that the outcome of the elections merely reflected a realignment

of the old horses behind the Nigerian political settlement among the ethnic constituencies of Nigeria; and that not much should be read into the outcome of the 2015 elections in projecting the long term character of the Nigerian state. This perspective is indeed also well founded.

These paralysing imperatives seemingly resonated across the board as the legitimate platform for change for the anticipated new political seasons in Nigeria's much abused post-Abacha democratic dispensation. Nigeria's elections and the expected democratic consolidation, after twelve years of unabashed political chicanery, transcended the Schumpetarian notions of mere procedural democracy and a mild expectation of the entrenchment of democratic tenets and values. In the process focused Schumpetarian demarcations, democracy is only a method and of no intrinsic value with its sole function to select leaders. In any case, according to Schumpeter, these leaders impose their views and are not controlled by voters.[12] That was indeed the hallmark of the post-Abacha PDP Schumpeterian democratic dispensation of Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Yar'adua and Goodluck Jonathan.

Against this background, democratic consolidation in Nigeria in the context of the evolved understandings among the people, classically delineated the concept as the actual transition of power from a morally bankrupt and discredited ruling party and its two administrations, in this specific instance the Olusegun Obasanjo led scandal suffused administration and its strategic cloning in the successor Umar Yar'adua and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan regimes of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), to another, an opposition political force, the All Peoples Congress (APC) and its Muhammadu Buhari presidential candidate at the other polar end of a normative and ethical-cum-morality gulf. Indeed the main conundrum in the national tragedy was the theatrical somersault of Olusegun Obasanjo in his public defection from a status quo that he built and (more than Goodluck Jonathan) personified, to the opposition. The overt theatrical turnaround of Olusegun Obasanjo, a hyper-hypocritical oddity in the universe and ranks of a progressive Nigeria, was the clearest indication that the bottom had fallen off the pedestal on which Nigeria's historic decadence was perched. The bastions of national decay were giving way as its founding lights were opportunistically defecting from the sinking boat.

The election then was at once at a profound level the contest of an already popularly delegitimised status quo power versus oppositional forces repudiating the extant ethical and moral construction of the Nigerian state and society. Given the criticality of normative and ethical dimensions of the change sought, both in state and society as well as in the corporate world, the salience of this dimension of the struggle for power and implications for power transition and democratic consolidation cannot be underestimated. This is more so in light of pervasive malfeasance in governance and the corporate world, both very exaggerated in Nigeria, as an accompaniment to the complete and absolute abandonment of the moral compass in politics across the board. These have elicited increased public demand for transparency and accountability in national processes globally. In Nigeria, the concept of change adumbrated in its holistic understandings is the struggle to create an enabling space to attempt to better restructure the normative and ethical fundamentals that impel the appalling state of the horrendous existential expressions and conditions of daily life. It is the attempt to employ smart strategies to ring-fence and protect the fragilised state and society against an expansive and destructive ethical and normative environment all too capable of imploding Nigeria as an existential reality of all times.

"The election then was at once at a profound level the contest of an already popularly delegitimised status quo power versus oppositional forces repudiating the extant ethical and moral construction of the Nigerian state and society."

Meanwhile a final Fanonian injunction cautions that by exploding the former (colonial) reality, the struggle uncovers unknown facts, brings to light new meanings and underlines contradictions which were camouflaged by this reality. Going by this masterful prognostication, the exposure of the unsavoury reality of Nigeria's discredited political settlement and its protocols as well as regime can only be consolidated through a historic struggle unleashed by the people under the guide of a truly nationalist leadership that is directed by a coordinated crystallisation of the people's innermost aspirations. For Fanon, without waging this struggle, there may be nothing left but a carnival parade and a lot of hot air. Hopefully, Nigeria can escape this damning prophetic reference at the cusp of its potential emancipation by the ballot.■

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CHINA-INDIA

Rising Global Giants

In looking at the development of India and China over the past few decades, many have rushed to the conclusion that we are seeing the beginnings of the Asian Century.

By Yacoob Abba Omar

The Mbeki Presidency, under its Policy Unit, carried out two scenario exercises – one in 2002/2003 and the other in 2006/2007. An interesting debate emerged in the 2002/2003 scenarios, centring around the long term prospects of the economies of India and China. There was widespread recognition already in 2002 that these two countries would emerge as economic giants.

The major difference was whether China, with its centralised, statist approach would have the more sustainable high levels of growth, or whether the messy, chaotic economy of democratic India would be able to sustain the higher of GDP increases over the long term. Both have since gone through spectacular phases of growth and this article sets out to examine their current prospects.

The Presidency 2002/2003 Scenarios, entitled *The Future we Chose*, attempted to capture the world we would be seeing in 2014, and noted: 'Boom-times in China and India create a fleeting opportunity in South Africa, but this is eventually lost'. The 2006/2007 Scenarios, entitled *Memories of the Future*, took a longer-term 2025 view, and identified 'Shifts in global economic power' as one of the six Key Driving Forces which would shape South Africa and the world.

It speculated that: 'The rapid

industrialisation and growth of China and India, and their burgeoning demand for resources and markets, is changing the world in profound ways. By 2025, given current trends, China's GDP is expected to be about the same as the USA's (the USA's GDP is currently more than double the GDP of China and India combined) reflecting three decades of Chinese growth at more than double the rate of the USA and the EU'.

This being the days before the 'S' was added to BRIC, it went on to ask 'Will the growth of Brazil, Russia, India and China and the oil bounty of many Middle East countries do more for the economic growth of Africa in the next 20 years than 60 years of Western investment and aid have achieved?' It then noted that 'While this appears likely to be the case, there are significant dangers too: China and Russia may be as cavalier in their disregard for democracy and human rights as the USA and ex-colonial powers have been in the past'.

This article will examine the Indian and Chinese experiences under the three headings:

- What were the ideological debates that shaped their respective economic responses?
- What were the key instruments of their economic policies?
- How did they see their roles in the international arena?

The article concludes by speculating on how these two giants will be evolving in terms of ideological emphases, economic policies and international roles.

Before embarking on this analysis, it may be useful to get the current (September 2015) 'currency crisis' China is going through out of the way. It is the author's view that it really represents a much needed devaluation of the yuan, but not for the popular reason that China is trying to stimulate economic growth through a cheaper currency. The main reason is probably that China wants the yuan to be included in the select group of currencies used by the IMF to calculate SDRs – making yuan a global reserve currency. This becomes more plausible when one looks at its global power aims, discussed below.

Ideological Debates in India

C Rajagopalachari coined the phrase in 1959, 'license permit quota raj', which captured the impact of a sclerotic bureaucracy that controlled just about every entrepreneurial activity in India. Its 2-3% GDP group was disparagingly described as the 'Hindu rate of growth'.

This came to be replaced by a set of measures to liberalise the economy. The liberalisation in the 1990s helped India achieve 5 to 9% GDP growth rates, with its IT sector booming and more foreign capital flowing in. The number of Indian billionaires grew, as did the size of the middle class by the late 1990s which, at about 250 million people, was described as being almost the size of the US population.

"In a deeply hierarchical society such as India, the state had a crucial role to play in levelling the playing fields for the poorest sectors such as the lowest castes, women and minorities, such as Muslims."

But the majority of Indians remained desperately poor and thus for most of the period of growth there were intense debates on the role of the state. For example India's leading economist, Amaryta Sen, had argued in the mid-1990s that in a deeply hierarchical society such as India, the state had a crucial role to play in levelling the playing fields for the poorest sectors such as the lowest castes, women, and minorities such as Muslims.

Two perspectives emerged from these debates: A hard left position which argued for the reversal of liberalisation and for the state to reclaim land ownership and impose high taxation on large corporations. The second position, which was a conservative, right wing view, pushed for the strengthening of market forces, the state helping in controlling wages, for companies to be allowed to buy land directly from peasants and for hiring and firing to be made easier.

More recently, and especially in the aftermath of the right-wing BJP's victory in last year's elections, the more conservative outlook has been in the ascendancy. Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya support this view, arguing that the liberalising reforms of the 1990s were just Track I changes, ie. reforms aimed at pushing economic growth to a higher plane, and which could be optimised through greater labour flexibility. What is now required, they argue, are Track II measures which, through the mantra of 'growth precedes development', consists of public welfare policies made possible by higher economic growth.

Bhagwati and Panagariya base much of their argument on what has come to be referred to as the Gujarat Model, where it is claimed that the state of Gujarat enjoyed economic growth rates which were above the national average. Indira Hirway (2013:26) points out that much of this was achieved through huge incentives and subsidies for corporate investment: medium and large industries were given more than ten times that of agriculture, food and allied activities.

She argues that 'With a high dropout rate in schools, deteriorating quality of primary education in the last decade, and declining rank in literacy from four in 2001 to nine in 2011 among (India's) major states, the performance of Gujarat is anything but respectable'. The Reserve Bank of India pointed out in 2012 that Guajrat's expenditure on health, education and social sectors in the last decade was one of the lowest in the country, and sank to lowest in comparison to the other 20 major states (Hirway, 2013:27).

Applying the Gujarat Model at the national level, Bhagwati and Panagariya argue that two decades of reform has resulted in 'pulling up' of millions of people out of poverty. However, India's Planning Commission reported in 2013 that more than 20% of the population lived under the already very low poverty line. The UN Human Development Report of the same year

placed India 136 of 185 countries.

Sen, and his collaborator Jean Dreze, provided a counterpoint calling for a 'welfare-minded state to moderate the excesses of the market', arguing that 'in India, public services call for far reaching expansion'. In essence they called for an activist state where growth is not an end it itself – rather a means to achieving growth-mediated development. They call especially for a focus on healthcare and education (2013:14).

The defeat of left-leaning Congress by the BJP has seen a renewed commitment to liberalising the economy. However, more than a year after the elections Victor Mallet (*Financial Times*, 16 August 2015) points out that some of the shine has been fading from the India Shining narrative: 'Investors think Mr Modi missed his early chance to rid India of a retrospective tax law that has sapped investor confidence. He has also failed, they say, to make progress in creating jobs or eliminating bureaucracy'.

Ideological Debates in China

There has been considerable debate about the so-called China model which has placed emphasis on selecting leaders through meritocracy. Based on a mixture of Confucian philosophy and socialist ideals, Chinese thinkers have been at pains to point out the benefits of their model which puts long-term benefits above the short term interests that business and political leaders show in the West.

While this may be the bedrock of China, there have been differences over the last few decades between those pushing for reforms and those sticking closer to the original precepts of the Chinese Communist Party. Their major debate focuses on the post-Maoist system which was adapted by the Deng Xiaoping leadership after 1978. Garth le Pere (2015) uses the terms populists and elitists to draw the differences.

The reformers or the elitists essentially believe in an open-ended transition from socialism by liberalising the political economy. They do not have any clear articulation of the organisational form the CCP has to take in such a post-socialist period. They generally favour the new classes which emerge from privatisation and the linkages with the international political economy.

The populists accepted Deng's view of the Maoist system as 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'. This is used by this ideological strain as a basis for justifying international economic linkages and encouraging the market to play a role in economic growth. However, they emphasise that the private sector must remain subordinate to the state sector and that one party rule must not be diluted. They insisted on the maintenance of a Chinese socialist identity and opposed the emergence of an emerging independent bourgeoisie.

The CCP differed in its response to the ending of the Cold War as compared to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The latter was focused on political reform. The events at Tiananmen Square in June 1989 had an important impact on the debates within the CCP, who did not wish to see the unravelling that the Soviet Union was undergoing. This resulted in what is described as a nod to the populists by Deng Xiaoping when he simultaneously began shaping a new consensus of CCP dominance and focused on economic growth. This also laid the basis for recognition of the two factions to remain in one party.

> "They insisted on the maintenance of a Chinese socialist identity and opposed the emergence of an emerging independent bourgeoisie."

Despite this, Zorawar Daulet Singh of Kings College, London points out, Deng's last and 'decisive political act was his famous 1992 tour of the coastal provinces to jumpstart the reform process and take the initiative away from the resurgent leftists' (2013:10). Thus, under the Jiang Zemin-Zhu Rongi leadership, the non-state sector was expanded through privatisation and foreign investment in coastal China businesses. This period also saw entrepreneurs entering the CCP. When Ju Jintao and Wen Jiabao took over the leadership of party and state in 2002, increased focus was placed on rising inequality, especially between the richer coastal China and the hinterland, and the accompanying social unrest.

Two important developments which up to today continue to impact on China's economic choices are the Global Recession of 2008 and the Bo Xilai case. The former forced China to recentralise the economy after huge fiscal expansion through state-owned enterprises. The subsequent endemic global economic crisis strengthened the hands of the reformists, who were pushing for greater market reform.

There had been much soul-searching leading to the anti-corruption campaign of President Xi Jinping. The most famous of this was the case of Bo Xilai, who was regarded as part of the elitist camp. According to Singh, Bo Xilai 'represented an effort by the crony-capitalist political economy to craft an informal alliance with sections of the security services and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) leadership to emerge as a political axis bypassing the formal party structure' (2013:11). This represented a challenge to both the populists and elitists who were united in their commitment to the primacy of the CCP.

New red lines were subsequently drawn as we entered the second decade of the 21st century: political leadership over the PLA emerged stronger with China able to present a united face to the world. However, the populist/elitist divisions can still be seen, with President Xi Jinping said to be linked with the former and Premier Li Keqiang associated with the latter.

Economic policies in India

Fuad Cassim, adviser to the South African Minister of Finance, argued that

> *India's growth accelerated in the early 1980s. The change in attitude by the Indian government was key (to this growth.) Quite simply, it entailed eliminating the License Raj System or making small adjustments such as reducing some business taxes and easing access to*

imported inputs. India doubled its growth rate from 2% to 4% during the 1980s. Yet India is still plagued with bureaucratic inefficiency and a poor infrastructure. Later, in 1991, India liberalised the economy much further but the initial spurt to growth took place in the 1980s. The point is that when a country is performing below its potential, it does not require much to unlock inefficiency to boost the growth rate. Small changes can turn into big outcomes (2015:84).

While that accounts for India's growth, there have been some negative sides to the India Shining narrative. Waquar Ahmed et al (2011), for example, argue that because of the urban bias in the Indian government's planning, as well as the way in which affirmative action was implemented in the public sector, there was a concentration of private capital in urban centres, securing the support of the urban and caste elites.

City planners thus become 'city entrepreneurs', according to Banerjee-Guha, who calls cities 'incubators of neoliberal strategies'. Another problem raised by analysts is referred to as the issue of labour flexibilisation, which has been important in attracting highly mobile capital in cities but leaving workers vulnerable in terms of tenure and working conditions.

Whereas Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in China have been cited as playing key roles in stimulating the economy in various parts of the country, SEZs in India have been accused of allowing the exclusion and further marginalisation of sectors of society. There was intense resistance to land grabs for SEZs in places such as Nandigram and Jagatsinghpur, with the state responding with repression, and resisters being branded as 'enemies' of development and employment-generation. The colonial 1894 Land Acquisition Act facilitated such land grabs, deeming that farmers' consent was not needed as long as land was acquired for 'public purpose'.

Opposition to SEZs has also been based on the view that such SEZs were simply relocating dirty industries amongst the poorest and away from major cities such as Delhi. This has led some to brand this strategy as 'green neoliberalism'.

On the positive side, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) introduced by the Indian National Congress during its rule, has been identified as playing an important role. On the basis of several studies, Dilip Mookherjee (2014) argued that 'providing employment to rural unskilled labour is the single most direct and effective way of reducing poverty; and the MGNREGA was successful 'in providing a safety net and reducing poverty for the most vulnerable sections of the rural population'.

Aditi Gandhi and Michael Walton (2012:10-11), of the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, looked at whether there was any correlation between the rise in number of billionaires (estimated at 46) created as a result of India's liberalisation of the economy and the overall growth of India's economy. The ratio of total billionaire wealth to GDP rose from 1% in the 1990s to 22% at the peaks of India's economic boom in 2008, and was still 10% of GDP in 2012. This compares to the US and UK having ratios of 4-6% in 1996, with Japan being significantly lower while the world average by 2012 was just below 9.9%. Starting from zero in 1996 China's ratio in 2012 was at about 4%. Russia's ratio had risen from almost zero in 1996 to 18% in 2012.

> "At least 60 socio-economic changes, ranging from relaxing the one-child policy to eliminating camps for 're-education through labour' and curtailing state monopolies, were adopted."

Gandhi and Walton argue that the corporate sector has played a key role in India's economic growth, with its share of investment rising from 25% in 2000 to about 35% in 2010. But, they conclude, east Asian countries 'did a much better job than India in channelling the gains from growth into broad-based service provision and employment growth' (2012:13).

One of the major themes of Modi's 2014 election campaign was the decisiveness he had shown in Gujarat as Chief Minister. This could be seen in national governance in the rough tactics the BJP used to push through a new law that would deprive Indian farmers of legal protection against compulsory purchase of their fields for factories and property developments, thus overcoming the resistance of Nandigram and Jagatsinghpur.

Economic policies in China

As indicated above, China, under Deng's leadership, carried out a number of significant economic reforms aimed at liberalising its economy. By opening up, China was able to attract foreign investment, first in the coastal cities such Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Hangzhou and, then of late in inland provinces such as Hubei, Sichuan, Hunan, and Jilin. These developments served to create jobs and contributed to skills and technology transfer to the Chinese working population. Learning from foreign companies has enabled China to set up and develop companies in a number of key economic sectors.

This has resulted in the emergence of Chinese conglomerates in the construction, energy, telecommunications and banking sectors. These companies initially focused on domestic growth and then expanded their activities abroad. Reforms have also fostered the growth of Chinese private companies, helping to diversify the role-players in China's economic development. The Chinese leadership had undertaken a twin-tracked strategy in its land reform process: redistributing land for peasantry farming or using land for development. There is no doubt that in the 1980s, modernisation of the agriculture sector boosted production hugely.

These various measures ensured high GDP growth rates, averaging 10% for almost 30 years. However,

this has since dropped to 7% and it is feared that it could drop even further. Today China towers over most of the developed world, as the world's largest manufacturer, and having $4tr in forex reserves.

Amongst the key risks the Chinese economy faces is that of an aging workface – the result of its one child policy. Companies have been found to be borrowing more than they earn, with China Policy labelling this the 'declining productivity of capital'. Evan Osnos (2015:54) wrote that 'nervous Chinese savers are sending more money overseas to protect it in the event of a crisis. Some factories have not paid wages, and in the last quarter of 2014, workers went on strike and protested at three times the rate of the same period a year earlier'.

It was not surprising then that President Xi Jinping told the Politburo: 'The tasks our Party faces in reform, development, and stability are more onerous than ever, and the conflicts, dangers and challenges are more numerous than ever'.

It is in this context that President Xi's Chinese Dream (zhongguo meng) takes on greater urgency. A communiqué of the November 2013 plenum of the Chinese Communist Party spelt out the details of the dream, with its essence being to 'comprehensively construct…a moderately prosperous society, and thereby create a wealthy, strong, democratic, civilised and harmonious Socialist country, and realise the China Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'.

At the same plenum, the CCP resolved to reinvigorate the private sector, increase the role of banks, force state firms to give up large dividends and to compete with the private sector. It pushed for allowing the market to decide where things like oil, water and precious items were to be directed. At least 60 socio-economic changes, ranging from relaxing the one-child policy to eliminating camps for 're-education through labour' and curtailing state monopolies, were adopted.

Liu Mingfu, a retired PLA colonel based at China's National Defence University, and author of the popular 2010 book *The China Dream* argued that 'The China Age, at its most basic, will be an age of prosperity'. He expects that point to be reached after three stages: catching up with the US; 'racing neck-and-neck with America' and the peak when China 'will be guiding the world through exercising leadership and management in the world, and thereby becoming the world's leading nation'.

Attitude to corruption

Corruption has been the focus of widespread debate, not only to establish its causes but also in whose interests are anti-corruption campaigns run. Ravinder Kaur, for example, observes that 'anti-corruption campaigns were initiated in harmony with a push for structural reforms in developing countries – more free market equalled less corruption'. He points out that the World Bank and IMF focus on corruption coincided with the push for structural reforms. Personal and corporate corruption such as evasion of taxes was explained away as resulting from high taxes and over-regulation.

> "A Chinese army will not launch wars, it is actually the fundamental guarantee for preventing wars…The aim of China's military rise is to make the United States unable to afford to contain China."

Sen and Dreze commented that 'Most of the countries rated least corrupt in international comparisons, such as Sweden, Denmark, Canada, and Singapore, have a significantly larger public sector as a proportion of the economy than India has'. Thus there is no direct causation between the size and powers of the state and corruption.

Trying to understand the root of corruption in India, Ramachundra Guha (July 12, 2013) writes that during the first years of independence, Nehru managed to keep civil services insulated from political interference. 'Now however, politicians have captured two aspects of institutional function – procurement and postings'.

India has seen mass mobilisation against the government and there have been demands for a Jan Lokpal Bill (People's Ombudsman Bill) to be passed as an anti-corruption measure. However, Kaur and others have pointed to 'the stark absence of any provisions to scrutinise corporate corruption… Corporates appear in debates, if at all, as victims of corruption' (2012: 43)

Singh and Walton argue that the US avoided the excesses of the Robber Barons of the Gilded Age via an anti-trust movement, the product of an alliance between a populist, political movement and a strong executive, supported by action of the judiciary. However, they conclude that 'India certainly has popular mobilisation against corruption, but it is not at all clear that the state has the capacity to manage the power of a rising corporate sector' (2012:13).

As mentioned above President Xi's leadership has been decisive in cracking down on corruption, focusing on 'naked officials' whose families were living way beyond the means of their official salaries. This included owning several properties, travelling abroad as well as having children in private schools or universities abroad. The campaigns targeted 'tigers' that is those amongst the elite as well as 'flies', the lower level mandarins. By the end 2014, more than 100 000 public officials were charged with corruption.

Foreign relations

As India and China emerge as economic superpowers, their roles in the international arenas have come to be redefined – impacting on their bilateral relations as well. One of the major issues which will impact on that bilateral relation is the tensions on their Himalayan border. It had already resulted in a very expensive 1962 war which saw 3000 soldiers killed. Atul Bhardwaj has suggested that the

whipping up of anti-China sentiments in 1962 'was also a political tool against domestic communists' (2013:13).

Liu Mingfu (2015) suggests that Asia needs to learn from the lessons of Europe where warring states have found peace and prosperity. He argues that 'Asia's Warring States era has just begun, and today China, Japan and India are acting out the Wars of the Three Kingdoms over the entire continent'. *The Economist* editorialised on 15 August 2015 that 'France's determination to promote lasting peace by uniting under a common set of rules with Germany, its old invader, has no Asian equivalent'. The editorial was written on the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II when 15m Chinese people died due to the Japanese invasion of 1937-1945, concluding: 'If Mr Xi were to commit China to multilateral efforts to foster regional stability, he would show that he has truly learned the lessons of history. That would be far, far better than repeating it'.

Chinese officials point out that Deng emphasised that China's force was for world peace and stability, not destruction. Mingfu captured this principle in the current context of China being accused of having aggressive designs on its neighbours that 'If a country is only strong and large in the market, but weak and small on the battlefield, it will be the prey of strong powers'. But 'A Chinese army will not launch wars, it is actually the fundamental guarantee for preventing wars…The aim of China's military rise is to make the United States unable to afford to contain China'.

In a speech made in 2012, President Xi called for 'a new type of relationship between major countries in the 21st century'. This theme was repeated during his June 2013 visit to the US where he spoke of 'a new kind of relations between great powers'.

Part of the Chinese foreign relations equation is BRICS. Much has been made of the fact that President Xi's first foreign foray after being made President was to Russia, en route to the BRICS Summit in Durban where he spoke of the 'legitimate rights and interests of developing countries'.

As alternatives to the Bretton Woods structures, the Chinese have set up the New Development Bank, the silk route infrastructure fund, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, all of these intended to galvanise $400b in capital.

Singh (2013:12) has argued that in the current context 'In one global triangle, India has inadvertently attained a position where its equation with both Washington and Beijing is more stable than the US-China relationship. India has some agency to maintain this position, and perhaps even benefit from a multipolar world'.

Commenting on the recent visit to China by PM Narendra Modi, India's *Economic and Political Weekly* editorialised: 'The intractability of the border dispute is perhaps a result of it being a "pure" ideological problem with little economic foundation. China faces no military threat from India and India gains nothing from getting pushed into a Great Game rivalry with China. The peace dividend from a settlement of the border dispute is massive' (May 23, 2015).

Conclusion

In looking at the development of India and China over the past few decades, many have rushed to the conclusion that we are seeing the beginnings of the Asian Century. As debates rage about the actual size of their GDPs, many question whether the US has lost its economic supremacy. And as different ideological strains jostle for influence, we can ask whether the debates of the 19th century will ever be settled given the experience of the 20th century. I would like to end this article in a somewhat inconclusive manner by citing two respected scholars.

Michael Cox (2012) of the London School of Economics concluded from his survey of contemporary forces that the 'United States still has a great deal of power, much more than any other country in the world, now and for the foreseeable future. China meanwhile confronts several basic problems at home and abroad (as indeed do the other members of the so-called BRIC family). And the idea that we are moving ineluctably into what some have termed an 'Asian Century' is unsustainable'.

The Malaysian Danny Quah, also of LSE while holding a professorship at the National University of Singapore has argued that as late as 1980 'North America and Western Europe produced more than two-thirds of this planet's income. Not unexpectedly then, the world economic center of gravity 30 years ago was a point deep in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, 900 miles west of Morocco. By 2008, however, because of the continuing rise of India, China and the rest of East Asia, that center of gravity had shifted to a point just outside Izmir Turkey, east of Helsinki and Bucharest – a drift of 3000 miles, or about three quarters of the Earth's radius. My projection has it that this move east will continue until 2050 when the world economic center of gravity will cluster on the border between India and China, 400 miles east of Katmandu'. ■

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The Political Economy of the Electricity Industry

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The practical reality of the situation is that South Africa's economy has slowed down largely because of the bottleneck in the supply of electricity.

By Tshilidzi Marwala

There is a famous photograph of all continents which shows Africa as a dark continent which is virtually not electrified compared to other continents (NASA, 2015). This picture reinforces the reality that Africa remains the most underdeveloped continent in the world.

It is estimated that 83% of South Africans have access to electricity compared to 58% in 1996 (World Bank, 2015). These are impressive statistics but access does not necessarily give a picture of the security of supply of electricity. According to the World Bank (2015), in 2011 of the 260 billion kilowatt hours produced by South Africa, 93% was generated from coal, 5.2% from nuclear and the remaining balance from oil (0.1%), hydropower (0.8%) with renewable energy (0.2%). These statistics reveal that South Africa's electricity generation is not diverse.

The other problem that these statistics do not reveal is that there are widespread power cuts not for maintenance purposes but because the demand is greater than the supply. Thus the South African electricity problem is not just that it has a long way to go before achieving universal access to electricity from 82%, but also that the security of supply is not guaranteed.

Why is the security of supply such a crucial factor? Studies have repeatedly shown that electricity utilisation, especially the increase in electricity usage, is correlated to economic growth (Chen et al., 2007). The old admonition "correlation is not causality" applies here in that electricity utilisation does not cause economic growth but as correlation is a necessary condition for causality, there is no economic growth without the growth in the utilisation of electricity. The practical reality of the situation is that South Africa's economy has slowed down largely because of the bottleneck in the supply of electricity.

The Narrative of the South African Problem

In 1999 the South African government was advised that given the massive electrification problem South Africa needed to invest in new power stations. Largely due to the massive technical deficit in South Africa's new political and social elite and the realisation that the advice was coming from the old establishment of the Apartheid era, this advice was not taken. In 2008, the country came to a sudden shock when the demand for electricity exceeded the supply and thus an era of massive electricity blackouts was ushered in. Government then started to build power stations which still have not yet come into full operation 7 years later.

Where lies the problem?

Where lies the problem in the existing generation, transmission and distribution value chain? The politics of electricity is also problematic since the political elites are largely drawn from the humanities. It is telling that there has not been an energy minister since 1994 who has been trained in science, engineering or technology. As a consequence there has not been a consistent policy on electricity. An example of this inconsistency is the fact that there was a policy adopted to separate distribution from generation and transmission and a company called the Electricity Distribution Industry Holdings was established by government – and few years later it was terminated. The skills shortage in the electricity industry has severely limited South Africa's ability to build power stations as well as monitor effectively the outsourced electricity built programmes, to maintain them, to finance them and to effectively plan intelligently for the future.

What is to be done?

To deal with the problem of electricity all stakeholders, in the political, economic and social space, need to come together to plan together. For example, society should play its role in utilising electricity efficiently, paying electricity bills and eliminating illegal electricity connections. The industrial establishment should come

to the party in creating opportunities for alternative energy generation and in assisting government to implement the independent power producers (IPPs) policy. Government should come to the party by ensuring sound governance in the state owned electricity companies as well as clear political directives. In essence what is to be done is to reconfigure the political and economic architecture of the electricity industry in South Africa.

Political Space

A great deal ought to be done in the political space, particularly in relation to bringing better governance and skills to all state owned electricity companies at both local and national levels. Furthermore, government should invest in alternative electricity generation in partnership with industry. An off-take agreement between the Gauteng Government and the University of Johannesburg on exploiting its thin-film solar technology is an example of an initiative that can potentially improve generation capacity quite substantially. Furthermore, government should implement the independent power producers (IPPs) policy and create an environment where IPPs are encouraged to enter the market. The biggest hurdle is the long term pricing policy which should be more predictable to facilitate financing these IPPs.

Government should also encourage efficient utilisation of energy through policy. For example, it is possible to regulate electricity usage by regulating geysers, light bulbs, stoves and fridges. Countries such as Australia are quite advanced in this regard and could provide a good case study for South Africa. Most importantly, government must lead by example by ensuring that government offices are equipped with energy efficient devices and roof-top photo-voltaic technology is deployed in all government offices. State owned enterprises are not going to run efficiently unless there is a strong participation of private industries where the skills depth is higher and government must come up with innovative private public participation (PPP) that benefit both government and industry to capacitate the electricity industry.

An example is the PPP between the City of Johannesburg and industrial players with regards to the Kelvin power station. Government should look at this PPP to draw lessons on how future PPPs are structured to ensure the maximum satisfaction of all role players.

Government also needs to come up with an unambiguous energy mix rather than a conflated message which leaves doubt as to how much nuclear energy we are going to acquire.

Economic Space

Industry must create business around efficient energy usage. Industries around gas as source of energy should be expanded beyond few suburbs. Energy companies such as Sasol that are building gas pipelines from Mozambique are moving in the right direction but the scope should be expanded. Industries around roof top solar technologies, solar geysers and other appliances need to be developed and expanded.

Homeowners are currently discouraged from using the abundant sunshine available in this country for anything other than geysers, because the government and Eskom have neglected the need to reward energy producers financially by allowing them to feed surplus energy produced during sunny days back into the grid as is possible over most of Europe and much of North America. This use of solar panels on roof-tops is subsidised in many parts of the world to encourage homeowners to invest in their own future electricity security. Thousands of these small generators combined could make a significant contribution to the generation shortfall in an ecologically sound and sustainable manner.

The consequence of this would be an expansion of the job market and thus the reduction of unemployment. Industry around maintenance of our electricity infrastructure should be developed and the latest mechanisms for the management of inventories should be applied. This would have an impact on the maintenance and replacement schedule. The South African electricity industry should move from a scheduled to a predictive maintenance philosophy where it is possible to predict electricity failure in advance using technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data (Marwala, 2012). We need to use technologies such as remote sensing to monitor and manage coal stock-piles.

Social Space

One of the underrated aspects of the energy industry is the role of customers in managing the demand of electricity. Firstly, customers must pay their electricity bills on time. This would allow electricity companies to be able to manage their finances better and thus be able to invest in capacitating electricity systems and infrastructure. A campaign directed at customers paying their electricity bills should be embarked upon. One of the problems with electricity distribution in South Africa is the unacceptable amount of non-technical losses of electricity which are avoidable. These are mainly due to illegal electricity connections. Without the mass mobilisation by all players in our society this problem of illegal electricity connections can only get worse.

We need to educate our society to become energy conscious. There is no need for a street light or an electricity bulb to be on during the day. We should create incentives where customers are rewarded for using less electricity and penalise those who use more electricity than the global standard.

In conclusion, as South Africa we have what it takes to deal with the energy utilisation problem in such a way that we reduce the aggregate carbon footprint. However, to ensure success, we require skills, political will, partnerships amongst role players and social mobilisation. We need to relook at our energy mix, bearing in mind the issue of carbon footprint. ■

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Jihadist Threats to African Stability – and Euro-American Global Dominance

In the absence of a compromise between the two ends of Africa's economic divide, the very fabric of African coexistence is under serious threat.

By Charles Villa-Vicencio

Africa arguably faces the biggest threat to political stability since the collapse of colonialism in the mid-twentieth century. The militancy of Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, the al-Mulathameen Brigade (the "Masked Ones") in Algeria, Ansar al-Dine in Mali, Séléka in the Central African Republic and Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia, among others, strike at the heart of African cohesion and nation-building.[1]

The growth of this militancy feeds off the profile of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere and more recently the declaration of a caliphate by the 'Islamic State' in Syria and the Levant (ISIS/ISIL). Reacting to last year's brutal beheading of American and French hostages in Syria and Algeria and subsequent Islamic militant attacks in Paris and elsewhere, the West sees the growth of Islamic extremism in the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East and Europe as a direct threat to the Euro-American-centred understanding of global coherence. By contrast, the hostage-taking of over 200 girls in Chibok on the night of 14-15 April 2014 and subsequent events resulted, at best, in a restrained response by the West (as well as by the Nigerian state).

Journalists, analysts and scholars provide crucial insights into the identity and praxis of Africa's rebel groups. Credible information is, however, invariably a casualty of war. This means that unbiased insights into the African conflict necessitate a high level of critical thoughtfulness. The consequences of the support by the West for oppressive African regimes needs close scrutiny. Strident Muslim aggression needs, in turn, to be understood in relation to the influence of western-based Christian fundamentalist groups in Africa, which many devout Muslim believers see as a muted form of the Christian crusades that endured for 200 years. Eight hundred years later, the current conflict is understood by them as a continuing fight for the purity of an Islamic belief, against which defeat is for them not an option.

There is a need to unravel the underlying affinity with, and popular support for, specific rebel groups, as well as the periodic tensions that exist within rebel groups in the Maghreb, Sahel and Central Africa. This involves situations in Somalia, for example, where Al-Shabaab pursues a nationalist struggle (requiring the support of people with different needs and interests) while appropriating a global Islamic agenda. The extent of this dual agenda provides insights into the potential limitations and possibilities of a continental fight-back against the dominant Euro-American influence in African countries and the quest for individual national objectives.

There are at least five key elements that are fundamental to understanding the jihadist conflicts in Africa.

Euro-American global dominance

Current fundamentalist Islamic assertions can be traced back to the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, established in the wake of the thirty year 'religious war' in Europe. The Treaty failed to hold, with periodic wars and eventually the eruption of the Napoleonic Wars (1803 -1815) that ravaged Europe. This was followed by the 1815 Concert of Europe, an attempt to (again) forge stability under 'great power' control.

European expansionism had, in the meantime, already extended into the 'new world' by the end of the fifteenth

century, characterised by Columbus's epic voyage in 1492. Vasco da Gama, in turn, sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in 1497 opening a new trade route between European countries and India. In 1858 direct British rule was established in India, the Anglo-Chinese opium wars were under way, and other European nations occupied territory in the region. In 1884-85 the Berlin Conference formalised the carving up of Africa by European countries.

In an attempt to re-establish world order in the wake of the World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 placed Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine under British protection. Syria and Lebanon were placed under French control. Egypt in the meantime remained under British rule, and France controlled the Maghreb. Arab nationalists and radical Islamic groups fought back against colonialism. In 1948 the West further prioritised the protection of the newly established state of Israel and, ironically, oversaw the birth of Salafism and jihadism in the marriage between Saudi tribalism and Wahhabist theology.[2]

In Africa, British and French colonialists were determined to see the birth of moderate, pro-western states in the wake of the independence struggle in the 1950s and 1960s, while the Cold War impacted on the independence process. The net outcome was a plethora of African coups d'etat and counter coups, with dominant western states supporting their client states in quashing rebel groups. This ideological conflict soon mutated into resource wars and economic deprivation, manipulated by religion and culture, which are still prevalent today.

This continuing ideological underpinning of opposing groups in Africa indicates the need for a deeper understanding of the conflict between rebel groups and existing African governments. It requires more than military engagement to persuade rebels to lay down their arms. African governments and their global partners need to accept that the manipulation of religion, culture and material resources, as a basis for the survival of current African governments, is both counter-productive and futile. It also requires groups committed to exclusivist forms of Sharia to explore options for co-existence with people of other faiths and persuasions.

The absence of a peaceful resolution to this contestation provides a gap within which jihadism and other quests for potential domination thrive, highlighting the need for a new paradigm for global coexistence to end the conflict. Karl Marx warned that "the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living".[3] The obligation of each generation is to remember and to engage with the past as a basis for creating a new future.

The African State

The ability of Africa to overcome a history of conflict, linked as it is to the history of colonialism and the internalisation of power relations by successive independent Africa states raises questions concerning the nature of the African state.

Basil Davidson argues that the assumption that state boundaries in Africa ought to coincide with cultural boundaries is "the curse of the nation state".[4] It is also an underlying dimension of divisions and under-development in regions within African states, notably in the under-development of north-east Nigeria, in the eastern parts of the DRC, in the northern regions of Uganda and elsewhere.

African states have their roots in colonial law, which resulted in a situation of political control by a dominant group. This "crime", says Mahmood Mamdani, resulted in the politicisation of culture, religion and indigeneity, to the exclusion of subservient and minority groups. Africa's continued failure to adequately address the racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and economic divisions of the state provides fertile ground within which rebel groups prosper in African states.[5]

This encourages cross-border alliances between allied groups, as evidenced in Boko Haram's support in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon. It is also seen in the attacks by Al-Shabaab into the disputed Ogden territory and deeper into Kenya – attacks undertaken with the noticeable support of alienated Kenyan nationals who choose to designate themselves as 'Somalians'. There is, at the same time, also evidence of this cross-border activity resulting in tensions between rebel groups in defence of their specific areas of operation. This has resulted in reports of Al-Qaeda amir, Abdelmalek Droukdel, admonishing AQIM regional commanders to explore flexible forms of co-operation with Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Kenya and elsewhere on the continent.[6]

Class Conflict

Capitalism has produced a dependent African economy, and African experiments with Marxist-inspired socialism have shown themselves incapable of inspiring growth and development.

The challenge is to create an African economy in pursuit of self-sufficiency, capable of rising above dependency on American, European and growing Chinese trade. The extent of organised labour in most countries remains largely ineffective, resulting in a capitalist class that is largely unchallenged by the broader community, although this is slowly changing in some African states.

A minority of grassroots Africans have been drawn into middle and upper classes which, in the words of Steven Friedman, constitute an exclusive club "never meant to be for everyone."[7] In situations where an increasing number of impoverished young people are supportive of rebel groups, the conflict between rich and poor is invariably decided through rebellion, class warfare and terrorism. In the absence of a compromise between the two ends of Africa's economic divide, the very fabric of African coexistence is under serious threat.

The question is whether African leaders and their sponsors have the political will and economic savvy, let alone the moral integrity, to negotiate the required economic compromise. Robert Rotberg outlines the parameters of the global economy within which this compromise needs to be negotiated: "The centre-periphery structure of global politics places strain on developing economies that makes it extremely difficult for Africans to develop fully

in the market place dominated by first world economies, which have effectively been built and maintained in a colonial-economic relationship with Africa. This reaches to the heart of the under-development in Africa, from which individual African states are seeking to liberate themselves.[8]

Religion as a national and global phenomenon

African poverty acts in a symbiotic relationship with religion, with religion being a powerful mobilising force among grassroots communities.

Priests, mullahs, rabbis and other religious leaders are frequently associated with the negative forces that terrorise the world through the use of religious language and symbols that acquire apocalyptic dimensions. This interpretation of religion demands dogmatic obedience by its followers, accompanied by visions of rewards in heaven. There are, at the same time, inspirational religious leaders and grassroots believers in Islam and Christianity who affirm the supremacy of God and Allah over state and rebel leaders.

Focus on the pre-eminence of the divine in political conflict is a critical theological principle, largely suppressed in the captivity of institutional religion to the dogma of ruling and rebel groups, which lifts the political conflict into the realm of ultimate (spiritual) encounters between rebels and the state. Driven by different forms of propaganda, this promotes and legitimises the engagement of believers in the massacre of civilians, the kidnapping and abduction of people, the raping of women and girls, forced marriages and the killing of infidels and apostates – as well as the slaughter of rebels by government forces.

The extent of this violence, driven by a sense of exclusivity, moral superiority, religious intensity and blind submission to authority has resulted in the endemic demonisation and dehumanisation of 'the other' – whether Christian, Muslim or simply people who are indifferent to the prevailing conflict. This is seen in the escalation of conflicts across the continent, including the religious war between Séléka and anti-Balaka that engulfs 'politically uninvolved' by-standers in the Central African Republic.

Dehumanisation of the other

The extent of rebel atrocities are responded to with government violence of similar magnitude, as evidenced in the call by Amnesty International for senior military officers in Nigeria to be investigated for the way in which they responded to the activities of Boko Haram rebel groups; and some spokespersons for government forces openly advocate and defend violence as the 'only solution' to the conflict, which draws on a range of both religious and secular forces.

Contemporary rebel groups draw on religious and cultural ideas that feed off the origins of earlier cultural and religious traditions and historic movements. In so doing, they have lifted the conflict into the realm of spiritual encounter in their conflict with the state.[9] Boko Haram draws on the memory of Mai Tatsine, literally the 'people who curse', in their fight for an independent Nigerian Islamic state; Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb emerged as an armed Islamic group fighting against a secular state in Algeria; al Shabaab began as a military wing of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts; and in the Central African Republic Séléka and anti-Balaka are rooted in contemporary forms of a Muslim and Christian community-driven war.

> "It requires more than military engagement to persuade rebels to lay down their arms."

Marginalisation, exclusion, desperation and the absence of political alternatives in the face of uncompromising state military power, lead to a combination of political reactions, religious extremism and violence. These responses, fuelled by abject poverty in the face of elitist economic wealth and authoritarian power, have produced a toxic mix of anger. Needing to be fully dissected and comprehensively analysed, the origins of the capacity of these and other rebel groups to resort to human terror need to be understood as a basis for discerning alternative options for countering the dehumanisation of Africans and indeed of humanity itself.

There are no quick answers to questions central to the threat posed by rebel groups to specific African states, often supported by regional and global powers. These and related alliances need to be placed under the microscope of a pool of multi-disciplinary analysts with a view to addressing the intertwined causes of the conflict embedded in Africa's stubborn conflict. Thabo Mbeki, writing on the 2011 popular uprisings in Africa as seen in the African Maghreb and Egypt, asks a pertinent question that is equally relevant to the proliferation of rebel groups elsewhere on the continent: "Where are the African intelligentsia, whose task it is to narrate accurately what is unfolding [on the continent]?" he asks. His call is for an analysis and narrative that "might serve truly to advance the Africa democratic revolution and therefore the African Renaissance."[10] If analysts and scholars in African and other countries, together with regional and global agencies, fail to embrace this responsibility the (much heralded) economic progress in particular African countries is likely to be engulfed in an ideological war that knowns no state borders. ■

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Can the expansion of ISIS be halted or reversed?

Syrian people in a refugee camp in Suruc, Turkey. These people are refugees from Kobane who escaped from an attack by ISIS.

The objective of this theological battle is to confront IS soft power projection into Muslim communities around the world. This is a crucial battle to be engaged in South Africa, and South Africa's Muslim community seems to have expressed a willingness to be on the frontline.

By Na'eem Jeenah

A number of scholars and commentators have recently come to the conclusion that the Islamic State group currently terrorising parts of Iraq and Syria has substantially established itself on the ground so that it is, in Patrick Cockburn's words, 'fast becoming an established geographic and political fact on the map'. With its brutality, spectacular military victories, internet presence that will leave many a spin doctor envious, and well thought-out military strategies, the group has managed to capture and hold a substantial amount of territory in the two Middle East countries. The challenge posed by this development, however, transcends the region and has already had an impact on South Africa and other African countries.

ISIS origins; thanks US

The Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (an Arabic term which approximates the Levant), now calling itself 'Islamic State', originated in Jordan as Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in 1999. It deployed its fighters to Iraq after the 2003 US-led invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq, and subsequently, in 2004, affiliated to the global Al-Qa'ida network. The USA, indeed, has a great deal of responsibility for the creation of ISIS and its current actions. Its occupation of Iraq and other repeated mistakes aided in the coalescing of jihadists in ISIS. These include the US mollycoddling of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, two American allies that played a major role in developing the ideologies and organisational capacity of ISIS-type groups, and the US targeting of the wrong countries and role players for the 9/11 attacks.

Over the course of its history it has assumed for itself many names, including Al-Qa'ida in Mesopotamia (often referred to in the media as 'Al-Qa'ida in Iraq'). It was always regarded, even within Al-Qa'ida circles, as being unnecessarily brutal and overstepping the limits of acceptable behaviour. In 2006, together with a number of other anti-occupation groups, it formed the 'Mujahideen Shura Council', which later formed 'the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)'. The current leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took control of the organisation in 2010. After the Syrian uprising had become a civil war in 2011, Baghdadi send representatives to Syria to start an ISI branch there, which was subsequently called Jabhat al-Nusra. In 2013, he announced that ISI and Nusra had merged to form Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS), a move that was rejected by Nusra and, later, the Al-Qa'ida leadership. That resulted in ISIS breaking from Al-Qa'ida early in 2014, developing its own extremist ideology and changing its strategy. Its targets in Syria included government forces as well as opposition groups, with the latter losing a great number of people to ISIS's terror campaign.

Under Baghdadi's leadership, over time, the group attracted (or was infiltrated by) a number of former officers from Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist army who had melted away into Iraq's desert, cities and towns after the US occupation. They have provided the strongest contributions to IS's military strategy and tactics, and with laying the groundwork for successfully executing the group's recent strategy in Iraq. This strategy captured the global imagination when IS spectacularly exploded onto the scene with its takeover of Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, in June 2014. Within a hundred days, it upturned politics in the region, and – on the ground if not on the map – erased a good part of the border between Syria and Iraq. It used the opportunity to declare a global 'caliphate' with Baghdadi as the 'caliph'. This declaration was one of the departures of ISIS from Al-Qa'ida's strategy. Having gained control of territory and forseeing the possibility of actually ruling over that territory, the group renamed itself Islamic State.

> "The USA, indeed, has a great deal of responsibility for the creation of ISIS and its current actions. Its occupation of Iraq and other repeated mistakes aided in the coalescing of jihadists in ISIS."

Mosul and the formation of a pseudo-state

Many observers were shocked at the rapidity (in less than 24 hours) of the fall of Mosul, a city with 2.5 million people, to IS. However, those who had been observing Iraq closely were not entirely surprised. It was not a shock that such a militia was able to obtain the support of Iraqi Sunni tribes to vanquish the Iraqi army, or that the army so shamefully retreated in the face of a much smaller force. Since then, ISIS has used the fact that it was fighting in both Syria and Iraq to its advantage, carefully identifying targets in alternate countries, gaining victories, and punishing its opposition – whether state armies or other militias – in the process. In Iraq it has mainly been fighting against the Iraqi army, various Shi'a militias, and the Kurdish Peshmerga (the army of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq) and YPG (People's Protection Units in the Kurdish area of Rojava in Syria). In Syria, it has been battling the YPG, various Syrian rebel groups (including, at some times, the al-Qa'ida-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra), and the Syrian army. When, in May this year, IS took control of the capital city of Iraq's Anbar province, Ramadi, the event was not greeted with the same shock as in June 2014 – even though the Ramadi operation was subjected to, and survived, seven airstrikes launched by the USA to protect the city.

Is IS winning?

While the control of territory in much of the area where IS has been operating – especially in the peripheries – is fluid and could change hands from one day to the next, the fact is that, in general, IS seems to be winning the battle against its array of enemies. It also exercises its rule over about ten million people. Indeed, its measure of success is not like that of an insurgent group, but, rather, like that of a state. As Afro-Middle East Centre researcher Omar Shaukat has pointed out, the group measures victory by its ability to hold and maintain control over the

core of the territory it has captured, provide services to the population in this area (as it is doing), and not being militarily defeated. And there seems to be little chance of it being defeated in the near future.

This is due to a range of factors: its enemies seem to be weaker; enemy soldiers or fighters are not well-equipped (Iraqi soldiers and Syrian opposition fighters), or do not have the same level of commitment (Iraqi and Syrian soldiers); the enemy is plagued by corruption (the Iraqi military); or the enemy is one that does not necessarily seek IS's destruction (the USA). Writing about the prospect of IS establishing a state, Stephen Walt argued: 'An Islamic State victory would mean that the group retained power in the areas it now controls and successfully defied outside efforts to "degrade and destroy" it.' While degrading the group is a real possibility, destroying it does not have much chance of success if all the forces arraigned against it are not aiming for that goal.

Another factor that has been useful for, and has been effectively used by, IS is sectarianism, which has played a significant role in boosting the group's successes. The marginalisation and neglect of the Iraqi Sunni community by the Shi'a-dominated central government of Iraq's previous president, Nuri al-Maliki, and the increasing sectarianisation of the crisis in Syria (even if the original uprising there was not based on sectarianism) have contributed significantly to the group's successes. Using the sectarian card has also been key to IS recruitment around the world. The group has presented itself as the only force able to defend Muslims, and, importantly, to defend Sunni Muslims and Sunnism against Shi'as and Shiism. In this, it has ridden on the coattails of Saudi Arabia which helped paint the Syrian crisis (and now the Yemeni crisis) as a battle of Sunnis against Shi'a expansionism. Saudi Arabia raised this sectarian flag; IS has announced itself as being better able to fight this battle than Saudi Arabia. Thus, a not-so-quiet battle is raging between the Saudis and IS for sectarian Sunni support, and recent IS attacks in Saudi Arabia should be seen in this light.

However, the notion of maintaining control over territory in the Iraq-Syria theatre is IS's minimalist position. It also wants to expand in other parts of the region. These twin objectives are encapsulated in its slogan: 'The Islamic State remains; The Islamic State expands'. This 'expansion' is not in terms of controlling a contiguous political entity that stretches from Iraq to Tunisia. Instead, its core Iraq-Syria theatre of operations will be its state, while its other areas of operations – Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen – will be satellites which play a role in terms of recruitment as well as in terms of disrupting its regional and global enemies.

Its 'success' is also determined by whether it can convince Muslims from all over the world to migrate to its territory, not only as fighters, but also as 'settlers'. This objective ties in with its determination to redraw the map of the Middle East, and undermine the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement between the UK and France (with Russia as willing participant) which defined these superpowers' spheres of influence in the Middle East in the event that the Ottoman Empire was defeated. The map of the region since 1920 has more or less accorded with that agreement. ISIS leader Abu Bakr Baghdadi made it clear after capturing Mosul that Sykes-Picot was an ISIS target, vowing that 'this blessed advance will not stop until we strike the last nail in the coffin of the Sykes–Picot conspiracy'. Thus its actions could result not only in the creation of a new state, but also in the fracturing of another (Iraq) into separate ethnic or sectarian states. While the prospect of the collapse of the Sykes-Picot regime is a liberatory notion for many in the Middle East, IS has ensured that it is couched in a potentially bleak and cruel future.

> "A number of public meetings and lectures were held in mosques and community halls, publications were issued, articles published, and radio and television shows on Muslim media focused on the issue."

The South African connection

The attempts of IS to recruit from within Muslim communities in various parts of the world has extended to South Africa as well. While it is necessary to reject unsubstantiated claims of hundreds of South Africans fighting with (and dying for) IS, it is also necessary to consider the documented cases of between 50 and 100 South Africans who have moved to IS territory.

This number has included two groups: young men who joined IS to fight in its ranks; and families (including children) who 'migrated' to IS territory. In both cases, the reasons for their decisions have been varied. However, there are two main attractions which might be pointed to. First is the political attraction. IS is seen by some as a force fighting the USA and its Iraqi allies (even though IS is not actually fighting the USA), and, in the context of global Islamophobia and Muslims being attacked and killed in various countries by states supported by the West, IS is viewed by some as the only force directly confronting imperialism and having successes against it.

Second is the religious/theological reasoning. Potential recruits are persuaded that IS has established a legitimate 'caliphate' and that it is the duty of all Muslims to support such a political project. Thus, they are told, those men of fighting age are duty-bound to join the IS army and defend its state, and other Muslims have a duty to migrate to and live in the 'caliphate', and support its establishment, survival and prosperity in whatever way they can.

In one case in April, 23 recruits from a town outside Johannesburg made their way to Turkey, en route to Syria. Eleven of them were intercepted by Turkish authorities and returned to South Africa, into the custody of the State Security Agency. There was

at least one other case of a young man being similarly intercepted and returned to the SSA. In all such cases, state security, after a brief interrogation of the 'returnees', released them. In meetings with representatives of the Muslim community, State Security minister David Mahlobo explained the government's view that none of those returned had committed an illegal act, and therefore could not be charged by the state. While the government held a dim opinion of the actions of these recruits, he argued, the primary responsibility for deterring recruitment and discouraging potential recruits from joining IS lay with the Muslim community, not with government. The main battle, he seemed to be suggesting, was not legal or political, but religious/ideological and social, and while he was personally willing to assist, government was not in the business of changing people's religious ideas – a responsibility that should be shouldered by the Muslim community.

South Africa's Muslim community seems to agree with the minister, and sections from within it have taken a number of steps to act in that direction. The April incident came as a shock to many Muslims, and spurred some into action. Among their responses were a common sermon issued to mosques across the country to be presented at the Friday prayer, and a media release that referred to the 23 and the view of the community on the issue. Beyond these public responses, there were also other responses which were internal to the community. A number of public meetings and lectures were held in mosques and community halls, publications were issued, articles published, and radio and television shows on Muslim media focused on the issue. The thrust was not only to condemn, but to engage in a conversation that went beyond condemnation and addressed the specific theological arguments that IS uses and which have proven to be effective in its recruitment.

It is too early to judge how significant an impact these measures have had. The potential for impact will also depend on the whether Muslim community organisations will continue pursuing this matter or will slacken off when the media spotlight is off them, and whether they are able to make a stronger case to South African Muslim youth than IS recruiters do. They will have to address both the theological as well as the political angles in their attempt to do so. Importantly, too, they will have to address the meaning of citizenship and the ownership and belonging that go with that in a modern nation state.

A threat to South Africa?

While South Africans joining IS (or settling in IS territory) is not necessarily a direct threat to South Africa, there are a number of concerns for South Africans around this phenomenon. One of them is the possibility that some recruits might decide to return to South Africa. Based on IS's current strategy, there is little chance that South Africa would be considered a target for IS operations – especially if the state does not join any initiative specifically targeting IS. Returnees, therefore, are unlikely to conduct operations in South Africa, but could include recruits who are specifically deployed by their IS chiefs to return and further the recruitment process, and, second, those who make the decision to return after the initial romanticism of IS and the notion of living in a 'caliphate' have worn off. Considering that life in IS land is not a bed of roses, this could start happening soon with those who have been there for a few months.

> "Soft power is necessary. Without such interventions, IS will 'remain' for a long time yet; even if it does not 'expand'."

The danger posed by the first group is obvious. But even with the second group, there is no guarantee that unhappiness with poor living conditions implies an ideological change. Such people could return to South Africa but continue promoting the same ideology and ideas they had been recruited to. The dangers inherent in this could impact on both the state and South African society more generally, and the Muslim community more specifically.

Conclusion

In general, countering IS requires action on a number of fronts, including the military one. One front that is not located exclusively in the Middle East is that of confronting IS's ideological attraction. The objective of this theological battle is to confront IS soft power projection into Muslim communities around the world. This is a crucial battle to be engaged in South Africa, and South Africa's Muslim community seems to have expressed a willingness to be on the frontline.

Such recruitment of Muslims from various parts of the Muslim world is one of three criteria that IS has set itself as measures of its success; the other two being the ability to maintain control over the core of the territory it has captured, and being able to provide services to the population it rules over on an ongoing basis. Indications are that on all three of these indicators it is, thus far, doing fairly well. Thus, by IS's own measure, it is succeeding. Frankly, there are no alternate criteria that have been set by anyone else – including its enemies and rivals – to measure the group's success or failure. This suggests that there is little likelihood that IS will be destroyed within the next decade. Even if various governments, Muslim scholars, activists, and militant groups like the Kurdish militias succeed in stemming the flow of glassy-eyed recruits to IS-controlled Syria and Iraq, it is entirely plausible that, with the forces it has, IS could protect its territorial gains and provide services to its subjects. In essence, there is a real possibility that the 'Islamic State' could transform itself into a state.

An effective counter to the group's control of territory cannot only be military. The other two indicators – stemming its recruitment and making it impossible for it to provide services (or ensuring that its subjects are not satisfied with the services it provides) will require interventions beyond the military; this is where soft power is necessary. Without such interventions, IS will 'remain' for a long time yet; even if it does not 'expand'. ■

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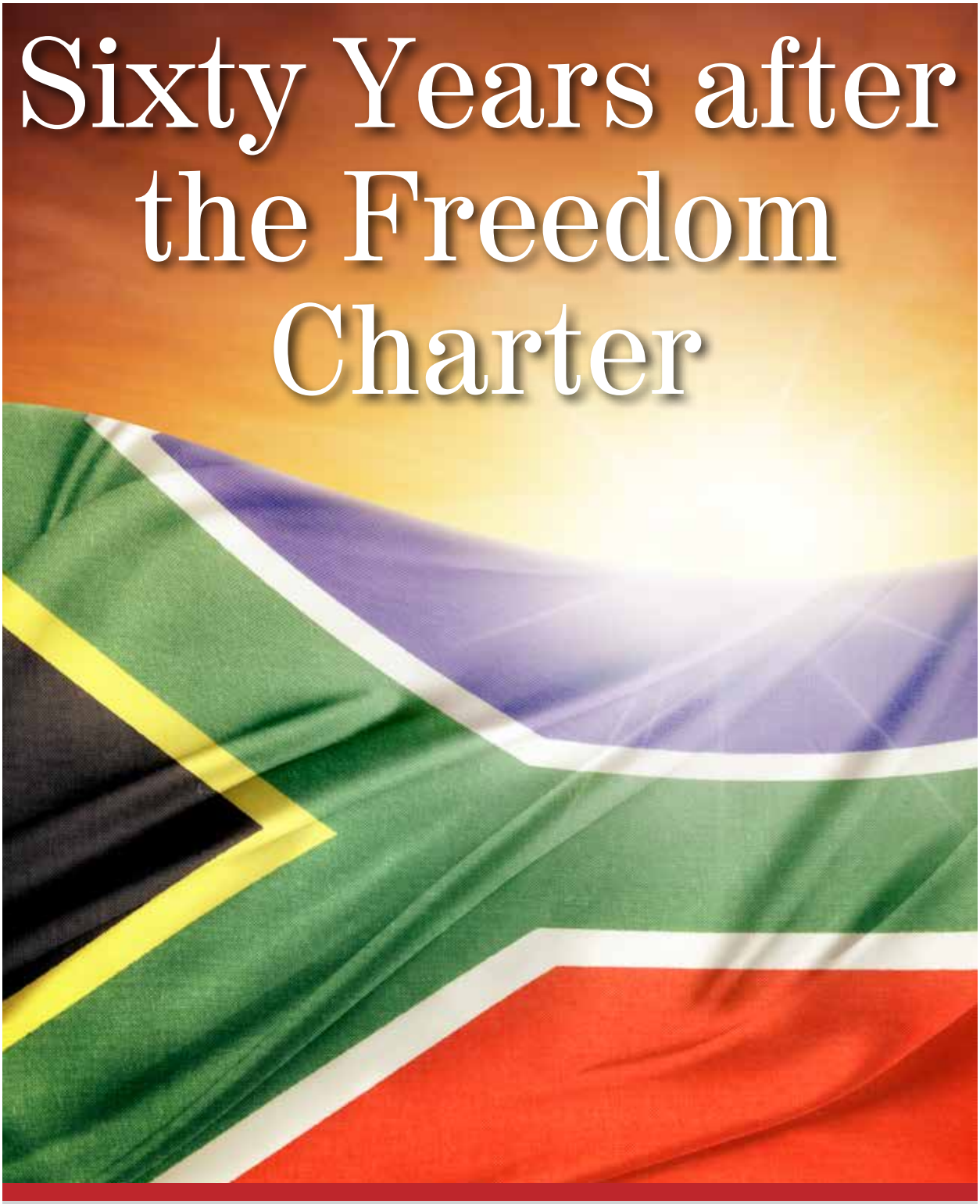
Sixty Years after the Freedom Charter



Can the Freedom Charter be used to make it possible for the oppressed anywhere, to dream and speak of their freedom and to make it a reality?

By Mongane Wally Serote

One of the most gallant battles, which must forever be an inspiration for all those South Africans who defend multiracialism, gender equity and democracy in our country, is the battle fought by the Khoe and the San against the invading Portuguese, who landed on the south western shores of our country in 1492. South African patriots must reclaim that victory as the foundation upon which the spirit of the Freedom Charter and the African Renaissance was to be built.

The Khoe and the San faced the mighty army of the Portuguese, who were armed with bayonets, guns, cannons and other weapons of war. Given the fact that the Portuguese had gained vast experience in the many other adventures which they had embarked upon in other continents, intending to settle and to implement the Slave trade and colonialism, a great victory was achieved for the oppressed of the world. The Khoe and the San, armed with knobkieries, spears, and bows and arrows, skilled in indigenous guerrilla warfare, scuttled and defeated the Portuguese, who, tails between their legs, had to run back to Portugal for reinforcement. The spirit of no surrender had been engraved in the minds and blood of the coming generations of South Africans.

A new era of struggle, signalled by the beheading of Inkosi Bambhata, and inspired by the wars of resistance which the indigenous people of South Africa had engaged in, from a divided and weak position, against the Dutch and the British, was embarked upon. The weaknesses among the indigenous people, our ancestors, including some who collaborated with the settlers, resulted in the colonisation of our country, and the near enslavement of the indigenous people, by both the British and the Boers. Lessons were learnt from these protracted onslaughts by the settlers. These lessons persuaded the indigenous people to correct some of their weaknesses. They united, they studied both the manner in which the settlers fought, and the institutions they created to govern them, their languages and their culture, and embarked on processes of developing greater unity among themselves.

They founded the media to communicate among themselves and even with the settlers across the land. They combined voices of *Imvo* and *Izwi*, the newspapers founded by the new leaders in African politics, which had a far reach, stretching throughout Southern Africa. These discussions and debates about the state of Africans within the state of affairs as put forward by the settlers – a maturing and ripening antagonistic contradiction – would qualitatively strengthen the African voice, and sharpen methods to strengthen, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the opposition to colonialisation. There emerged, from all these efforts, the launch of the South African National Native Congress in the late nineteenth century. This was the predecessor of the African National Congress (ANC) which was launched in 1912.

> “The West European and US administrations were to assist us in building a more powerful solidarity movement as an unintended consequence of their support for the Apartheid regime.”

The gathering of 2800 people from all walks of life, from across South Africa, from large and small villages, from large and small townships, from dorpies and suburbs, in Kliptown in 1955 was another qualitative leap for the struggle. This historic event had been preceded by the Defiance Campaign and the M-plan, both of which were to be the foundation upon which the new forms of struggle would be based. The divided and weak position of the patriotic forces had been overcome, and a road map for the rebirth of an African nation, the South Africans, had been drafted: it was called *The Freedom Charter!*

Some of the pillars of the Freedom Charter read:

…The people shall govern!
The people shall share in the country's wealth!
All shall be equal before the law!
All shall enjoy equal human rights!
The doors of learning and culture shall be opened!
There shall be houses, security and comfort!…

Thus the voice of the people reverberated in the corridors of history. The Freedom Charter was also the basis upon which the culture of Mass Action against oppression and exploitation was based; the M-plan, a tactic used by the ANC to mobilise the masses, was also a preparatory move towards establishing the underground networks which were to be the anchor of all other forms of struggle. By 1961, the people who had been in struggle against the antagonistic contradiction manifested through oppression, exploitation and violence founded Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) to defend the spirit and letter of the Freedom Charter. As the saying goes: 'History repeats itself'. The struggle had returned to 1492, in a different form.

The different terrain of struggle had to be understood, as well as the new subjective realities. By 1952 the people had spoken, the road they wished to travel no matter the odds, was mapped out, and the motive force to engage the processes to resolve the antagonistic contradiction had been mobilised. As Govan Mbeki put it, the impact of the Defiance Campaign was:

> *Firstly it gave an opportunity to the rank and file of the ANC membership to be involved in a political way in a struggle against oppression… Secondly the people realised that the way to freedom passed through jail. Thirdly the campaign inculcated the idea and spirit of sacrifice of personal interests for public good. Fourthly, out of the campaign came out a disciplined volunteer corps of men and women who gave unstintingly of their time and energy without remuneration in order to build and strengthen the ANC…And finally, the defiance campaign put an end to the era of deputations and pleading with Government.*

By 1960 leaders were jailed, and some were in exile, some in the

underground networks while others were sent for military training. Tens of thousands of ordinary people in the world were mobilised, and were mobilising themselves, in the Anti-Apartheid Movement. And the West European and US administrations were to assist us in building a more powerful solidarity movement as an unintended consequence of their support for the Apartheid regime.

The antagonistic contradiction between the People of South Africa and the Apartheid regime had deepened. The liberation movement held on to the Freedom Charter. While the returning and trained guerrillas became armed cadres, trained in progressive politics, the Freedom Charter was the basic and non-negotiable point of reference for them, for the liberation of their country. They were also nurtured to honour and emulate the pre-colonial leaders like Makhanda, Hintsa, Sekhukhune, Cetshwayo, Moshoeshoe and Bambatha, the great fighters who resisted colonialism in battle and with force. The struggle was also to free the leaders, who were nurtured and tempered in struggle, some of whom were now in jail: Mandela, Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Dennis Goldberg, Ahmed Kathrada, Braam Fischer, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Dorothy Nyembe... .

At this current hour, having traversed twenty one years into democracy, our country is obviously at a cross-road.

Different parts of the nation put the constitution of our country, which is the deep elaboration of the of the Freedom Charter, to the highest test, through diverse actions: the social and delivery protests; the labour strikes and demonstrations; and through other sections of the populace taking government to court on a variety of issues, some serious and some less so. Furthermore, disruptive protests inside Parliament are also taking place. Are we once more repeating history? We tested the Freedom Charter and that testing, in that time, 1956, resulted in one of the longest trials in our country, the Treason Trial, and then matured into detentions, deaths in detention, bannings and banishments, torture, long-term imprisonments and a host of other atrocities.

It is important to note that we are still engaged in resolving the complex antagonistic contradiction of our country. We essentially resolved the political element to usher in a free, just, stable, peaceful and secure nation. However, we still have the past. And that still subjugates, oppresses and exploits our people, and also dehumanises sections of the population.

The conundrum is: which motive forces among our people stand for multiracialism, gender equity and democracy, and which for Apartheid and exploitation? That is the question. We have arrived once more in that historical moment, when we must ask the historical question: What must be done?

Is it possible to be objective and to try to understand the men and women, the fire eaters for freedom who sacrificed everything, so that the Freedom Charter could be the agenda for Freedom for all South Africans? The Freedom Charter expresses everything which every South African must cherish deep in their minds, and hold dear to their hearts and close to their spirituality. It is unprecedented in our Country for it expresses a collective consciousness of a people, and expresses their commitment to actions which must impact on the life of a nation to resolve an antagonistic contradiction of bloody proportions and consequences. The pioneers, Luthuli, Sisulu, Tambo, Mandela, Mbeki, Kotane, Marks, Fischer, Dadoo, Florence Mphosho, Kate Molale, Ruth Mompati, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rhahima Moosa… were the torch bearers of an unique and eternal moment.

> “Does the constitution engage the issues related to the fact that the majority of the people in this country, who are black, have been underdeveloped, consciously and deliberately by the Apartheid state?”

I am not only calling for the understanding of these men and women, I am also stating that the Freedom Charter is a heritage of this country which must be accessible, which must be there in the open, to talk to all the people and enshrine their rare and fine aspirations as they faced all the odds, to accomplish it as a political reference. Their forward looking vision of a future of many generations of South Africans is now written on the wall, proclaiming South Africa as a nation among nations of the continent and the world.

The Freedom Charter is the anchor of Freedom which has shaped and laid a foundation for a nation to emerge. This nation, which is part and parcel of other African countries, enters the family of nations even beyond our continent. It, on behalf of Africa, enters the world to contribute to the human experience. It does so because of its total and unique experience which is inherent in the Freedom Charter, making this tool an international tool which must be celebrated as a contribution to freedom in the whole world. Can that be done, as a collective spiritual commitment of South Africans, on behalf of Africa and as an international beacon? Can the Freedom Charter be used to make it possible for the oppressed anywhere, to dream and speak of their freedom and to make it a reality?

From 1492 onwards, to the nineteen nineties, while the mass struggle rose and ebbed and rose and ebbed, the imposition of oppression, exploitation and subjugation of black people were brutally, ruthlessly and violently reinforced through legislation and violence. That oppression, which was intended to be a means for maximum exploitation of black people, was also a tool to deny democratic rights, freedom of speech, justice and the enjoyment of the diversity of our country. The total rejection of this is expressed in the “…shalls…” in the freedom Charter. The denial of freedom for all South Africans was negated by the Freedom Charter. The laws representing those denials were repealed and replaced

with inclusive policies and legislations, in line with the new constitution of the country.

Let me tell you a graphic story which illustrates this. I come from Alexandra. Alexandra was, in the spirit of the village, structured as a community; it was a tightly knit community, cushioned in the ways of the village but in an urban area, 18 miles from the city centre. In one yard in Alexandra, there would be perhaps ten or twelve or more families. There was the main family, the property owner, then, the tenants. Meetings about how to live with each other were now and then held. Stories were now then told as elder men sat and shared beer, after the formal discussions which were chaired by the landlord. Security tasks, water conservation, cleanliness of the yard, discipline and other chores were discussed and responsibilities allocated. Fund-raising would have been done for this or that in the yard.

I recall hearing, as a little boy, Rre Pooe, talking about his life story. He was from Thabazimbi. He worked for a boer there, who did constructions for other boer farmers. The ritual in the morning as they prepared to leave, was that Rre Pooe would clean the car, pack the tools: picks, shovels, rakes and things like that. He would then wait for the "baas" so that they can then leave for work for the day. The "baas" had laid down the law that, Rre Pooe would enter the boot where he had packed the tools, sit there. Then the boot would be closed. Rre Pooe would sit there inside the closed boot together with the tools until they reached their destination. Rre Pooe would come out of the boot, soaked wet with sweat, dizzy and clamouring for breath. He would recover, and then he would begin to work. Part of his pay was the little shack he had built in the "baas's" farm plus one pound a month.

Rre Pooe ran away from the farm one day and came to Alexandra. In my view, he ran from the pan into the fire. When Rre Pooe died, eventually, he was alone, in his room in our yard, with his family faraway in Sekhukhune. What a life!

This man, a father and a husband, had had no peace in his life. He was not only oppressed and exploited, he went through a process of systematic dehumanisation all his life. He had been a shepherd, coming from a peasant family. He understood farming methods. He then became a labourer employed by the Baas. He then became a domestic servant..."I was expected to wash white women's panties…" he used to say. Before he decided to be an entrepreneur, he had been in menial job after menial job. He left the "…white women pantie…" place. When he died, he was trying to sell flower seedlings to the white people, riding a bicycle, for miles on end in the white suburbs – Bramley, Rosebank, Parktown and so on – and in the process, he had to avoid being arrested for an invalid pass. A section in his pass stated that he could not be employed in an urban area.

> "The "…shalls…" in the Freedom Charter were inspired by the understanding and realisation that even against the greatest odds, the inhabitants of those dungeons still claimed their being human and humane."

When he died, he was about seventy-five years old. He had endured forced removals in the areas where he was born. A long and protracted forced removal was being enforced in Alexandra, beginning the fifties, and in the seventies, Alexandra began to show the cracks of disintegration of individuals, families, community, heritage, culture and it seemed the spirit of the place was in despair. The one time elders of the place became very old and one by one they began to let go… . In 1994, even as Rre Pooe had already passed, his peers who were still alive were vindicated. It must have been them who came in their millions to vote before they too would let go… . The inclusivity of the Freedom Charter empowered all to hold on to and use the political power which is enshrined in it to participate in the changing of the circumstances of the people.

While the "baas" element of the nation hides and lives the life of the chameleon, the truth is, it is aware that there is no space for it in a multiracial, gender equal and democratic South Africa. The Democratic system is a dictatorship against warped and unjust intentions.

The Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement have expressed, in their own spirit, minds, words and being as Movements, what their aspirations for the future of South Africa must be. In their own right, they fought against oppression, exploitation and the dehumanisation of black people. They, like the ANC, aspire for the regeneration, reclamation, rebirth, reawakening, recreation and reconstruction of our country within the context of the African Continent, and we all envision the Union of the African Continent. These aspirations are in no way contradictory to multi-racialism, gender equity and democracy. The Parliament of South Africa is a multiracial institution and it is culturally, spiritually and politically diverse. The Constitution is our supreme law.

As an instrument, the Freedom Charter is a legacy for the South African people. In place now, in the same spirit, informed and inspired by the Freedom Charter, is the Constitution of South Africa. The Constitution is now the instrument through which the freedoms of sections of our nation must be defined, with the objectives which the Freedom Charter stated so clearly: to on the one hand affirm the uniqueness of the different sectors of our nation; on the other, to become the basis upon which the great nation of the South African people must be born and must emerge.

Because the constitution dictates and creates checks and balances related to the lives, being and history of the citizens of the country, that constitution must be defended. It must be defended in the first instance by all the South Africans. The government must also put into place institutions capable of defending it.

Does the constitution engage the issues related to the fact that the majority

of the people in this country, who are black, have been underdeveloped, consciously and deliberately by the Apartheid state? And that is why I have had to go into detail about Rre Pooe! Besides defending and protecting the diversity of a growing nation called South Africans, are there enough balances in the constitution to ensure that different sections can really understand each other? Apart from the black the majority, other parts of the diversity still have to have a fuller and deeper understanding of the unintended and unconscious, as well as the deliberate and conscious effects and impact of racism, apartheid and labour exploitation on that majority part of the diversity.

The hue of this diversity was not only excluded, but short of being rendered extinct, it was sustained for the sustenance of other hues of the national diversity. This not intentional unawareness forever raises its head. The Freedom Charter calls for inclusive participation to overcome this, which can become a trigger for racial misunderstanding. After all, the Freedom Charter was founded through sweat, suffering and death. It was founded, by all means necessary, to enshrine inclusivity in our nation.

Otherwise, what actions have been taken, by whom, how and where, to ensure that the "…shalls…" in the Freedom Charter have not only been addressed, but that their history and their reality is not only studied by all, but that all are committed to their being implemented and to their becoming a reality?

The "…shalls…" in the Freedom Charter were inspired by the understanding and realisation that even against the greatest odds, the inhabitants of those dungeons still claimed their being human and humane. Suddenly it was said: the Freedom Charter has been achieved! That is the meaning of Freedom! That is what the constitution meant when the democratic Parliament received it on behalf of the Nation. In the meantime, the truth is how must we make the constitution walk the streets? Is it at present, being taught to walk the streets?

This was a contradiction in terms, but still, a reality guiding the struggle for freedom, which in part, is forever even today, still being addressed by the "…shalls…" of the Freedom Charter. That is why, in my view, we could arrive at the exploration of reconciliation, even as we missed its central point.

The Reconciliation which was pronounced, at Codesa and later enacted, cannot be limited to a reconciliation sought between White and Black South Africans only. Reconciliation should also have meant that, from a multiracial viewpoint South Africans would claim the Africanness of South Africa.

"…South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white…" That is not and cannot be an idle notion. Does it inform reconciliation, but does that mean that the interpretation must be confined to that meaning only? The "…shalls…"of the Freedom Charter enforce the total opening up of the South African Nation, and the history of this Charter emanates from negating tribalism. The "…shalls…" of the Freedom Charter confirm gender equity through its insistence on inclusivity which also implies the openness of the family, which cannot remain being torn apart, as it was by the Apartheid system which deliberately targeted it for destruction. That destruction would ensure that blacks are subjugated. That subjugation would ensure that blacks would become cultureless and thus more easily exploitable.

> "How must we make the constitution walk the streets? Is it at present, being taught to walk the streets?"

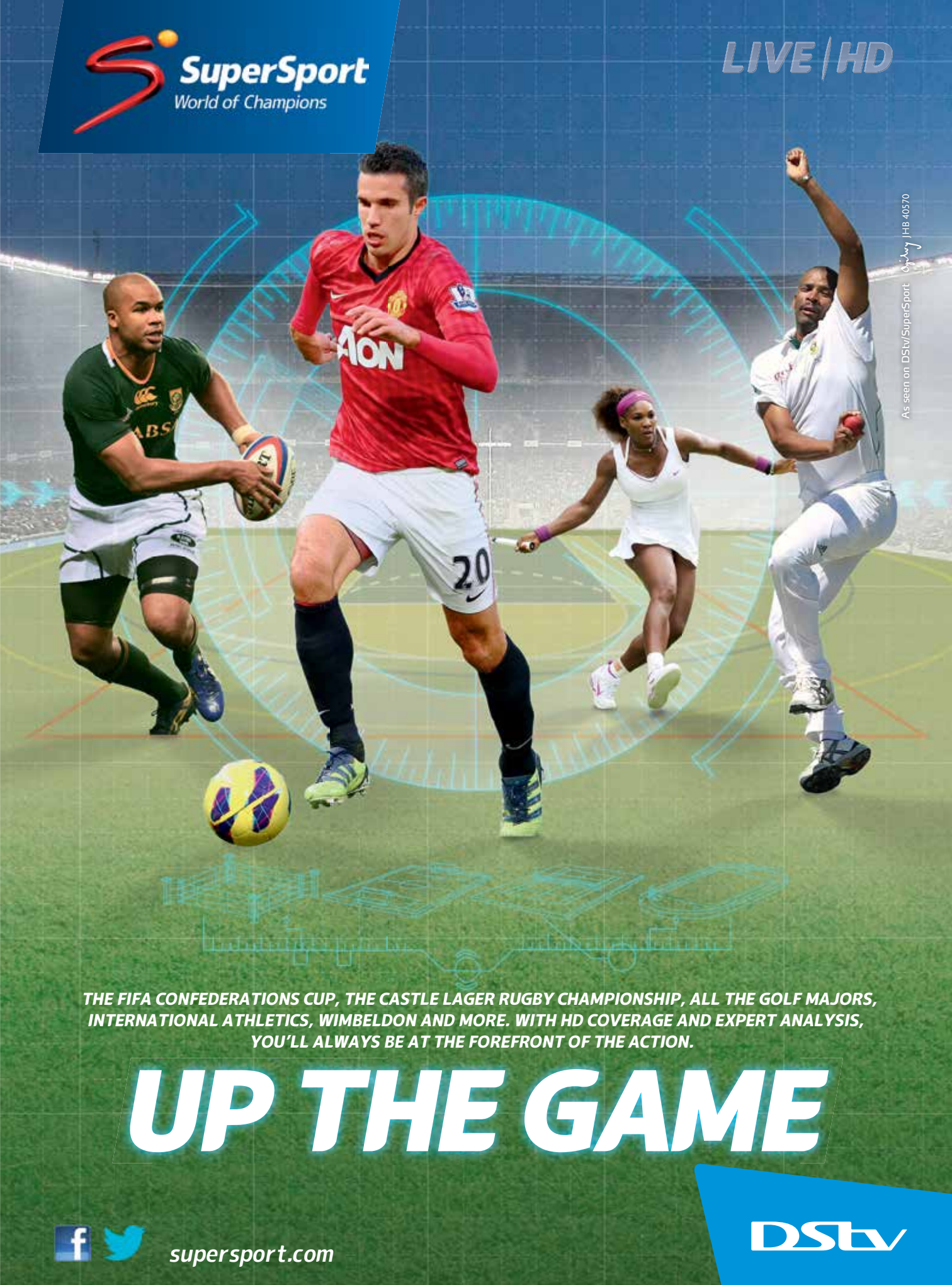
Lastly, the "…shalls…"in the Charter affirm the Africanness of Africans and of South Africa. The five categories of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) –namely social issues, institutions, technology, bio-diversity and liberatory processes – are the basis for the re-emergence of the South African African discourse, which remains fundamental to the inclusive multiracial and diverse culture of our nation.

IKS will and must emancipate the African voice. It is that voice, which will negate our having to be professional students of the West. The African voice must be emancipated in South Africa. For as long as when it emerges, it is pounded and crushed against all kinds of guises and eventually muted, no voice can speak for Africans and therefore the fundamental principles of the Freedom Charter will be completely and absolutely violated. Inclusivity will have failed.

There are too many biased and prejudiced views of African Culture. It is a prejudice to speak of tradition and custom, even as it is also, African intellectuals who insist on that terminology when referring to African Culture. Where else in the world is that terminology used which anthropologists, who see the "dark continent" when they visualise that which is not white or Western? Speaking of African Culture, in the democratic dispensation of our country, has almost become tantamount to oppression of women, backwardness, child abuse and tribalism.

There is no doubt in my mind that there are issues which need to be discarded in African Culture, as is also the case even with the so called civilised west. Because many cannot even contemplate that there are things to be discarded from western culture, its sun is setting. That is one discussion. In this African bath like in any other human bath which contains dirty water, there is a baby in it. That is another discussion.

I agree also, that there is a need to use the constitution, there is a need to be scholarly, there is a need also to be objective and not to be romantic as this process of rebirthing and regenerating the African discourse is engaged. I am the first to know that there is scholarly and scholarly, that there is objectivity and objectivity… . All that process, of the renaissance of Africa, must not negate the Freedom Charter, or seek to be integrated into and not transform or disguise eurocentrism as the ultimate truth of human life. The scholars, African scholars, multiracial as they must be, must be the defenders of diversity. The Freedom Charter is the unprecedented pioneer of inclusivity! ■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Revisiting the Freedom Charter

The ANC must realise that they have been reinforcing neo-colonial structures in our country and post-independent Africa. It must become clear to them that the outcry from the black disadvantaged is valid and cannot be ignored any longer.

By Ndumiso Maseko

Why should we celebrate the Freedom Charter when it is not implemented in its entirety? Out of the 10 clauses, only a few can be evidently traced in the policies that the government has adopted over the past few years. The following are the clauses that the Congress of the People adopted into the Charter which was held on the 26 and 27 of June 1955:

THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN.

This important clause emphasises the collective governance of our country. 'The people shall govern' means that the people shall vote for a party and leader whom they perceive as suitable to advance the socio-political and economic causes of the masses. In addition, it also means that the voice of the people should inform the policies that are adopted by government. Do we see that in our current government?

ALL NATIONAL GROUPS SHALL HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.

The plurality of our society poses a challenge in how the subjects should be treated. This clause means the complete elimination of superior groups in our society. Is everyone treated the same in South Africa? Are black people treated the same as white people?

THE PEOPLE SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH.

The minerals beneath the soil and the land still remain in the hands of the minority. The Freedom Charter called for nationalisation of mines, banks and industrial monopolies. Can this be seen in the policies of the government of the day?

THE LAND SHALL BE SHARED AMONG THOSE WHO WORK IT.

We have seen a lot of documents aimed at redistributing the land back to its rightful owners. It is a sad reality that less than 20% of the land has been returned to the people. White farmers are still comfortably claiming ownership of stolen property.

5. All shall be equal before the law.

Is Justice served? Why are apartheid agents who committed atrocities and murdered our people still not prosecuted? Have government officials been arrested for corruption?

Have we dealt with and arrested those white farmers who continue to abuse and violate the human rights of black people in our countryside? Are police who have committed criminal offenses and acted against their oath in jail? Did the Marikana commission serve justice to the victims? Did Oscar Pistorius receive a proper sentence for murdering his girlfriend?

ALL SHALL ENJOY HUMAN RIGHTS.

Our Constitution guarantees our people the freedom to protest and demonstrate. People in various parts of the country have been shot for participating in protests and demonstrations parties. Are our rights protected in the Constitution? Why do the police use rubber bullets routinely and live rounds too often? Is the militarisation of the new police 'force' a poor exchange for the police 'service' we need?

THERE SHALL BE WORK AND SECURITY.

The Labour Act establishes the overall setting in a work place. It gives employees the right to associate themselves with any union. It guarantees workers the right to organise themselves and to collective bargaining. If we are truly honest and committed to the Freedom Charter, then why are we looking at alarming statistics of unemployment, exploitation and gross inequality?

THE DOORS OF LEARNING AND CULTURE SHALL BE OPENED.

One of the greatest setbacks in our society is illiteracy. Millions of South Africans cannot write their names yet they are walking on gold. Students are turned away from universities and technical and vocational institutions because their studies cannot be accommodated by the fiscal budget. Tertiary education is extremely expensive. Young \ poor black people cannot afford to pay even the registration fees. Are doors freely opened in higher learning institutions?

THERE SHALL BE HOUSES, SECURITY AND COMFORT.

Over the past twenty years nearly two million people have received some form of housing benefit. But there are millions who still do not enjoy the benefit of houses, security and comfort. Are we safe? Are we secure?

THERE SHALL BE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP.

Xenophobic attacks directly contradict this clause. Some of our people have shown no remorse in their wild acts. They have murdered and burnt our brothers and sisters who come from other African countries.

As much as we need to always qualify our argument by looking at the period we have had in power, we could have done better. The Freedom Charter is no longer the document of the collective.

Decolonising the mind first before economic emancipation

The struggle for economic freedom in our lifetime has been intensified and heated. The consciousness resides within the deepest thoughts of the African masses that the century for African Renaissance has arrived.

I just hope that when we do attain and realise the economic emancipation project for Africa and her people, the work of decolonising the mind of black people will also have been concluded and sealed. Otherwise, we are continuing to participate in and perpetuate our own oppression.

Decolonise the mind first, then economic freedom!

A diluted Freedom Charter

The sudden emphasis and reinforcement of the Freedom Charter is a socio-political and economic mirage since the ruling party has been pursuing neo-liberal policies that are not aligned with the basic tenets of the Freedom Charter.

The ANC must realise that they have been reinforcing neo-colonial structures in our country and post-independent Africa. It must become clear to them that the outcry from the black disadvantaged is valid and cannot be ignored any longer.

Political opportunism has been part of the ANC's DNA at times of desperation. Dedicating the new year as the period of the Freedom Charter is an overt signal to anyone who closely examines the political landscape of our country that the ruling party is vigorously challenging the EFF.

Despite this, the ANC is honestly responding to the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) radical stances on eradicating poverty, reducing the unemployment rate and fighting crime fastidiously.

Without a doubt the ANC inherited a reeling and bankrupt economy in 1994. The South African economy had major structural flaws that needed carefully crafted economic policies to integrate the economy into the mainstream world economy. With that in mind, the ANC devised the *Growth, Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR)*. GEAR was introduced in 1996 with the aim of addressing the socio-economic challenges of the present day. It was necessary for the ruling party to act immediately in order to avoid perpetuating a stagnant economy.

GEAR, as a macro-economic policy, contained a firm and central principle aimed at integrating the developing economy into the global community with the assumption that exports will pull up the economy rapidly and thereby balance the inequalities that existed.

GEAR, to a certain extent, achieved laudable results but it also made the South Africa economy vulnerable to global twists and turns. The government then decided to introduce the *Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (Asgisa)* to enhance the government's capacity to implement policies.

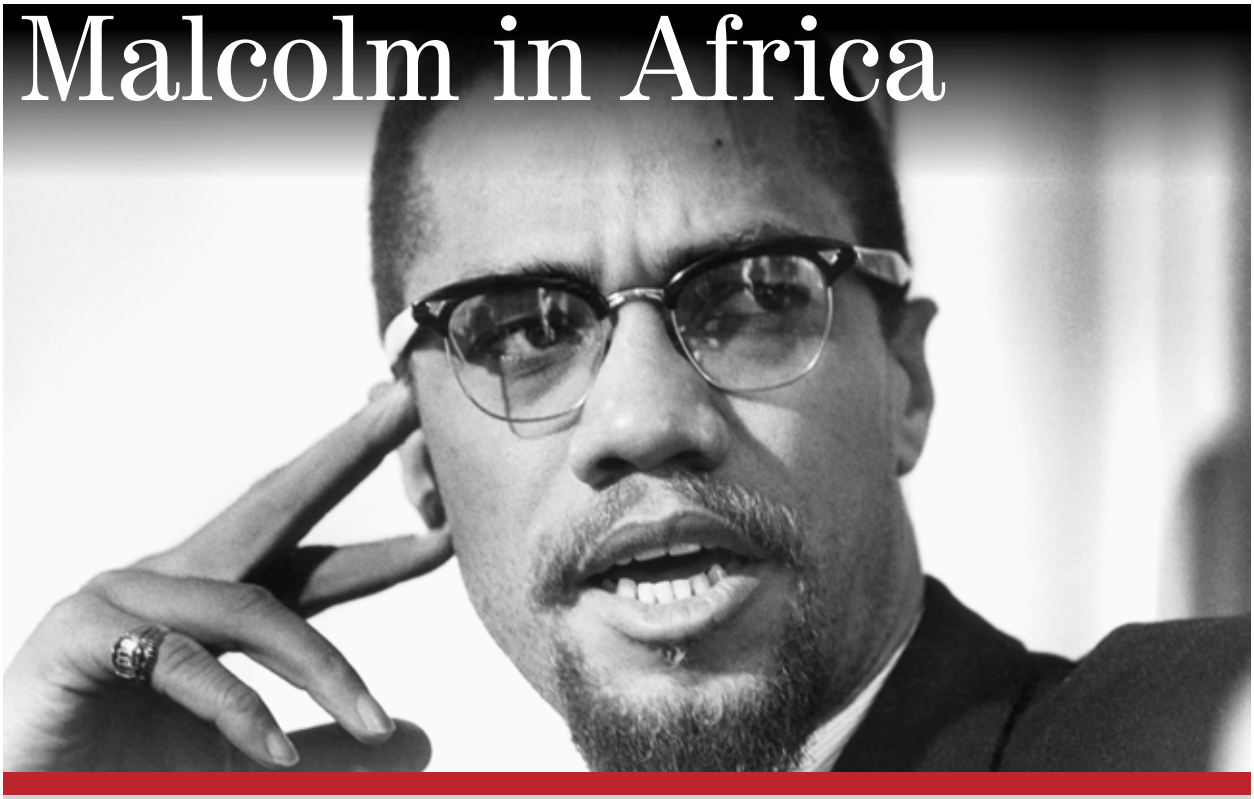
The saddening reality is that when these policies and plans were devised, there was no mention of the Freedom Charter or any close alignment to that document.

The National Development Plan (NDP) is another plan that does not take the fundamental clauses of the Freedom Charter into consideration. It is a plan that will continue to reinforce the capitalist account pattern which will perpetuate racial under-development and inequalities.

Reclaiming the Freedom Charter should mean that the ANC will have to go back to the drawing board and perform a serious paradigm shift in order to implement the clauses of the Freedom Charter.

They are taking chances! ■

Malcolm in Africa



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He had realised that race alone could never be a sufficient criterion for achieving social change...He had allied openly with the enemies of Washington in Havana, Hanoi and Algiers. These facts meant that 'they have already ordered my execution. They don't like uppity niggers. Never have. They'll kill me. I'm sure'.

By Dan Glazebrook

Malcolm X spent much of the last year of his life abroad – indeed, it may well have been his success in building international support for his cause that effectively signed his death warrant, as the US government became increasingly nervous about the impact he was having. Malcolm travelled to Mecca on Haj in April 1964, and then on to Beirut and Cairo. Over the following ten months he visited Nigeria (twice), Ghana (twice), Britain (three times), Cairo again, Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Ethiopia, Liberia, Guinea, Algiers, Geneva and Paris.

It is well known that these travels – especially those within Africa – had a dramatic impact on Malcolm's developing political outlook following his break with the Nation of Islam. Perhaps most famously, Malcolm's support for the Algerian struggle against French colonialism had forced him to reassess his understanding of race and oppression, as is made clear from an interview given to the Young Socialist Alliance in January 1965:

> *He explained that during a discussion in Ghana the Algerian ambassador, 'who was extremely militant and revolutionary', had questioned his definition of his philosophy of black nationalism by asking 'where would this leave me?'. The Ambassador, Malcolm explained, was a white man. 'He showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary... So I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of black nationalism'....Later in the interview Malcolm said he had had the opportunity to 'sample the thinking' of the African presidents and prime ministers he had met. 'I was impressed by their analysis of the problem, and many of the suggestions they gave went a long way towards broadening my own outlook', he added.*

In particular, he became ever more convinced that the struggle for the rights of African-Americans within

the United States was intrinsically linked to the struggle for freedom from colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa, that the more these struggles were understood as one fight the more success they would have – and that this was already starting to happen. As Malcolm himself put it:

> *As long as Africa was colonised, the coloniser projected the image of Africa and it was negative. And this made the people of African origin in the West not want to identify with Africa. And as the image of Africa was negative, the image of themselves was negative. But...now Africa is projecting a positive image, you find that the black people in the West are also projecting a positive image, they have more self-confidence and they are stepping up their drive in the struggle for freedom.*

That the African independence movement was having this effect on Malcolm himself is clear. His notebook entry in May 1964, during his stay in Ghana, noted that

> *All Africa is seething with serious awareness of itself, its potential wealth and power and the role it seems destined to play. We must identify with ('migrate' to) Africa culturally, philosophically and psychologically and the 'life' or new spirit will then give us the inspiration to do the things necessary (ourselves) to better our political economic and social 'life' ...in America.*

Malcolm was particularly impressed by Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of the successful liberation struggle against British imperialism in Ghana, and President from 1957. Nkrumah had established the Organisation of African Unity the year before Malcolm's arrival as a forum for implementing his vision of a single pan-African state that could rid itself of the vestiges of colonialism for good. As he put it to Shirley Du Bois, one of over one hundred African-Americans who had responded to President Nkrumah's call for Africans the world over to migrate to Ghana to help build pan-African unity: "Your President, Osagyefo [Nkrumah's nom de guerre], has taught me the true meaning and strength of unity". Malcolm also wrote that "the most remarkable achievement made by Africa since the arrival of the white man is the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity...Heads of State should give maximum and uncompromising support to the OAU and the concept of a Union government for the continent; those who don't do this are contributing to the continued presence and dominance of the west in Africa". Indeed, his own organisation, the Organisation of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) – founded immediately following his return from Ghana in June 1964 – was explicitly modelled on the OAU.

Another figure who made a deep impression on Malcolm was Egypt's Nasser, whose victory against the combined forces of Israel, Britain and France in 1957 had been a massive boost for independence movements across the continent – and indeed, across the world. Back in Detroit, Malcolm said that he had had "a chance to speak in Alexandria with President Nasser, for about an hour and a half. He's a brilliant man. And I can see why they're so afraid of him – and they are afraid of him. They know he can cut off their oil. And actually the only thing power respects is power".

"Malcolm's increasing alignment with such figures as Nasser and Nkrumah was deeply worrying to the US government – and Malcolm knew it."

Malcolm's increasing alignment with such figures as Nasser and Nkrumah was deeply worrying to the US government – and Malcolm knew it. In an interview with the Lagos Morning Post published just over a week before his death, Malcolm spoke of an "international conspiracy to prevent the black man in the West from identifying with his brother in Africa... All coloured people in the world had to identify with Africa...They had to stop thinking of themselves as British, French or American, they had to think black and be independent".

Malcolm knew that this was a dangerous position for him to hold, writing in November 1964 that "Those talks [with African revolutionaries] broadened my outlook and made it crystal clear to me that I had to look at the struggle in America's ghettos against the background of a worldwide struggle of oppressed peoples. That's why, after every one of my trips abroad, America's rulers see me as being more and more dangerous. That's why I feel in my bones that the plots to kill me have already been hatched in high places".

Africa, then, had made a fundamental impact on Malcolm's thinking. But this influence was not only one way. Malcolm was not only learning but teaching on his visits, constantly addressing mass public meetings, conducting TV, radio and press interviews almost daily, as well as meeting leading figures in the newly independent states.

Throughout all of these discussions, he was driving home the reality of continued racist oppression in the US, warning Africans not to believe the US government propaganda that this had all disappeared with the passage of the Civil Rights Act – and warning them that a government which continues to dehumanise its own African population would not treat Africans in Africa any differently. Africans, he argued, needed to be as wary of US 'dollarism' as of European colonialism. In May 1964 he told a Nigerian newspaper that the "Peace Corps are spies of the American government and missionaries of colonialism and neo-colonialism... Every American recruited into the Peace Corps had a special assignment to perform. They are all agents of espionage." He developed the theme at a speech to the London School of Economics the following February, reported in *The Times*: "'They send the Peace Corps to Nigeria and hired killers to the Congo. What is the Peace Corps? Exactly what it says,' he added amid applause. 'Get a piece of your country'".

William Sales, in his book *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation*, notes that "the most useful aspect of Malcolm X in Africa was that he presented other

views than what was propounded by the United States Information Service... only from Malcolm X did the militant leadership group receive a briefing on the US racial situation in a language immediately recognisable to them". James Farmer, after his own visit to Africa shortly after Malcolm's, noted that "President Johnson has not been well-projected in Africa. In addition, Malcolm X contributed greatly to the generally unfavourable African opinion of Johnson".

That Malcolm's visit made a huge impact on Africa is not in doubt. He was received as a guest of honour by the governments of almost every country he visited, and given private meetings with not only Nkrumah, but also Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and even President Azikiwe of Nigeria. In Guinea, he not only met President Sekou Toure, but stayed in his private residence, noting in his diary that day: "I'm speechless. All praise is due Allah". These men deeply respected Malcolm, with Nkrumah, for example, dedicating his 1968 pamphlet *The Spectre of Black Power* to Che Guevara, Ben Barka and Malcolm. William Gardner Smith, another of the 120-plus African Americans living in Ghana at the time, and assistant editor-in-chief of Ghana TV, wrote that Malcolm "inspired great admiration... When we met him...Malcolm was becoming a revolutionary. He was a great man to us".

But Malcolm's influence was not limited to the African leadership; it was deeply felt throughout the countries he visited. According to Leslie Lacy at the University of Ghana in Legon, Malcolm's second visit to Ghana "caught us by surprise...but we were ready. Most of us had not gone back to our old lives. Malcolm...and all that we had seen and felt as a result of his visit, had had a converting effect on our lives, and he had outlined specific plans for how we could aid our struggle for human rights in America...[The students] at the University had talked about Malcolm for days after he left". John Lewis of the US-based Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, living in Ghana at the time of Malcolm's visit, "found that Malcolm was revered" says Marika Sherwood. "He and his SNCC colleagues were constantly asked about Malcolm wherever they travelled in West Africa. 'Malcolm X was considered even further to the left… – an extremist, a revolutionary. But here in Africa, among these young freedom fighters, we were dismissed as mainstream, and it was Malcolm who was embraced'". Elsewhere, Lewis and another SNCC representative wrote:

> *Among the first questions we were continually asked (in Ghana) was 'What's your organisation's relationship with Malcolm?' After a day of this we found that we must, immediately on meeting people, state our own position in regard to where we stood on certain issues – Cuba, Vietnam, the Congo, Red China and the UN...We ultimately found that this situation was not peculiar to Ghana, the pattern repeated itself in every country... Malcolm's impact on Africa was just fantastic. In every country he was known and served as the main criteria for categorising other Afro-Americans and their political views.*

> "Malcolm was not only learning but teaching on his visits, constantly addressing mass public meetings, conducting TV, radio and press interviews almost daily, as well as meeting leading figures in the newly independent states."

Malcolm himself, in Guinea in November 1964, wrote that "It is difficult to believe that I could be so widely known (and respected) here on this continent. The negative image the Western press has tried to paint of me certainly hasn't succeeded".

Malcolm was determined to use this influence to turn the US treatment of African Americans into an international concern – in particular, by getting the issue raised at the UN. In July 1964, Malcolm was invited to attend the OAU conference in Cairo; a huge deal, given that this was a conference specifically for heads of state. He submitted a written statement on the situation of Afro-Americans in the US, which concluded by requesting that the assembled heads of state "recommend an immediate investigation into our problem by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights".

Then, on July 17th, Malcolm addressed the Assembly. As a result, the OAU passed a resolution that professed to be "deeply disturbed by continuing manifestations of racial bigotry and racial oppression against Negro citizens of the United States of America", that "reaffirm[ed] its belief that the existence of discriminatory practices is a matter of deep concern to member States of the Organisation of African Unity" and that "urge[d] the Government authorities in the United States of American to intensify their efforts to ensure the total elimination of all forms of discrimination based on race, colour, or ethnic origin" – clearly reflecting, therefore, Malcolm's message that this goal had still not been achieved, despite the passage of the Civil Rights Bill.

Although "the African states never asked for an investigation...Breitman argues that Malcolm's influence was evident in the 'sharp denunciations of American racial policy at home and abroad voiced by several African delegations in the UN debate over the Congo in December 1964'. The Essien-Udoms point out in their memoir that it was an 'extraordinary concession that Malcolm X was admitted to the OAU as it was a heads of state meeting'. He had had to lobby hard as [in Malcolm's words] the 'US government had almost successfully convinced most Africans that the African Americans did not identify with Africans and that Africans would be foolish to get involved in their problems...Not only did the Summit pass the resolution, but some of the delegates promised officially to assist the OAAU in its plan to give their support during the following session of the United Nations.'"

Sherwood, quoting Karl Evanzz, writes that "'On December 10th... African ambassadors repeatedly compared racism in South Africa

to racism in North America, just as Malcolm X had requested...The first to make the link was...Guinea's foreign minister' who questioned whether thousands of Congolese citizens had been murdered 'because [they] had dark skin just like the coloured United States citizens murdered in Mississippi?'. He was followed by Mali's foreign minister. Twelve days later the *New York Times* reported that 'Charges of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism are being levelled at the United States in the 24-member United Nations Special Committee on Imperialism'.

Malcolm's lobbying was reaping dividends – as further evidenced by MS Handler's article in the *New York Times* (2/1/1965) which stated that Malcolm X had 'prepared the political groundwork in the capitals of Africa for the recent concentrated attack on American racism in the debate on the Congo at the United Nations'". Malcolm was at pains to point out that "America needs Africa more than Africa needs America" – and that Africa should use this leverage to fight for the rights of Africans everywhere, a call to which Africans proved increasingly willing to respond.

Needless to say, none of this went unnoticed by the US authorities. "Throughout my trip, I was of course aware that I was under constant surveillance" wrote Malcolm, and this is undoubtedly true. Whilst publicly they attempted to downplay and belittle the significance of Malcolm's visit, their private correspondence (extensively quoted by Sherwood) demonstrates a deep concern about his extensive and growing influence – and how it could be combated. The State Department wrote that "there is no denying that the propaganda which was generated by his extreme statements may have caused some damage to the United States' image" and US Ambassador to Kenya, Attwood, telegrammed that "we disagree that Malcolm has had no real impact on Africa. He had considerable success in Kenya in publicising his views and in getting ear of Kenyan leaders".

One method to limit Malcolm's influence appears to have been the pressuring of African media outlets to either censor all reports of Malcolm's visits, or limit coverage to the recycling of US Embassy press releases. His second visit to Nigeria in October 1964, for example, received very little press attention compared to voluminous coverage on his earlier visit.

Malcolm certainly believed that the US government was putting pressure on African governments over his visits, and Sherwood suggests that the Embassy may have pressured the Nigerian media into ignoring his visit the second time around. An intriguing telegram from the US Embassy in Ghana to the Department of State certainly backs these suspicions, with the ambassador writing that: "I brought up press again [with President Nkrumah], saying daily press had improved towards USG (US government) but that last night I read latest issue of *The Spark* which made strictly communist line attack on Alliance for Progress and condemned peace corps...Nkrumah did not claim credit for improvement in daily press and responded only with vague comment, 'well, it is difficult'. He said he too had just read *Spark* issue, tried to side-step by saying, '*Spark* is a theoretical journal; they go into these issues'. I replied they always went into issues from one direction..." That the Ambassador would brazenly reprimand the country's President for allowing one single (theoretical) journal to print critical remarks about the US speaks volumes about the overall US commitment to censorship and micro-management of the African press.

Nor does this commitment appear to be limited to Africa. US newspapers reported Malcolm as being merely an 'observer' at the OAU conference, entirely omitting the fact that he presented a memorandum to the conference, leading Sherwood to speculate that pressure was being exerted on US media as well.

In addition, US ambassadors in Africa had clearly been told to figure out specific ways to undermine Malcolm. In November 1964, writes Sherwood, "the ever busy racist Ambassador Attwood in Nairobi sent a confidential telegram to the Department of State regarding Malcolm's planned visit to Conakry, the capital of Guinea. Attwood advised that the 'most effective way inoculate Toure against Malcolm X is to stress latter's derogatory remarks about Kennedy after assassination in view Toure's deep admiration for Kennedy, this line should help in advance Malcolm's visit'".

Other attempts at countering Malcolm's influence included the use of pro-US African Americans to project a more positive image of US in Africa. Thus, the US Embassy in Guinea suggested to the State Department that it "may wish to consider informing [well known African American actor Harry]Belafonte re proposed Malcolm X visit with direct or implied suggestion he write personal letter to Toure on subject". Sherwood comments that "either the US was unable to contact Harry Belafonte, or, of course, Belafonte might well have refused to cooperate." However, they did not give up on the idea of sending a pro-US African American to Africa to counter Malcolm's influence. Sherwood writes that "Apart from trying to influence the African heads of state via its ambassadors, the governments by trade and aid missions, the peoples through the massive propaganda efforts of the United States Information Service, the US government had another idea. Why not send another African American, espousing somewhat different philosophies from those of Malcolm, to visit?

The choice fell on James Farmer, president of the Congress of Racial Equality, but the information sent to the American embassies in Africa [by the US State Department] claimed that "Farmer's trip is sponsored by the American Negro leadership conference on Africa. The Department (of State) was informed by the Planning Committee of the Conference that the purpose of Mr Farmer's trip is to attempt to present a 'true picture of the progress of civil rights in America and to state the true aspirations of most American Negroes as compared with what has been said in Africa by Malcolm X and Cassius Clay'.... Addressee missions are requested to extend the usual courtesies to Mr Farmer and to facilitate his making contact with government leaders...The Department of course wishes to be of

help to Mr Farmer in any way practical. It is recognised that in some countries too close an identification with the Embassy may be counterproductive" – and therefore the real organisers of his trip should be kept secret.

An article in the *New York Times* summed up US concerns about Malcolm's trip in the following way: "The State Department and the Justice Department have begun to take an interest in Malcolm's campaign to convince African states to raise the question of persecution of American Negroes at the United Nations... Malcolm's 8-page memorandum [the one submitted to the OAU conference] became available only recently...The officials studying it are reported as stating that if Malcolm succeeded in convincing just one African Government to bring up the charge at the United Nations, the United States Government would be faced with a touchy problem. The United States...would find itself in the same category...as South Africa... and other countries whose domestic politics have become debating issues at the United Nations. The issue would be of service to critics of the United States... and contribute to the undermining of the position the United States has asserted for itself as leader of the West in the advocacy of human rights". Extreme methods had seemingly been taken to deal with this threat.

Just one week after his address to the OAU conference, during his stay in the Nile Hilton hotel in Cairo, Malcolm (writes Eric Norden) "collapsed in his hotel room, suffering from severe abdominal pain. He was rushed to hospital...His stomach was pumped out...and that saved him...Analysis of the stomach pumping disclosed a 'toxic substance'. Its nature was undisclosed, but food poisoning was ruled out... According to Milton Henry, Malcolm believed 'someone had deliberately poisoned me...Washington had a lot to do with it'...Mrs Ella Collins, Malcolm's sister, reported that Malcolm had told her...that he felt the CIA was directly responsible". Malcolm later told Jan Carew that "two things happened simultaneously. I felt a pain in my stomach and, in a flash, I realised that I'd seen the waiter who'd served me before. He looked South American, and I'd seen him in New York. The poison bit into me like teeth. It was strong stuff. The doctor told Milton that there was a toxic substance in my food. When the Egyptians who were with me looked for the waiter who had served me, he had vanished".

It is perhaps, then, no surprise that during Malcolm's visit to Oxford in December 1964, in response to Tariq Ali saying he hoped to see him again soon, Malcolm replied "I don't think so. By this time next year I'll be dead." Malcolm explained that, in Ali's words: "since his break with the Nation of Islam, he had been moving in other directions. He had realised that race alone could never be a sufficient criterion for achieving social change... He had allied openly with the enemies of Washington in Havana, Hanoi and Algiers. These facts meant that 'they have already ordered my execution. They don't like uppity niggers. Never have. They'll kill me. I'm sure'. 'Who?' He shrugged his shoulders, as if to say that the question was too foolish to merit a reply".

> "Malcolm was determined to use this influence to turn the US treatment of African Americans into an international concern – in particular, by getting the issue raised at the UN."

Malcolm had voiced this prediction frequently since his poisoning in Cairo and "three months away from his fortieth birthday, just before he had left London, Malcolm had told Jan Carew that 'the chances are that they will get me the way they got Lumumba'". He had also been warned of this danger by many of his African friends, including Nkrumah, who tried to persuade him to stay in Ghana. Indeed, when Malcolm was prevented by the French authorities from entering the country less than two weeks before his assassination, Eric Norden's explanation is that a "'highly-placed North African diplomat' told him that his country's intelligence department had been quietly informed by the French that the CIA planned Malcolm's murder and 'France feared he might be liquidated on its soil'". He was killed just eleven days later, addressing a packed meeting in New York, on the same day he unveiled the programme of the Organisation for Afro-American Unity.

It is clear that Malcolm's political trajectory, largely the result of his travels to Africa, meant that he had crossed a 'red line' for the US authorities. The unspoken rule of 'civil rights' campaigning in the US since the Second World War – as with 'left-wing' agitation in Britain during the same period – was that it would be tolerated, and even granted some concessions, so long as its leaders backed the country's militaristic and racist foreign policies. This unspoken 'contract' constituted a red line which Malcolm – as Paul Robeson before him and Martin Luther King afterwards – not only refused to respect, but actually came to believe rendered the struggle at home meaningless and impotent. Had he survived, he would undoubtedly have continued to build his own organisation as the 'US wing' of an international anti-imperialist struggle which he was becoming ever more deeply involved in, and his presence at the Bandung summit in Jakarta the following month (to which he had been invited) would only have strengthened these bonds. His vision of the inseparability of the struggle for freedom at home and abroad was immensely empowering for Africans in both Africa and in America, and for all oppressed peoples the world over. And despite his martyrdom - it still is.

There is much to say about Malcolm's visits abroad that has been left out of this article. For a much more thorough account, based on a huge amount of primary source material, Marika Sherwood's book Malcolm X: Visits Abroad April 1964-February 1965 *is strongly recommended for all readers*. All the quotes in this article are taken from this book and those which are unattributed are Sherwood's words. ■

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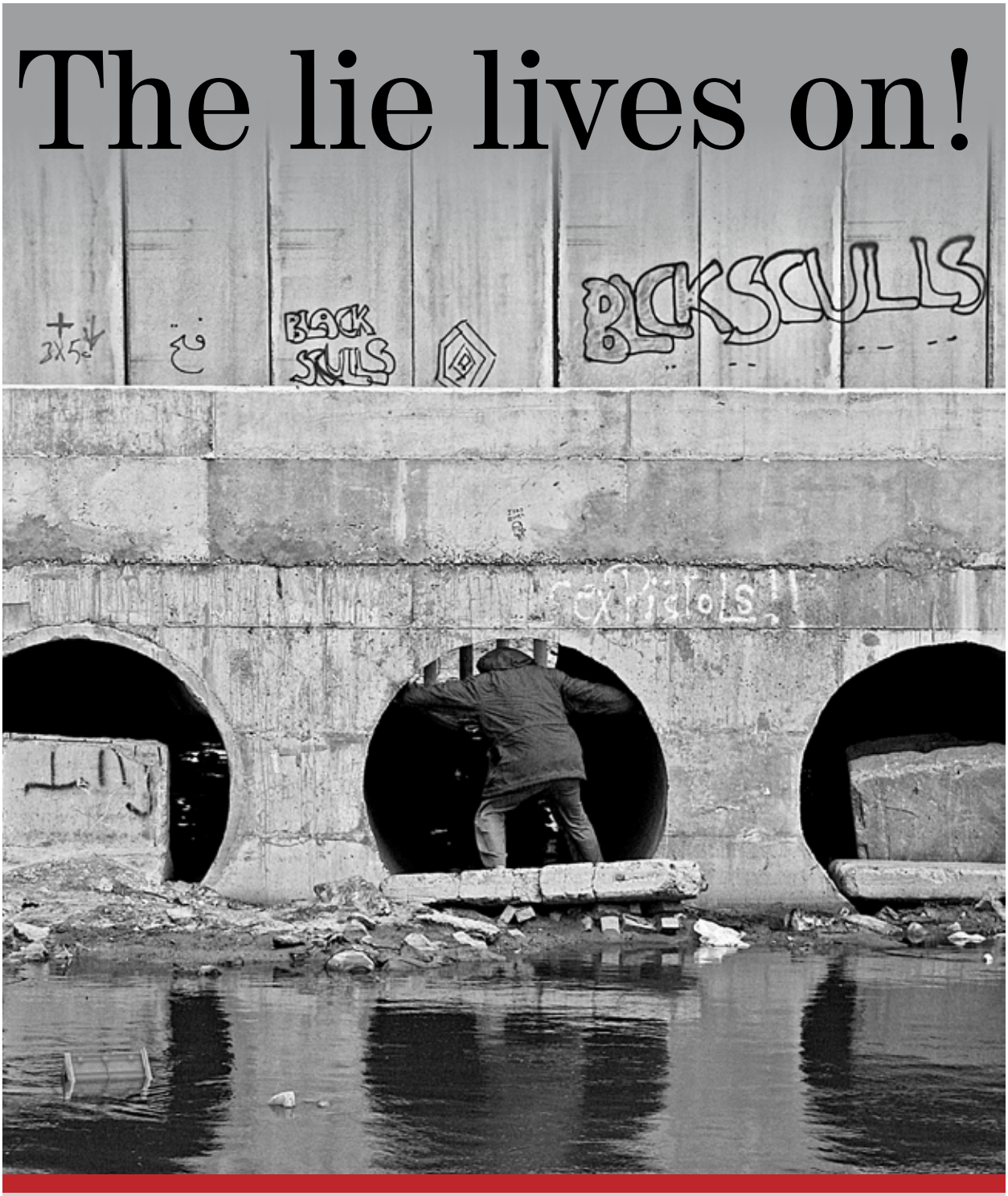
The lie lives on!



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In Israel, nobody is free. You vote for the one who upholds the apartheid system. You cast your vote to uphold the system of oppression. You vote and turn away.

By Mats Svensson

She told me she longed to get away. Just for a few days. She had been invited to visit friends in Amman, only a few miles away. She only needed to drive down the mountain, down to the Jordan River.

If it can be called a river. Once upon a time it had been a river, now it has almost entirely dried out. Getting the "desert to bloom" has demanded a high price. The Jaffa oranges were thirsty. The river dried out and the Dead Sea sunk. The Dead Sea already died, but what will it be called when also the salty water has disappeared? One day, someone will explain in the tourist brochures that "there was once a salt water lake here, but the oranges were thirsty, man never got enough and the water ran out".

Beyond the "river", she would walk to the other side, up the mountain. There she would find Amman, where her friends would be waiting. Laughter, memories and a few hours to feel really good. She hesitated. Although she wanted to see her friends, did she want to travel the short journey? The short journey could take so many hours.

The memories rush over her. The transfers. She had lately visited Gaza many times. It was fantastic to be there and feel like she could contribute, but the transfer area, Eretz… To see everyone queuing, to witness those in line to visit their daughter in the Israeli prison or to get hospital treatment. To watch them, reflect on all those who wait to get through, and herself pass through relatively easily. Pass through, but still be put through the same humiliation. The questions, the useless repetitions. Always the same questions, the same game. Everyone plays their part, participates in the same circus. A circus without laughter. The clowns aren't missing. Nobody is laughing.

Wrong number and you're stuck

She thinks about the airport Ben Gurion. This is probably where the effects of the apartheid system are most clear. The selection. Everyone receives a number. If you get a six, you are stuck, stuck for a long time. Free, forced massage. Someone searches your hair, massages hard, unpleasant. It feels like you are the only one to get this treatment. The ones with a lower number get away. Last time this was you, you got a five. If the selection gives you a really low number, you may even be able to avoid the questions, you don't need to lie. With the right pass, you are free.

We lie. We learn to lie. To lie becomes a part of being, to participate in the theatre of lies. You leave out. You don't tell the whole story. The lie becomes a part of the system, apartheid builds on this, creates the lie. Nobody is free.

Vasu and Senzo are leaving. They are going back to South Africa. The boys from the representative's office are helping Senzo. These boys don't like to lie. As a diplomat, you are meant to tell the truth. Even in the epicentre of lies, only the truth should be told.

> "Getting the "desert to bloom" has paid a high price. The Jaffa oranges were thirsty. The river dried out and the Dead Sea sunk."

The boys respond on behalf of Senzo:

"Where have you been?"

He answers, "In Ramallah."

"Where else have you been?"

"In Jerusalem, Hebron and Gaza."

Within a few seconds, they are carried away. Placed in two rooms. Senzo, who is only leaving the country to go home to Durban, is exposed to an outright hearing. The questioning continues for almost two hours. They become stressed. Are close to missing their flight. It is important to answer correctly. Both of them start to feel like criminals. Previously, Senzo had thought about coming back. He had already planned for it. After this, the apartheid regime has likely succeeded in getting rid of him. During his short visit, he has reacted to evident forms of apartheid, which have continued to wash over him. To travel with him has taught me a lot. I had previously never been close to the structures of apartheid.

I don't think you want to know

It went quicker for Vasu and I. We passed through quicker. We didn't lie, we just didn't tell the truth. We came, two stand-up comedians. We were the only ones laughing.

The questioner was really young. He was insecure. A young woman stood behind him, seemed to be there just to control him, or maybe to support him. Maybe he had just started his job, perhaps we were his first "guest".

"How do you know him?", the young man asks, and points at Vasu.

"Vasu is a very close friend", I answer.

"How did you get to know each other?"

"I don't think you want to know that."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"I don't think you want to know."

"What do you mean?"

"Ok, we met at a bar."

"How long has he been here?"

"Five days."

"Where have you been?"

"I don't think you want to know."

"Answer my question, this is not a joke." He starts to become stressed.

Vasu starts to understand. He puts his hand on my shoulder.

"Ok, at a hotel room."

"Have you met any Palestinians?"

"No, he didn't want to go out." I point at Vasu. "I am kind of sick of him now. Sick of him, sick of the hotel room. He's come all the way from South Africa, but has only seen me and a hotel room."

"What have you done in the hotel room?"

"In a hotel room for five days? I don't think you want to know!!"

He hesitates. Doesn't understand. This guy has no script for the unexpected answers. He has no imagination. In the airport located outside of Tel Aviv, there is no sense of humour. The woman behind him

raises her arms. Nobody is whispering. We are playing the same game, but stay on our own half of the field. The young woman points behind here, and then moves to the next guest. We are allowed to begin the long wait. Waiting for the boys and Senzo. It was a long wait.

I would write a book about how the occupation of Palestine creates liars. The person who imposes himself in a house is a thief. The person who lives in stolen property is an accomplice. The broker who sells stolen property is a fence. The thief, accomplice and fence conceal their act. The truth is pushed aside. What remains is the lie.

To assign themselves a village, to assign themselves a neigbourhood, to occupy, to select, undermines the possibility of being truthful. All that anyone holds or lives in eventually becomes stolen goods and the lie is carried forward from one generation to the next. Most of those who live in the system, including the stranger or visitor, become a part of the system of lies. Fear of their own past becomes an everyday thing. Don't speak, don't tell, don't pass on to the children. A regular response to the tough question from the child or grandchild becomes the collective lie: "They left voluntarily."

The logic of lies

We know all about the logic of lies from South Africa's apartheid. Few could resist. It permeated everything – the political system, courts, schools, police. It became evident when even the church leader became the messenger of lies. Anyone who was affected by the system became the master of lies. For leaders, it was all about grabbing more. They could never get enough. The occupied, then used the lie to get away. It went so far that the system of apartheid eventually couldn't handle the truth.

They would probably impose a death sentence. The "Rivonia Trial" in 1963-64 took place. The evidence was extensive. Ten persons were being charged. They had agreed on which strategy to use. Nelson Mandela spoke on behalf of them all. Mandela's three hour long speech on April 20th, 1064 was to be the highlight of this drawn out trial. He concluded with:

"Fear of their own past becomes an everyday thing. Don't speak, don't tell, don't pass on to the children. A regular response to the tough question from the child or grandchild becomes the collective lie: "They left voluntarily."

"During my lifetime I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realised. But, my Lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

I would really want to know how Walter Sisulu felt when Mandela confessed, when he clearly said that he was willing to die for his actions. When Sisulu within himself understood that he possibly could be executed. That his wife and children soon would see him for the last time. History would take a turn. The truth put the masters of lies on the defensive. It was as though they had planned to impose the death sentence, and couldn't stand to face the truth. Mandela explained what they had done and why.

The corrupt apartheid system required lies, not truth. Most Afrikaners went to church on Sundays. Many, but not all priests, had forgotten to tell Botha that the truth sets you free. Churches became a part of the oppressive system. But the ones who faced execution in 1964 continued to live on, refused to surrender, were made to break rocks. Rocks were piled onto rocks, year after year, decade after decade. Humiliated, but they refused to break down. Eventually, even the oppressor was terrified that the "terrorist" Nelson Mandela would die unfree.

"You turn away. Hand over responsibility to someone else. Do not want to hear, to see, to feel, to know. You want to be free."

A system of humiliation and oppression

She didn't go to Amman. She had become a part of the system that shuts out and shuts in. She had become part of the system of humiliation. A system where all become prisoners. Where the question is continuously asked: How much should I humiliate, be humiliated? Should I lie or be truthful? Should I stay inside or try to break free?

In Israel, nobody is free. You vote for the one who upholds the apartheid system. You cast your vote to uphold the system of oppression. You vote and turn away. The West Bank is not here but over there, high up in the mountains. You will never go there. Gaza is someplace else. You assure yourself that you cannot know what it's like there. You have never been there, and will never go there. You repeat to yourself, you have no responsibility.

You turn away. Hand over responsibility to someone else. Do not want to hear, to see, to feel, to know. You want to be free. You live in an old stone house. You did not build it. You have just bought it, renovated it. You don't know and don't want to know who built it. But deep inside you know. You hope that sometime in the near future, it will be forgotten. You hope that your children will never need to know, never have to reflect on it. Maybe you even hope to one day be forgiven.

You cast your vote.

Occupation continues!

You want to stay.

The house belongs to someone else.

You do not know what to tell your children.

The lie lives on through you and through your children. ■

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Stop Turkey from Bombing our Friends Fighting ISIS.

Kurdish (peshmerga) fighters at Bashik base, 25km from ISIS controlled Mosul.

Kurds have a saying `Kurds have no friends but the mountains`.This time, let`s make the saying wrong.

By Roj Welat

Kurds in Syria and Iraq have been the only ground-based allies against ISIS. While the US and its Coalition partners have bombed massively from the air, we know that there can be no defeat without 'boots on the ground', which is what the Kurds have provided with significant success. So why is Turkey, supposedly a member of the Coalition, bombing them? Why are we allowing Turkey to bomb them? Could we stop them if we really wanted to?

The PKK has been conducting a low grade civil rebellion in Turkey for 31 years, fighting for simple recognition of their existence, which is denied in the Turkish Constitution. Innocents on both sides have been killed in this guerilla warfare, as well as Turkish soldiers and Kurdish rebels, but the vast majority of deaths have been of Kurdish civilians. The US and Europe have sided with Turkey and also labelled the PKK as 'terrorists'. A few months ago, President Erdogan started a 'peace process'. His statement that 'no more mothers should cry' was warmly welcomed by the rebels. Sadly, he has changed his mind.

On July 20, 2015, a group of young activists had gathered in the small border town of Suruc, Turkey, to cross over into Kobani, the city in Syria that was so incredibly defended by Syrian Kurds against a sustained and brutal ISIS attack, but had been 80 percent destroyed in the process. These young people were either Kurds or their supporters and were going over to see how they could help. A suicide bomber attacked and killed 32 of them (another has died since). This bomber was ISIS but clear evidence has emerged that he was aided and abetted by the Turkish regime.

On July 24, to retaliate against this 'act of terrorism', Turkey started to

bomb the PKK both in southeast Turkey and in northern Iraq. Why would a terrorist attack on Turkish Kurds lead Turkey to start bombing other Turkish Kurds? Kurds were the victims, not the perpetrators. The answer lies in Turkish politics.

Erdogan has led Turkey for 13 years, first as Prime Minister of the AK party and more recently as President. He has made it very clear that he wants to alter the Constitution to give even greater power to his office of President. Turkey also has a limit of 10 percent of the electorate before a political party may sit in Parliament. Until the June, 2015, election, no Kurdish party had managed to break this barrier. In the last election, the HDP, a progressive party with Kurdish rights and responsibilities as its base, gained 13 percent of the vote and deprived the AKP of its majority in Parliament and its President Erdogan of his fervent wish for much, much more power. As a result, he is angry with the Kurds.

Token efforts to create a Coalition government with one of the other 3 parties, to no-one's surprise, have failed. There will now need to be another election and Erdogan hopes that by whipping up a 'war' with the Kurds, by creating a sense of lack of safety for the ordinary Turk, by attempting to blame the Kurds for the failure of the 'peace process', he will be able to steal back the votes AKP lost to HDP and win back his majority in Parliament. In such as scenario he would be able to attain his wish for a presidency far more powerful than that of the US President and with virtually no checks or balances.

While on paper Turkey is a member of the Coalition to oppose ISIS, the reality is that government sees the PKK as more dangerous than ISIS. This stance makes no sense. When did we ever hear of the PKK chopping off someone's head or capturing women and young girls, raping them and keeping or selling them as sex slaves? For the past two and a half years, its guns have been silenced as they sought a political resolution through the 'peace process'. There were no threats to disintegrate either Iraq or Syria. It is ISIS that is the huge threat to regional stability and the reason for the formation of the 'Coalition'.

Turkey, or to be more specific, President Erdogan, is abusing its position as a member of the Coalition to attack the PKK instead of what other Coalition members see as its responsibility to attack ISIS. When Turkey first started its bombing campaign, in the first 2 days, they bombed 155 PKK targets and one ISIS warehouse. They arrested 1300 suspected 'terrorists', of whom some six to one were accused PKK sympathisers. The bombing of the PKK may indeed be illegal even under Turkish law. While Turkey joined the Coalition to fight ISIS before the election while the AKP still had a majority in Parliament, bombing the PKK started after the election, when the AKP had lost its majority.

"In the last election, the HDP, a progressive party with Kurdish rights and responsibilities as its base, gained 13 percent of the vote and deprived the AKP of its majority in Parliament and its President Erdogan of his fervent wish for much, much more power. As a result, he is angry with the Kurds."

Why should this matter to the US or its Coalition partners? All of the Kurdish militias, whether they are in Iraq, Syria or Turkey are the 'boots on the ground' without which the war against ISIS cannot be won. Turkish Kurds, the PKK, are closely affiliated with the Syrian Kurds and while Coalition members are certainly aware of this, they pretend not to be. Both Syrian and Turkish Kurds are the fighters who saved 150,000 Yezidis from annihilation by ISIS on Mt. Sinjar.

Allowing Turkey to force the Kurds to fight on two fronts at once, the Turkish army and ISIS, clearly lessens the Kurdish capacity to fight ISIS. This helps ISIS and is not in the best interest of the whole world.

In addition, Turkey is attacking civilians. While they claim to be attacking PKK strongholds, 9 villagers who had no connection to the PKK were killed and 15 injured in a northern Iraqi village called Zergale that was bombed by Turkey on July 25. This incident has been investigated by Amnesty International. Lama Fakih, Senior Crisis Advisor to AI visited the community and stated clearly that it was a 'flagrantly unlawful attack'. By saying nothing, the US becomes an accomplice to illegal acts.

As the international community we must intensify the campaign to stop President Erdogan's bombing campaign against our staunchest allies, the Kurds. Kurds have a fundamental human right to be recognised for who they are. It is nothing but the most blatant hypocrisy for the West to say, 'Kurds can be Kurds if we do not like the leader of the country in which they live (ie Saddam Hussein in Iraq, or Bashar al Assad in Syria) but they cannot be Kurds if we like or perhaps more honestly, have a use for, the leader of the country, (i.e. Turkey's Tayyip Erdogan).'

The ANC and the PLO were once considered to be terrorist organisations when all they were doing was fighting for the basic rights of their people. The causes of both of these organisations have now long been considered to be just. It is time to consider the same process for the PKK.

Finally, Africa should play a role in compelling Turkey to stop its bombing and murderous onslaught against the Kurds. The bombs are counterproductive in that: firstly, they divert and dilute the capacity of the Kurds, the only effective anti-ISIS force on the ground; and secondly, they are an international injustice. There is no doubt that the right sustained international pressure could stop the bombs.

Kurds have a saying 'Kurds have no friends but the mountains'. This time, let's make the saying wrong. ■

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The Mortification of Modernity

Instead of being judged by what we bring to make our communities happy, we get to be judged by the clothes we wear, the cars we drive and by whether we can pronounce words through our noses. Instead of helping us improve our economies, modernity keeps us busy with nothingness.

By Sibonginkosi Mazibuko

In this article I argue firstly that poverty and inequality are largely the consequences of western modernity which has failed the millions of people that need food and shelter. Modernity – a colonial camouflage of exploitation, subjugation, dispossession and racism – has caused poverty and inequality not only in economic terms but in every aspect of the lives of the majority of people. Ordinary people associate modernity largely with the government because people still see governments as institutions that should lead and guide them. I shall also explain the role the comprador classes play in this situation.

Modernity as a problem

To start with there is a difference between modernity and

modernisation. Modernity is an ideology that informs imperialism and assumes the superiority of one part of the world (the global North) over the others (the global South). It is an ideology of domination, expropriation, exploitation and oppression. It is an ideology of subjugation. It breeds confusion in situations and dehumanises its subjects. Modernity is enforced through violence and racism; it sets people of one land against each other. Modernity thrives on cultural chaos among the local people. This ideology teaches that to be modern is to be like the western world, and seeks nothing other than the Western domination of the world. Those that oppose it are turned into humanitarian and/or charity cases. Zimbabwe, Libya and Egypt are the living testimony to this maliciousness.

Modernisation on the other hand is a process of improving things and therefore living conditions. It has no hidden agenda of dominating anybody. Modernisation is what all humanity aspires for – to make and do things to fit the current era. It simply refers to the contemporary. It may also be interpreted as making the present better than the past in terms of living conditions. The introduction for example of technology at schools and hospitals, building of better roads using latest methods, introduction of faster modes of travel happens to make life easier. To that effect, modernisation is a continuous process that aims to make better lives. It is a condition that humanity strives for.

When nations modernise their ways of life, they are only improving their own living conditions and they have no desire to impose their will and intentions on others. Many (as in post-modernisation) call for the abandonment of the use of the concept 'modernisation' itself because it implies western hegemony, penetration and domination of other lands and nations. Others think that we do not need to invent words (or even language) simply because others have chosen to adulterate their uses. To modernise will always mean what it says – making a better life for all. They argue that trying to formulate and invent new words can only lead to capitulation and confusion as, in the final analysis, we will be doing exactly what the word says.

Despicability of modernity

How people despise modernity is a long story. In South Africa, when ordinary people can no longer help a situation, they throw their hands in the air and say 'it is modernisation'. This concept they have translated into their own local dialects. Largely everyone knows what 'isimodeni' means. In Sotho dialects they call it 'sejwale-jwale', 'xisweswi-sweswi' in XiTsonga, and in Nguni dialects they call it 'isimanje-manje'. But people also personalise modernity in terms of those who introduced it and, in their varied dialects, they say it is 'isiLungu', meaning it is a white man's ways and directly linking modernity to colonialism and colonisation. In South Africa people will tell you modernity has caused loss of values and major harm to social living conditions. This is concretised in family breakdowns, teenage pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, inequality, juvenile delinquency, prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, and promiscuity among other things – all reflections of unhappiness.

> "It does not matter where one goes including our universities and our parliaments – all you see are fake accents, fake faces and fake hair and fake smiles."

In too many instances, where modernity is being experienced, there is glaring poverty, homelessness, debts, hunger, prostitution, inequality, diseases, and greed. This modernity has indeed caused humanity untold misery. In too many instances, those that are subjects of modernity are no more than victims of the failure and collapse of structures that should protect, nurture and grow the spirit of humanity, or ubuntu as the people of South Africa would put it. Modernity shows itself in instances where respect for and among various social groups has no meaning or does not exist anymore. At the same time, in the camp of those that sell us modernity these things are as scarce as a Chinese policeman on the South African soil. This is a South African saying, denoting that something is rare in the extreme.

Politics and modernity

Modernity has also corrupted the governance institutions. Only those with money (or those linked to those with money) make it to government. Those that have no money or refuse 'donated' money, regardless of how relevant their policies are, regardless of the correct values they uphold, get nowhere near these institutions. They even never get to win the so-called democratic elections. The elections are democratic insofar as contestants have money regardless of how they obtained the money. Elections are free and fair only if those that received money win. If the opposite happens, the elections are dubbed rigged, unfair and unfree. Modernity in elections means the continuation of relations of patronage between the 'moderniser' and those that are subjects of modernity. It means trampling on the rights and dignity of the overwhelming majority who watch in amazement how 'sejwale-jwale' has turned people into money 'animals' with no human values except the value of forever wanting more.

By voting for democracy, people discover they actually voted for pillage as the so-called leaders line their pockets with public money. Public officials and politicians steal from the people and ignore the deplorable living conditions of those they claim to represent. They obtain expensive medical treatment and education and consume luxury goods from other countries because in their looting of their own country resources, they neglect to invest at home. As they die their loot becomes of limited use. In the South African lingua franca, we all end six-feet underground empty-handed. As if in mockery, even mourners can be heard at funerals singing 'Amagugu alelizwe ayosal'emathuneni…'. The

treasures of the world will remain at the graveyards.

Education and modernity

It is modernity that turns young and old into shadow images of themselves as they imitate the looks and speeches of the moderniser. They wear fake hair and apply make-up and skin-changing creams so that they may at least be nearer to modernity. It does not matter where one goes including our universities and our parliaments – all you see are fake accents, fake faces and fake hair and fake smiles. They all try to out-do each other in looking foreign because the ideology of modernity teaches that. How am I expected to trust a fake who tells me they can help improve my miserable conditions?

We go to schools and universities hoping to be educated about matters of life and new technologies, but in most cases we come out despising everything that is us. We come out worse than when we entered those institutions. We cannot even think in original terms as everything we do and say has to be modelled along the lines of modernity. We twist our tongues to mimic the foreign accents. Instead of being judged by what we bring to make our communities happy, we get to be judged by the clothes we wear, the cars we drive and by whether we can pronounce words through our noses. Instead of helping us improve our economies, modernity keeps us busy with nothingness.

We fail to even come out with workable solutions for our economies. We forever look upon the moderniser to provide us with solutions. And what do we get? Structural adjustment programmes, more dependency-causing aid, more suffering, more disguised constructive engagement meetings dubbed *American African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)*. Under modernity, there is nothing genuine. The mis-education of modernity only makes us vulnerable to further exploitation.

Many leaders are prepared to kneel, caps in hands, like school children summoned into some school principal's office. None wishes to be seen defiant and uncooperative lest they go the route of Zimbabwe and others. Even those that get left out keep dropping saliva like a dog watching one eating meat on television – an illusion at best – but still wish they were part of the 'party' that decides the fates of their own people.

Culture, religion and modernity

Western modernity entails turning against one's culture and religion, embracing that which is foreign and thus 'modern' while despising your own, including your own history. These are the repercussions of modernity. Modernity makes foreign religions and culture look better and more rewarding. People run from one denomination to the next in the hope of finding a better God. All they encounter is parting with their hard-earned money. There is little difference from voting one political party from the other into office. Whatever route they take, people discover they have only been made to part with their money. In religion they discover the 'god' they worship is in actuality the person preaching to them. This is the person that 'eats' their money in the form of donations to God. What will God do with money when at the same time they are told that there is neither hunger nor thirst in heaven?

"People run from one denomination to the next in the hope of finding a better God. All they encounter is parting with their hard-earned money."

The environment and modernity

Modernity ensures that we even destroy the environment that sustains our life systems. It teaches us that everything and anything is for exploitation and profit. The harmony that should exist between nature and humanity faces destruction on a daily basis as 'modernising development' takes place. It is this ideology that ensures politicians will sell their souls to the highest bidder that is able to pay for better destruction of our natural environment. Under modernity, 'development' is also about the destruction of natural forests, pollution of fresh water resources, over-extraction of minerals and fracking.

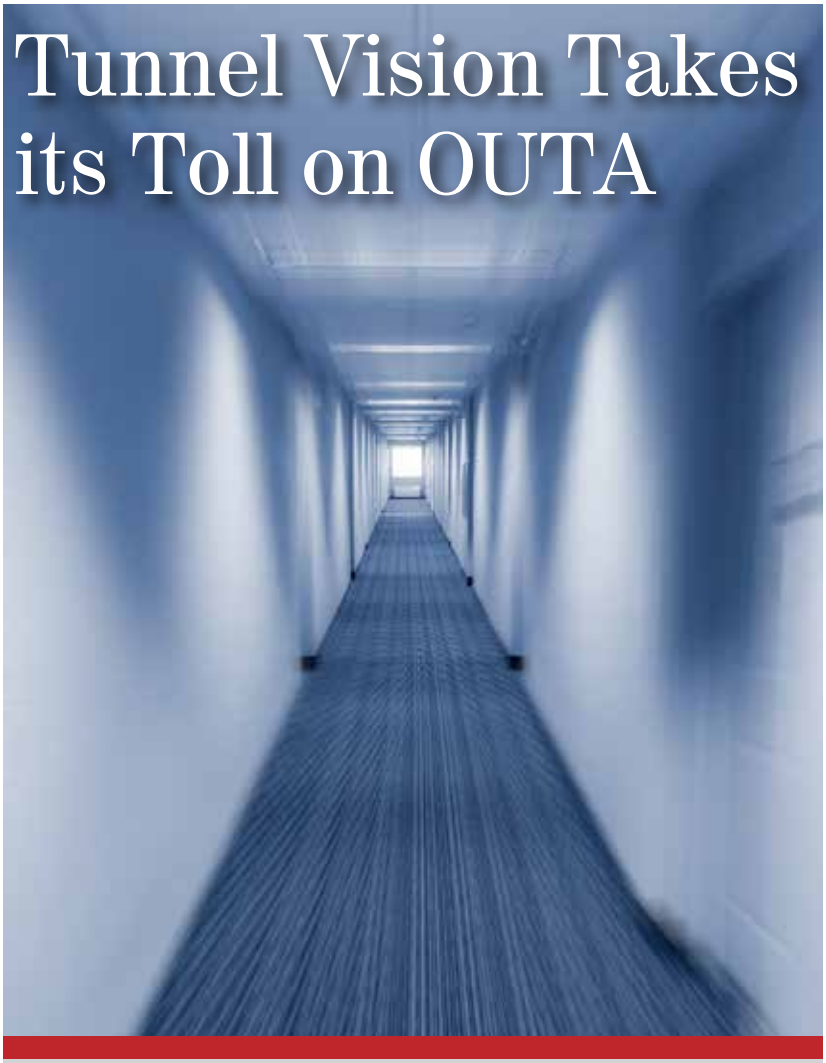
The anchor of modernity

I must say that the anchor of modernity and development in the so-called developing world is the comprador class that represents the aspirations of modernity instead of representing local interests. Like the biblical Judas Iscariot, the local comprador classes survive on the 'blood transfusion' from the west that is the source of the menace of modernity. Modernity is therefore like a parasite. For a parasite to survive in a foreign body, it must suck enough blood from its host so that it adapts to the very conditions the host lives in. What I mean is that the modernisers first get to befriend the comprador class, learn from it and then take over the resources. The comprador class is so weak it can hardly say a thing. In fact, it cannot afford to displease its masters. Even if they are told the west is not interested in our development, when western powers summons them into some summit the malicious comprador classes come running; many in private and hired jet aircrafts while their own people starve and sleep on the street-pavements.

Conclusion

I have tried to define and show how western modernity functions and the extent to which ordinary people despise it. I have shown how modernity corrupts people's lives while it promises good things. I have also shown that without the local comprador classes, modernity would not survive and this includes every part of the dominated world. I can then safely conclude by saying by that all nations have (or are supposed to have) their own ideologies. It is the imposition of one's ideology on the others that creates problems. Let everyone modernise in their own ways. ■

Tunnel Vision Takes its Toll on OUTA



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By Busani Ngcaweni

Scintillating or dumbfounding? That is the dilemma I faced after putting myself through the 331 pages of Wayne Duvenage's book, *The E-Tolls Saga*. Was it many hours well spent on a chilly Wednesday morning, especially for a miserably slow reader like myself, I wondered.

Appreciating the daunting task of putting together a book with demanding publishers like Pan Macmillan, the first adjective rang true. One is always fascinated by the idea of another South African book hitting the bookshelves. Even more so when the author is someone you know and better still, when the subject in question is as familiar as the "E-Tolls Saga" which Duvenage writes about.

As one thinks hard of the contents and conclusions of the book, the switch to dumbfounding looms larger than the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project. How did Wayne arrive at this point, downplaying all the facts and science before him?

Let us look at two major conclusions in the book to test its rigour. Hopefully, in the end, readers will make up their own minds about whether to treat the book as an intellectual canon on public policy or just a collection of thoughts and media statements meant to amplify a narrow ideological standpoint.

The book concludes that sustaining the electronic mode of payment to charge users of the Gauteng freeway network is illegitimate because the public was not adequately consulted and where they were, they overwhelmingly "rejected the e-tolls".

Yet it is a matter of public record that for more than two years prior to the adoption of the new e-toll dispensation, government listened to the public's concerns and responded to legitimate perceptions about the costs of transport associated with e-tolling.

In addition, following another round of consultations, the new dispensation offers reduced maximum limits for all users and a simplified system which will allow infrequent users of the e-tolled roads defined free passage.

During these consultations on the future of e-tolling on the Gauteng freeways, a multitude of factors were taken into account, one of which was how to best look after the interests of poor and marginalised communities.

One of the notable dynamics of the opposition to open road tolling has been the way in which the interests of disparate groupings in society converged into common opposition to a system designed to find a long-term solution to the legacy of apartheid spatial planning.

Middle-class interests, predictably, took a populist approach to build an anti-government narrative. The most vocal opponents of e-tolling shared a common agenda with opposition political parties and received ready funding and logistical support for their campaigns.

The book documents some of these marriages of convenience crowned by the DA's funding of OUTA, thus making it difficult to believe that OUTA is not the party's civil society proxy.

Political expediency took precedence over a purely infrastructural matter. In what has since become a theatre of the liberal offensive, we saw a manifestation of what Mahatma Gandhi identified as one of the seven social sins: politics without principle. Look no further than the Western Cape where the tolling of Chapman's Peak is embraced, but maybe only just, and no further.

Even as we have referred to recent consultation processes which build on the work that started around 2007, we fail to understand why Duvenage would come to the dishonest conclusion that there had been no consultation and if there was, it was just "a farce".

In Gauteng Premier Makhura's review panel processes, records show that many submissions called for the retention of e-tolls, albeit with lower caps and administrative simplicity. As asserted in this article, that has been taken care of in the new dispensation and compliance is expected to rise over the next two years.

The second dumbfounding and perhaps most ideologically pointed conclusion in the book regards the fuel levy as an alternative to e-tolls.

Rehashing hundreds of his press statements on the matter, the author sees higher fuel levies as a panacea to pay for an improved freeway system without explaining to the public the downstream impact on transport costs, inflation and the prices of all consumer goods.

Fuel levy lobbyists have often expressed the view that e-tolling would place an additional burden on the poor who pay an inordinate percentage of their income on transport-related costs.

The reality is that research by various scholars shows in great detail why the user-pay principle is the most effective method to pay for vital economic infrastructure and restrict the burden on the poor.

The fuel levy is not a user pay mechanism because it is indiscriminate. So, for example, a car owner and or taxi operator confined to Tembisa, let's say, can't be exempted even though he does not use the GFIP network. Taking science into account, the Premier's panel advised against the fuel levy.

Compared to a fuel levy, e-tolling is a flexible system which can be easily adapted to provide relief for commuters who make use of public transport or who plan their journeys to take place outside peak hours. This is exactly what Government has done, through the National Department of Transport, with its decision to exempt registered public transport from e-tolling in Gauteng.

Given the fact that close to 69% of the population of Gauteng use taxis to commute, the exemptions make e-tolling the most pro-poor alternative for the funding of the freeway system.

Other methods such as fuel taxes and a hike in licence fees will have a direct impact on public transport operators and immediately get passed on to the commuters in the form of higher fares. Yet we all agree that an integrated public transit system in Gauteng is overdue as a matter of urgency.

The reality is that Government's decision – made almost a decade ago – to improve the Gauteng freeway network and to finance it through an open-road tolling system, was not taken in a hurry. Public policy making is much more conscientious than suggested.

It grew out of a clear recognition that well-planned and well-maintained roads are only some elements of a broader approach to undoing the spatial legacy of apartheid, reducing the "commuting burden" – as described by the National Development Plan – and creating a more equitable transport system.

The new dispensation continues to recognise poor communities and has introduced changes which will benefit the poor. The majority of low-income earners use public transport to commute to their places of work. Under the new deal public transport – registered buses and taxis – continue to be exempt from e-tolls.

Imagine Sipho from Soweto who only travels twice a year to Soshanguve to make peace with his in-laws: with new 30 free gantry passes, he does not have to bother about e-tolls. Isn't that a material response to public concerns and reduction of administrative burden on road users?

Finally, the new dispensation ensures that a well-designed and well-maintained national and provincial road network will contribute to government's developmental objectives to address the triple threats of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The thing about writing a book, Mr Duvenage, is that once it is published, you lose your innocence, your privacy and all the privileges that goes with being a normal person. In other words, writing a book is like being elected into political office. You subject yourself to scrutiny, to praise, to a dipper measuring stick. You literately become a subject in the world of literature.

As a book writer myself (and Mr Duvenage has contributed a chapter on e-tolls in one my of my books), I wish to congratulate Wayne for this achievement.

It takes courage to condense one's story in book form especially in South Africa where publishers always think of money first and the story later. Whilst I vehemently disagree with the main storyline in this book (especially the suggestion that e-tolls are threatening the Constitutional order), I commiserate with the nervous condition he experienced throughout the publishing process and understand why close to a quarter of the book is tautologous.

Again, I empathise: book writing is a punishing enterprise especially if you collaborate with a journalist who is emotionally attached to the subject you are writing about.

Truth be told, the book should have ended in the dying paragraphs of page 299. It surprisingly doesn't and adds further politically charged sections which include another ideological let-out where a subtle call is made for a coalition of regime change led by the "Club of Active South African Citizens" modeled along the 1970s "Club of Rome".

In all honesty, although the book fails to declare this, Wayne has scored victories for his constituency only if the tunnel vision can be removed to see this road to success.

Facts are: people are now paying less to drive on GFIP. The administration burden has been reduced with measures like 30 free gantry passes. The system is simpler especially when you update your car details - now a FICA requirement. Public transport users and taxis are exempted. The e-tag is not a requirement for registration and compliance. Not paying e-tolls is now a traffic offence and no longer a criminal offence. Every struggle has minimum and maximum victories. If his was a struggle to reduce the burden on the poor (as often claimed), then isn't it a victory that OUTA has scored? If it is an ideological stance against the ruling party, then they live to fight another day.

I particularly wish Mr Duvenage well as he contemplates exiting OUTA and embarking on the more difficult road of management consulting. ■

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Africa is not yet free!

This time the face of colonialism is no more the old European colonialism of Spain, but one maintained against all odds by a fellow African government, the Kingdom of Morocco.

By Malainin Lakhal

In his inaugural speech to the first Organisation for African Unity (OAU) Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1963, the late President Nkrumah, a founding father of African unity said:

> *How, except by our united efforts, will the richest and still enslaved parts of our continent be freed from colonial occupation and become available to us for the total development of our continent? Every step in the decolonisation of our continent has brought greater resistance in those areas where colonial garrisons are available to colonialism. This is the great design of the imperialist interests that buttress colonialism and neo-colonialism, and we would be deceiving ourselves in the most cruel way were we to regard their individual actions as separate and unrelated.*

As African Heads of State gathered in Sandton for the 25th African Union Summit, 52 years after the formation of the OAU, this assertion by Nkrumah is still relevant. Africa is still far from being freed from the yoke of foreign colonialism, neo-colonialism and barbarous exploitation, made even worse by the involvement and complicity in many cases of African collaborators acting on behalf of their old colonial masters, about whom Frantz Fanon warned us in his magnus opus *Wretched of the Earth*.

One of the most striking cases is the persistence of the colonial occupation of Western Sahara (officially known as the Saharawi Republic), a full-fledged

member State of the former OAU since 1982 and a Founding member of the African Union. This time the face of colonialism is no more the old European colonialism of Spain, but one maintained against all odds by a fellow African government, the Kingdom of Morocco.

Many will be shocked to realise that a fellow African nation is still fighting for freedom and full independence and that the people of Western Sahara are still suffering under brutal military occupation by another African country.

Saharawis under the Moroccan occupation are indeed living under a very similar type of military occupation to that endured by Palestinians, with all that it entails: mass human rights violations, oppression of all forms of peaceful political struggle for independence; activists suffer from disappearances, imprisonment, torture, harassment and assassination.

Still, the perpetrators of these crimes are enjoying impunity, because they enjoy the protection of Western powers such as France.

Morocco has in fact enjoyed unreserved support and protection from Paris since the beginning of its Western Sahara colonial adventure in October 1975. Without this external support it would not have succeeded in sustaining this illegal and brutal invasion and occupation. France even participated in the military confrontation between the Moroccan forces of occupation and the Saharawi liberation movement, POLISARIO Front, in 1976.

The Janus-faced French government, whilst pretending to champion human rights worldwide with their famous slogan *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*, (liberty, equality, fraternity), is, through the protection it is giving Rabat in the United Nations Security Council, tacitly supporting the Moroccan human rights violations in Western Sahara. France also shamefully opposes the wide international call to mandate the UN Mission in Western Sahara to monitor and report on human rights in that territory. It has repeatedly used its influence in the UN to protect its dauphin, Morocco, enabling it to ignore more than 67 Security Council resolutions and 52 UN General Assembly Resolutions, in addition to many AU and other regional organisations' resolutions calling for the exercise by the people of Western Sahara of their inalienable right to self-determination and freedom.

But Africa, or at least a great part of free and proud Africans, has always expressed support to their brother and sister freedom fighters in Western Sahara. A few prominent names must be mentioned here: Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Thomas Sankara and Huari Boumedienne. The foregoing is evident in a speech given by Oliver Reginald Tambo, then President of the exiled African National Congress, on a visit to the Western Sahara liberated zone in Tifariti, 22 July 1988, when he noted that "We…will continue to support your struggle by all means necessary, in order for both our just causes to triumph".

> "Morocco has in fact enjoyed unreserved support and protection from Paris since the beginning of its Western Sahara colonial adventure in October 1975. Without this external support it would not have succeeded in sustaining this illegal and brutal invasion and occupation."

Western Sahara is still colonised because it is rich in natural resources that are exploited by some countries and governments in complicity with Morocco. And the list of the guilty plunderers of this African country is huge. It comprises the European Union, in addition to multinational companies from dozens of countries from the five continents and even a few African countries under the influence of France.

The only losers here are Africans. Their wealth is plundered in this North African territory as it is still plundered in other zones usually by the same suspects, with complete impunity of course.

Even in the African Union, which has recently adopted a stronger position in favour of the full independence of the territory, there are still a few countries who try every now and then to create divisions, speaking against freedom and full liberation for this colonised African nation, and in favour of the brutal and violent occupation of the last colony in Africa. They openly oppose all the principles and goals set forth by the founding fathers of the OAU and visionaries of Pan Africanism.

But progressive Africa has spoken since the eighties in favour of the Saharawi struggle when African leaders admitted the Saharawi Republic as a member of the Pan African organisation, while Morocco withdrew from it. Morocco is in fact the only African country that is at present not a member of the AU, and it should stay that way until it finally agrees to set the Saharawis free from its colonisation.

In fact, the African Union Peace and Security Council's 496th meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 27 March 2015:

- *(i) Appealed for an enhanced and coordinated international action towards the early organization of a referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in compliance with relevant OAU/AU decisions and UN resolutions; and*
- *(ii) Urged the UN Security Council to take all necessary decisions to ensure progress in the search for a solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, acknowledging its critical role and primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.*

Let us reiterate that Africa cannot be said to have entered a post-colonial phase as long as Western Sahara remains a colony. The Saharawi Republic will not be completely free until, through its own sovereignly, it controls its own resources and destiny. ■

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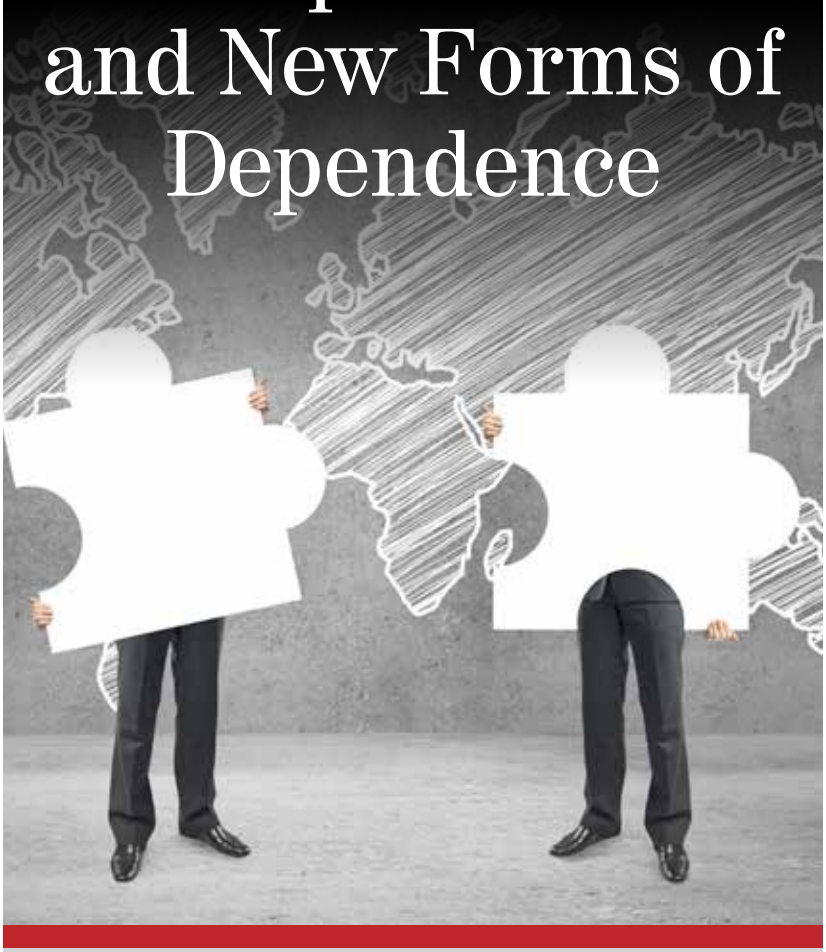
CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN LEADERSHIP ON THE OCCASION OF AFRICA WEEK

Africa's Decolonisation, Independence and New Forms of Dependence



Our current epoch should be characterised by unfettered belief in building an African Developmental State, with a solid foundation in the virtues of selfless, people-centred and people-driven development.

By Alvin Botes

The Construct 'African State'

Africa as a continent was of particular interest to the colonisers because of its strategic geographic location and for advancement of religious hegemony. The pre-colonial era had as its anchor in sea-trading routes, and was a calculative factor in improving trade with the Mediterranean, India and the Far East (Osaghae and McGowan, 2002:180). Two streams of religion were competing ideologies during pre-colonial times. These were Christianity (Roman-inspired) and Islam (Ottoman Empire).

The evolution of African statehood has its origins within a particular context, and the Berlin conference (1884) imposed substantive limitations on its formations. Little regard was held for historical, social, economic and political conditions which were present in African states. The Berlin product had the state not as a voluntary social construct, which should have arisen as consensus between the various tribal kings, but as an imposition of those foreign to the African people (Francis Fukuyama, 2012). Africa's underdevelopment has as a result rampant poverty, human deprivation and low levels of human capital development (Maxi Schoeman, 2002:209).

Osaghae et al. (2002:179) argues that the majority of the forty-eight independent African countries were granted freedom 'under duress', in the late 1960s as European imperialism reached its apogee. It is therefore important to celebrate African independence as a set-back for her colonisers, as her emancipation was not as a result of the magnanimity of the imperialist states, but was occasioned by the liberation movements themselves and the shifting of the global balance of forces. It took the fifty American states more than 200 years, since 1776, to have an agenda of national cohesion. Africa also requires time; it must be given the opportunity to dispense with more than 350 years of enslavement.

The arrangement and demarcation of Africa into manageable, smaller regions has enabled Africa to better organise herself (Van Nieuwkerk and Hofmann, 2013:56). The formation of regional African organisations was premised on enhanced economic

integration and security cooperation. They further served as an instrument for African states to "overcome their inherent weaknesses", thus leveraging their interface within Africa and World Affairs (Khadiagala and Lyons, 2001:4).

In Pursuit of Power

During the colonial epoch, regional conflicts took the express form of the colonial masters managing and or protecting their historical footprints, whilst advancing their future economic potential. The post-colonial dispensation has produced a new African body-politic, wherein state conflicts are extended into regional conflicts the moment they involve neighbouring African countries. The pursuit of national security at all costs has its unintended and antagonistic outcomes, since the accumulation of security measures leads to insecurity for a country's immediate neighbouring states (Philip Nel, 2002:28).

Before the 'wave of democratisation in Africa', overarching reliability for security was assumed by former colonial powers, in particular France. The American-driven African Crisis Response Initiative was a policy instrument founded on the precepts of African ownership for African crises (Khadiagala et al., 2001:11), and sought to change the responsibility paradigm between and amongst African leadership as well as between African and European leaders. The Cold War served in many ways as an antithesis to colonialism in Africa, and spurred many liberation movements to solidify linkages with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and other Socialist countries.

Colonialism of a Special Type

Neo-colonialism and the balkanisation of Africa after the Cold War was characterised by a liberated Africa which was, however, under a new stewardship.

In addition the ongoing indoctrinated subserviency to the European way of life had the effect of entrenching colonial dependency (Ruth First, 1970:70). A vestige of Western post-neo colonialism was the instructive note of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to African countries that initial trade privilege allotted under the Lome agreement would be done away with (Southall et al., 2002:199). This insistence by the WTO pre-supposes that the African economy is capable of competing on an equal footing with other, more developed economies, having little regard for the history of political economy within the African states, or the elementary nature of statehood in Africa.

Even as we continue to advocate for Africa's independence, our continent continues to be intertwined with the West out of necessity, as it provides our primary export markets. McGowan and Nel (2002:5) correctly argue that "interdependence does not exclude asymmetrical relations of dependence." It does mean that a subservient relationship does exist, wherein the marginalised and underdeveloped has been accorded a pedigree of power, equal to its standing in the broader global body politic.

"Before the 'wave of democratisation in Africa', overarching reliability for security was assumed by former colonial powers, in particular France."

We, as Africans must 'contest' for a development trajectory which is intertwined with the world economy, but one which will be immune from failures of the capitalist market orientations (ANCYL, 2008:60). An instructive economic challenge which must be overcome is trade liberalisation, and in particular the Doha debate in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on agricultural subsidies. The central topology of trade stagnation is the requirement that Africa remove produce subsidies, whereas the developed economies continue with the allocation of huge subsidies to their own agricultural farmers. A complete new mind-set must be encapsulated by our leaders, to ensure a dramatic shift from exporting commodities and importing 'high value' consumables to one where value is added to the production of primary products.

African Solidarity: Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance

Optimistic and unrealistic suggestions to constitute one Africa, as a catalyst for its sister states, in the form of a united African Federation (pan-Africanism) produced the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The forebears of African statehood, leaders such as Zambia's Kaunda, Tanzania's Nyerere, Ghana's Nkrumah and Senegal's Senghor propagated African unity and pan-Africanism. The OAU was formed to realise African unity, and the inaugural summit which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopa, in May 1963 gave serious consideration to it. However, the 1964 summit laid bare stark African contradictions, when it subscribed to the colonial boundaries, and by implication entrenched the sovereignty of individual African states.

The idealism and euphoria of post-independence, from the 1960s, quickly subsided in the 1980s, due to increasing repressive one-party states, the failure of the African-socialism model, military rule and patrimonial states, aptly earning Africa the title as the 'lost continent'. The African Union (AU) was established to defend the sovereignty of its Member States; to promote peace and stability; and to advance democracy (Constitutive Act of the African Union, 2000).

Africa's resolve to enshrine good governance is firmly embedded in initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and its embryonic governance apparatus, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (Nicky Oppenheimer, 2007). Because of the voluntarily nature of its membership, it is an opportune moment for Africans to respond with African solutions to essentially African problems.

In his book *Africa since Independence*, Colin Legum categorises some periods in the history of our continent as the Romantic Period, from 1939 to 1970; the Period of Disillusionment, from 1970 to 1985; the Period of Realism, from 1988 onwards, and the Period of Renaissance, which is the period towards the end of the last Century, and the beginning of the 21st Century.(Thabo Mbeki, 2003). Our

current epoch should be characterised by unfettered belief in building an African Developmental State, with a solid foundation in the virtues of selfless, people-centred and people-driven development.

The Path to Power: a New World Order

The emergence of China as a potential superpower has reconfigured the global body politic, which presents itself as a shift from uni-polarity to multi-polarity. World capitalism has been firmly engrained in the global community and this is reflected in the dominance of the USA, a peculiarity of the 'hyper-power'. The emergence of BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa – has the possibility to change the international economic landscape. Although uni-polarity had decaying features such as unilateralism and injustice, it is not guaranteed that multi-polarity will usher in a better developmental paradigm for Africa (ANCYL, 2008, p.60). Central to any economic interest of a country, a friend or an enemy, is the betterment of their domestic people's interest. It remains an unanswered question if BRICS' approach to the development of Africa will be different to that of the rest of the developed world.

The growing danger which confronts Africa is the 'war on terror', which has been depicted as a humane campaign against terrorism and, by implication, evil. The so-called 'collateral damage', i.e. the intended targeting of civilians in conflicted areas, is inhumane and repugnant. It often increases support for terrorists and their causes, especially when it leads to the dangerous phenomenon of militarism (ANC, 2007:34).

The singular objective of these 'big-brother' postures is to serve as an expostulator to African leaders never to underestimate the West's superiority, a lesson the oil-rich Libya assimilated too late.

The African Dependency Syndrome

African's over-reliance on its former colonisers is a direct result of the neo-liberal policies which it embraced in the past, under the stewardship of the Bretton-Woods institutions. Africa faces the dangers of a failure to tackle the scourge of Poverty, Unemployment and Inequality. That should be the central topology which underpins the African Century. But how are we to meet and recognise of the challenges of underdevelopment, and the channelling of 'development aid' to Africa?

Bauer (1981) highlighted the misendeavours of such artificial efforts by stating that "the argument that aid is indispensable for development runs into an inescapable dilemma. If the conditions for development other than capital are present, the capital required will either be generated locally or be available commercially from abroad to governments or to businesses. If the required conditions are not present, then aid will be ineffective and wasted." Increasing development aid has a decaying effect on the African Renaissance, whereby Africa should free herself from economic bondage, through producing a competing economic system and encouraging 'respect for an honest day's work'.

> "The emergence of BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa – has the possibility to change the international economic landscape."

Moyo (2009) argues that the receipt of concessional (non-emergency) loans and grants has an identical effect of holding a precious stone: it has minimal incentives for integrity and productivity. He further highlights that at the epitome of the development aid paradigm in Africa, between 1970 and 1998, the poverty rate rose from 11 percent to a staggering 66 percent. Maxi Schoeman (2002:227) augments this argument by stating that "only strong, cohesive states can withstand the threat of internal decay and collapse".

Conclusion

A key challenge for African leaders is how to convert the potential which the continent offers into realisable political dividends. To paraphrase Karl Marx, the role of leadership, including African leadership, is to change the world. Inherited colonial boundaries should become links of cooperation and trade, instead of boundaries of exclusivity (Kwame Nkrumah, 1965).

It is correct that "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" (Ho Chi Minh, 1966) as long as the dialectical and accompanying thesis is that "nothing is more precious than the defeat of poverty and underdevelopment" (Thabo Mbeki, 2007).

The regeneration and development of Africa is entirely dependent on the consciousness of its leaders and the active participation of the masses in socio-economic development and political processes. ■

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NATIONAL AND CLASS STRUGGLES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Unpacking the evolution of our revolutionary alliance

The ANC's relationship with the Communist Party contributed to its development into a liberation movement which attracted large sections of the working class as well as the Coloured and Indian communities.

By Thando Ntlemeza

In one of his nineteenth century political letters Engels stated that:

> *…I am sufficiently revolutionary not to renounce absolutely combined actions with other parties in circumstances when they are more advantageous or less harmful to us*[1]

With this statement, Engels was expressing a view to the effect that he did not have any problem with the Communist Party forging alliances with other organisations, as long as such alliances would help to advance the revolution. Lenin took the issue further by providing a scientific perspective to justify the alliances between communist parties and liberation movements. In particular, Lenin advocated an idea that in any revolutionary struggle there should be room for tactical compromises to pave the way for a further revolutionary advance – a theoretical perspective which must guide our analysis of the contradictions and struggles in South Africa.

In 1910, the Dutch and British descendants in South Africa entered into a governing arrangement premised on the political and social subordination, exclusion and oppression of the people who were viewed and treated as foreigners in their own country. At the time, South Africa was characterised by racial discrimination, class exploitation and patriarchal relations of power. Or, governance and socio-economic life in the country was based on race, class exploitation of black workers on the grounds of race and the triple oppression of women on the basis of race, class and gender.[2]

In the light of the inter-connectedness of national, class and gender-related contradictions, organisations opposed to oppression needed a perspective to guide their struggle to resolve the contradictions in society. This perspective was not a product of mere thumb-sucking; but originated from what Lenin referred to as an analysis of the concrete conditions in society, as well as from a theory of colonial revolution that was, in Lenin's time, evolving in certain European countries and other parts of the world.

Lenin and colonial revolution

It was at the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organisations of the Eastern Peoples that Lenin expressed his innovative views about (what we can generally refer to as) the national content of class struggle. In particular, Lenin unequivocally stated that:

> *…the socialist revolution in each country would be neither solely nor chiefly a struggle of the revolutionary proletariat against their respective bourgeoisie, but rather a struggle by all the imperialist oppressed colonies and countries against international imperialism*[3]

The Congress confirmed Lenin's novel approach to the socialist revolution. In particular, it resolved that, whilst the primary task of communists was to establish communist parties in Eastern Europe and other colonial societies elsewhere in the world, communist parties were expected to provide political support to the national liberation movements in those countries to defeat western imperialism.[4] However, Lenin was quick to concede that solutions to the problems of colonial revolution were not to be found in any communist literature.[5]

The Second Congress of the Comintern held in Moscow and Petrograd in July 1920 deliberated on matters related to the colonial revolution and adopted the thesis on the national and colonial questions. This congress emphasised that communist parties have to politically support

national liberation movements, which are revolutionary[6] and when exponents of these movements do not hinder the work of educating and organising oppressed people.[7] In characterising the Second Congress, commentators expressed views to the effect that this Congress was a witness to Lenin's thesis on the national and colonial questions.[8]

At the 6th Congress held in Moscow, in 1928, communists from all over the world seriously debated the colonial situation in South Africa and then supported the establishment of the "black republic" where all the racial groups would enjoy equality.[9] This was justified on grounds that in South Africa:

> *… the majority of the population is black and so is the majority of workers and peasants…Hence the national question …lies at the foundation of the revolution…*[10]

Expressing his own views on the resolution, Comrade Mzala (Jabulani Nxumalo) argued that the resolution represented a rejection of the Communist Party's long standing position that the struggle was first and foremost a struggle for socialism.[11] Comrade Mzala argued that the resolution meant that the struggle for national liberation would have to precede the struggle for socialist transformation in colonial societies such as South Africa.[12] Mzala assumed that class exploitation would persist after the resolution of the national contradiction; hence he cautioned against the classical drive by elitist elements among the oppressed people to gain power to replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the masses.[13]

The evolution and nature of the relationship

In many of the countries that were either embracing or sympathetic to the communist paradigm, the relationship between national and class struggles found expression in various, but related ways. In our country, this relationship is expressed through a relationship between the ANC, the Communist Party and the labour movement. It was in 1929 that the Communist Party decided to be in an alliance with the ANC[14] – a move that was based on the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International which required "The Party … [to] pay particular attention to the embryonic national organisations among the natives, such as the African National Congress."

Deriving authority and mandate from this resolution, the Communist Party has made enormous contributions to building the ANC into a revolutionary liberation movement. This seems to have started as far back as 1927 with ANC's President Josiah Gumede and an ANC delegation visiting the Soviet Union and Gumede's subsequent embracement of Communist Russia as a genuine friend of the oppressed masses.

Building the ANC involved theoretical and ideological development, locating ANC among the ordinary masses and positioning it to lead the revolution. Not so long ago, Kgalema Motlanthe reminded us of the contribution of the Communist Party in equipping many members and leaders of the ANC with the tools of analysis they needed to successfully execute the struggle for freedom and liberation in South Africa.[15] All this was done to strengthen the alliance because of a collective belief that the alliance is an appropriate vehicle through which both the national and class struggles could be successfully fought.

The ANC and Communist Party built the alliance into a characteristic feature of the struggle before and after the 1994 elections. While the Communist Party made enormous contributions and sacrifices in building ANC into a 'real' revolutionary movement and in developing its theoretical tools for social analysis, the Communist Party learned many things from the ANC, which have helped to develop its theoretical and ideological skills and to ground its struggle in the realities of the country.[16]

Whereas the relationship between national and class struggles in South Africa dates back to the late 1920s, it was only after World War II that this relationship assumed organisational forms. Underlying it was a commitment to act in unity to advance the struggle to liberate the oppressed people as well as to achieve the objectives of the national democratic revolution.

The ANC's relationship with the Communist Party contributed to its development into a liberation movement which attracted large sections of the working class as well as the Coloured and Indian communities into the liberation struggle. This was necessary to mobilise and unite all the oppressed black people as well as to consolidate a united voice against national oppression.[17] The Communist Party, as a vanguard party of the working class, was central in mobilising the working class. This led to the consolidation of many progressive trade unions into the Congress of the South African Trade Union (Cosatu) – a giant movement that was formed in 1985 and later became part of the alliance with the ANC and Communist Party. Later, it was the community organisations in the black townships which joined the alliance under the banner of the South African National Civic Organisation, commonly known as SANCO.

In 1981, at the 60th anniversary of the South African Communist Party, the late President Oliver Tambo skilfully distinguished our own revolutionary alliance from all other alliances. In particular, Tambo reminded us that ours:

> *… is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. ..., [but] a living organism that has grown out of struggle... [which] we have built …out of our separate and common experiences.*[18]

In his view, this strategic alliance is based on a broad agreement on the strategic objective of our revolution to create and build the non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

The existence of the alliance does not necessarily mean that the Communist Party will not lead the struggle for victory of the socialist revolution.[19] Neither does it mean that the trade union movement will not lead the struggles of the workers for higher wages and better working conditions. In fact, each component remains an independent part of the whole. This, in essence, means that each component is expected to develop and implement its own policies, without imposing them on its allies. On major policy matters, alliance components must consult and reach

consensus.[20] Whereas consultations must take place, "it is not expected that the … organisations should as a condition of the alliance agree on all the policy matters".[21] Instead, the alliance must identify key issues they may agree on to take the revolution forward, and act upon them.[22]

However, the relationship between national and class struggles in South Africa has not evolved without difficulties. From the start, this alliance faced resistance within the component organisations. Concerns were expressed within the Communist Party about possible dilution of the class struggle and subjection of the class to the national struggle. In the 1930s and 1940s, there were concerns in the ANC about the fact that white people dominated leadership structures of the Communist Party and that the Party embraced communism – a foreign ideology.[23] Hence, anti-communist leaders and members mobilised against President Josiah Gumede because he embraced communists. Resistance against the communists was alive in the ANCYL in the 1940s. It was the youth leaders such as Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo who led this anti-communist resistance.[24]

Who leads the revolution and the alliance?

Leadership of the liberation struggle was debated for some time. While the debates on the matter kept on coming up in one way or the other, the matter was finally and decisively settled in favour of a view that the national character was primary to the struggle for freedom and liberation in South Africa.[25] Confirming this, *The Road to South African Freedom* [26] states that it is:

> *a national democratic revolution which will overthrow the colonialist state of White supremacy and establish an independent state of National Democracy in South Africa.*
>
> *The main content of this revolution is the national liberation... [of The African people]*

Taking the matter further, Nqobizitha Mlilo states that some people believed that:

> *…Once the national character … was taken as primary, there could hardly be dispute as to who should lead the struggle and therefore the Alliance."*[27]

Ngoako Ramatlhodi argues that the debate of the leadership of our revolution was ultimately settled in favour of the ANC.[28] In his view, this was premised on the analysis of subjective and objective reality; not on the grounds that the ANC is a "big brother" merely because it was formed in 1912 whilst other alliance partners were formed much later.

Ours cannot be a mere workers' struggle. It is the struggle to liberate the oppressed people, majority of whom are African and women. Even if we were to accept a view that ours is a struggle of the workers, upon close examination of these workers one will note that these workers, in the main, comprise the African people who are poor and underdeveloped. Hence, the main content of the revolution is the liberation of the African people in particular and blacks in general. Whilst coloured and Indian people have been involved in the struggle, it is the African people who constitute the substantial part of the motive forces of the revolution. An approach to leadership depends on the main contradictions the struggle seeks to resolve. In our case, it is commonly accepted in the alliance and broad movement for liberation that the national question is a dominant contradiction.[29] For this reason, an alliance between the ANC and Communist Party was formed on the basis that the ANC was best positioned to lead the national liberation struggle in South Africa.[30]

As has been the case for decades, the ANC remains a multi-class movement that accommodates and leads all the classes and strata in the struggle to resolve the primary contradictions created by the system of apartheid colonialism.[31] The ANC must also master the art and science of managing secondary contradictions in the ANC, the alliance and the society.[32] On internal contradictions, Joe Slovo stated that:

> *…if the Party … has reservations about any aspect of the policies of any fraternal organisation, [they] must place these reservations before such an organisation officially, openly and legitimately at a meeting of representatives of the organisations*.[33]

Challenges in the current phase of the revolution

Each phase of the revolution presents its own challenges. These challenges may be attributed to internal or external factors. For this reason, all the interventions that are aimed at resolving the challenges facing the movement and the revolution are supposed to take into account the realities of that particular phase. Our analysis must do this.

The 1994 democratic breakthrough was an outstanding achievement as state power was transferred to the liberation forces after many decades of mass struggle including armed resistance. The liberation alliance was clear that the contradictions created by apartheid colonialism remained after the capture of state power.

For the first time, many of the leaders had to strike a balance between organisational work and the work associated with the state. Given the urgency of state work, unfamiliarity with the related processes and the material benefits associated with deployment, focus shifted more to working within the democratic state. This had a negative impact on the internal programmes of the ANC such as the political education of members and building capacity of the deployed members to be able to strike a balance between party and state work.

The de-racialisation of the ownership, accumulation and allocation of capital is designed to empower historically marginalised sections of the population. Shamefully this correct policy was and is abused by deployees within the state to make as much money as possible. These nefarious anti-people activities spread from a few bad eggs to a larger number who were desperate to make "quick cash".

The question is to what extent are counter-revolutionary forces responsible for corrupting political leaders, activists and public servants? As Charles Tilly warns: ' an analysis of a … revolution, which provides no understanding of the presence of counter revolutionary forces leaves us unsatisfied.'[34]

However, corruption within the state cannot be solely attributed to politicians and officials. As Soma Pillay points

out: 'corruption is not limited [only] to the actions of the politicians and public servants. Rather, the problem is widespread.'

Therefore all corrupt activities within the state need to be investigated so that all the culprits, including those who may belong to the ANC or any other alliance partner, as well as the private sector, are brought to book.

It is important to note that the influence of private capital also manifests itself in the structures and organisational processes of the ANC and its alliance partners. The ANC, in its documents, has identified the very serious negative impact on the movement of the use of money to lobby for positions of power and influence.

There are some business people who join the ANC merely to advance their business interests. Others bribe members at various levels of the organisation to push for some positions that will ultimately benefit them. However, there are many other patriotic business people who support the movement with finances to enable it to advance a people's cause because they firmly believe in the cause we pursue.

There are even allegations that some union leaders mobilise resources from capital for their lobbying and promise to tone down workers' radicalism.

All is not gloom and doom. There are many ANC and alliance cadres, political leaders and functionaries as well as public servants who remain honest and committed to advancing the revolutionary process.

Can we say "the alliance is still relevant"?

There are numerous critics, both from the left and the right of the political spectrum, who assert that the alliance has failed to deliver on its policy undertakings and mandates. The broad movement also faces serious challenges from breakaways such as the EFF, NUMSA and the projected United Front.

While challenges may have weakened the alliance, this does not mean that the alliance is irrelevant. A weakened organisation should be distinguished from an irrelevant organisation. The alliance may be weakened but still remain relevant albeit in a weakened form.

Serious internal challenges may exist, but the alliance remains very strategic to deepen and advance the revolution. Its task remains that of mobilising the people in various sectors of society, and searching for answers to the challenges facing the country and its people. In the process, the alliance must ensure that its components are not dragged into divisive internal battles at the expense of the core constituencies and the revolution. The alliance has to be vigilant and "… continue to search for better ways to respond to the new challenges"[35] facing the alliance and the revolution. Splitting the alliance will not be in the interest of any of the alliance components.

Each component of the alliance is supposed to respect the right of other components "to discuss and arrive at their decisions on how they seek to pursue their strategic objectives."[36] We must identify, expose and condemn to the political wilderness all those who are responsible for destroying the alliance and its components from within by, among other things, promoting factionalism, purging certain members, neglecting interests of their core constituencies or prioritising personal agendas which are distinct from the interests of the motive forces of the revolution.

Despite the challenges, the alliance has not yet reached the state of total paralysis. Revolutionary theory teaches us to understand the dual character of the challenges facing an organisation. It helps us to appreciate that, while the challenges may be disruptive to the alliance and its programmes, they also provide enlightening lessons about the contradictions within the alliance and its components and how best to respond to and resolve these very contradictions.

As and when we deliberate on the strategic and tactical responses to the challenges facing the alliance and its components, we must understand that on our mere desire or will to change things are not more important than the actual conditions that should be changed.[37] Neither must we over-estimate the strength of the forces that seek to destabilise the alliance to the extent of mistaking superficial appearances with actual reality. ■

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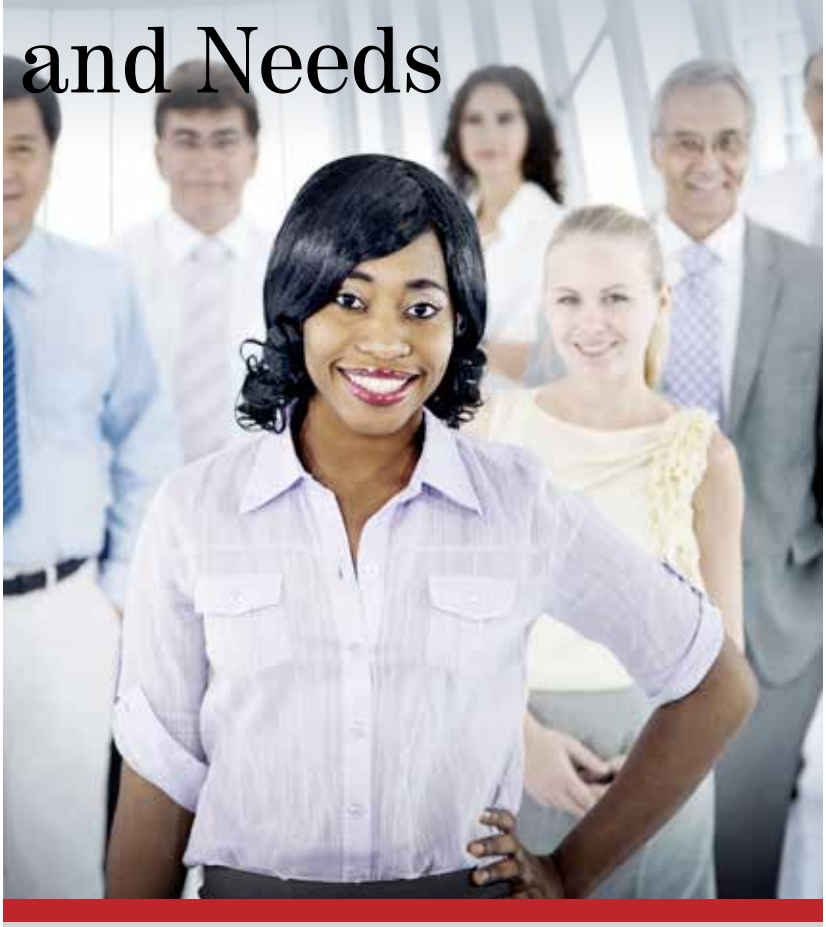
WOMEN AS REPRESENTATIVES

Transformational Leadership, Political Interests and Needs



By Naseera Noor Mohamed

The need to empower women and to establish gender equality remains a pressing challenge. Although some women hold significant leadership positions, many do not. Too often, the discussion of the role of women in society is perceived as a mundane and isolated issue. It should be mainstreamed. The quest to define women's role in leadership and their distinct political needs and interests appears elusive and lacking in determination. Perhaps we must revisit our past in order to distinguish the extent to which women have the capacity and will to lead and to represent political interests and needs, not only for themselves but for a diverse society as a whole.

Transformational Leadership: Women's March of August 1956

Leadership reflects the behaviours and understandings of all individuals and is a critical aspect of human activity (Williams, 2006). According to Mbigi (2005), the role of leadership is to enable development and progress in society, communities and organisations; thus the definitive task of leadership is that of transformation. Zagoršek, Dimovski and Škerlavaj (2009) explain that transformational leadership concentrates on intangible qualities, such as vision, shared values and ideas; these are used in order to build relationships, provide larger meaning to separate activities, and to also provide common ground to encourage fellowship in the process of change. Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as an ongoing process, whereby leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels of morality and motivation; therefore the transformational leader seeks to encourage individuals to be sentient toward what they feel and to define meaningful values, in order to bring about purposeful action.

Thus, the estimated 20 000 women (of all races) who courageously marched on 9th August 1956 to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, can easily be labelled transformational leaders. The significance of August (also commonly referred to as 'women's month') owes its merit to these intrepid women, as they gathered in order to petition against the country's pass laws. This pass law required South Africans defined as 'black' under the Population Registration Act to carry an internal passport, so as to regulate the movement of black South Africans and to uphold the apartheid government's policy of segregation. The march was led by Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Sophie Williams, Lilian Ngoyi and Frances Baard; all of whom (among others) have come to be understood as iconic and transformative leaders who helped to liberate the South African people from the apartheid regime (Mulaudzi, 2011).

The women who participated in the march not only took a pivotal step toward the liberation of South Africa, but they too liberated the notion of women being able to practice their own political interests and needs, in order to affect the greater population. These women brought the essence of transformational leadership to the

fore; as a result they excelled in their capacity to demonstrate the role of leadership in the want for change.

They also showed in practice that transformational leadership requires the movement of a collective people and centres on the attraction of a social group (Burns, 1978). According to the UNHCR (2002), a social group can be understood as a group of persons who share a common characteristic (innate, unchangeable, or which is otherwise fundamental to identity, consciences or the exercise of one's human rights) and are perceived as a group by society. Political and social theorists understand social groups and associations as a collective of persons who come together voluntarily as individuals and establish the association by forging rules, positions and offices. The emergence of organised women's engagements has not only helped us to understand women as a social group, but it too has provoked debate about women's interests and needs in the social, political and economic realms (Young, 1990).

Political Interests and Needs: The Role of Women as a Social Group

The interpretation of 'interests and needs' is politically contested; and who gets to establish the authoritative needs is itself a political stake. As a result these interpretations may not be adequate and fair and therefore public discourse itself becomes an issue when discussing the political interests and needs of people (Fraser, 1988).

Despite the emergence of organised women's social groups, women's interests and needs remain highly contentious, because women are positioned within their societies through a variety of different means, and the interests and needs women have as a group are similarly shaped in complex and sometimes conflicting ways, thus making it difficult to generalise about them. Consequently, we need to specify how the various categories of women might be affected differently and act differently due to the particularities of their social positioning and chosen identities (Molyneux, 1985).

Molyneux proposes that there are three ways in which women's interests may be categorised: strategic interests; interests derived deductively, from the analysis of women's subordination to which alternatives are formulated to overcome women's subordination; and practical gender interests, which are given inductively and arise from the actual conditions of women's positioning within the gender division of labour. These are formulated by the women who are themselves within these positions, rather than through external interventions; and practical interests are a response to an immediate perceived need. These conceptions of interests are used to explain the dynamics and goals of women's participation in social action.

Interestingly, the women of 1956 enable one to consider not only the categories of women's interests provided by Molyneux, but they also allow one to consider the role of organised women's social groups within political processes that affect the interests and needs of a nation. According to Reeves and Baden (2000), interests and needs should not be externally defined or seen as fixed, as these result from a political process of contestation and interpretation. As a result, the women of 1956 who acquired more than 100 000 signatures to petition against the apartheid government's legislation to control the movements of black South Africans, proved that organised women's social groups have the capacity to bring about social change, by representing the interests and needs of the people. Through their action they contributed to South Africa's non-racial and non-sexist constitution that we celebrate today (Mulaudzi, 2011).

> "The transformational leader seeks to encourage individuals to be sentient toward what they feel and to define meaningful values, in order to bring about purposeful action."

Perhaps the greatest achievement of those gallant women of 1956 was their ability to unite in numbers to rebel against an oppressive system and demonstrate their leadership qualities. Their courage and bravery should encourage us to reconsider the solutions to the challenges we face today, critically that of poverty and underdevelopment. Indeed women, who share a unique perspective and are able to represent a diverse society, have to play a pivotol role in reducing the rates of poverty.

Women as Representatives of a Diverse Society: Poverty

Diversity is an evolving concept. Contemporary authors have defined diversity as any significant difference that distinguishes one individual from another. This general definition includes a broad range of overt and hidden qualities, therefore researchers attempt to organise diversity characteristics; for example Kreitz (2008) suggested four areas, namely: personality (abilities, skills and traits); internal (ethnicity, gender, race, IQ level and sexual orientation); external (culture, marital or parental status and religion); and organisational (department, positions, union or non-union).

As a concept, diversity can be understood as acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing, and celebrating differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice and beliefs, and public assistance status (Etsy, Griffin and Schorr-Hirsh, 1995). According to Ely and Thomas (2001) diversity is a characteristic of groups of two or more people and it also refers to demographic differences of one type or another among the group members.

Representation of women in politics is understood as increasing the number of women in the political arena, under the assumption that women in power would be more responsive to women's interests than men (Morna, 2004). Therefore we must capitalise on the representation of women, in order to address the challenges we face today, such as poverty, underdevelopment

and the empowerment of women.

Moheyuddin (2005) explains that gender inequality and poverty are closely related, as poverty exacerbates gender inequality while gender inequality exacerbates poverty, as gender inequality causes lack of access to productive resources and employment opportunities for women. Poor families have a lack of economic resources and the women remain deprived of education, better food and clothing, and even tend to have low self-esteem. As a result, poverty results in gender inequality, thus the representation of women in government and within organised social groups can become an important factor in the exercise of power and influence.

However, the manner in which women are perceived as representatives within political spaces is met with a variety of interpretations. Too often, female candidates tend not to initiate discussion of women's issues, because it is presumed that they will not protect the interests of all people. Women candidates also place less emphasis on their domestic lives in their campaigning, because it is suspected that a woman would be distracted from her public work by her private concerns. As such, when in political office women tend to assume duties that reflect traditional women's concerns.

The role of women in government is shaped by the effects of recruitment procedures and organisational constraints in a political system dominated by patriarchal norms, and female leaders who, to varying degrees, accept and make decisions according to these patriarchal norms due to stereotypes and sexism (Sapiro, 1981). It should also be noted that not all women seek to be within the political arena with the intention of representing women's interests, for example the Zambian Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Edith Nawakwi, who distanced herself from women's movements and showed little interest in gender relation issues (Morna, 2004).

However, Vickers (2006) argues that when women assert an interest, they claim the right to be among state decision makers with political demands. Women have an objective interest to expand the presence of women among decision makers, so that all women's interests can be heard. Women need to monitor state politics and engage in electoral projects and gender gap strategies in order to transform political systems and political discourse. The argument is that although all issues are societal issues, women will identify with some issues more easily because of their lived experience as emphasised by Frelimo MP Ana Sabonete from Mozambique, who believes that there are some issues women are better qualified to speak about as they know the reality of the situation and as such can illustrate it better for the understanding of men.

> “Perhaps the greatest achievement of those gallant women of 1956 was their ability to unite in numbers to rebel against an oppressive system and demonstrate their leadership qualities. Their courage and bravery should encourage us to reconsider the solutions to the challenges we face today, critically that of poverty and underdevelopment.”

Conclusion

We must continue to learn from the transformative leaders of our past, like the spirited women of 1956, in order to find solutions to confront the difficulties we encounter today, such as the eradication of poverty, racism and sexism. Leadership is exercised in different contexts with different characteristics; therefore it is important that we study the contexts in which leadership has to be exercised so that we may function as successful future-fit leaders. Despite our differences (gender, age, class, or other) we must as youth and students unite in our will to elevate our society, as those before us have done, in order to bring about our own distinct transformational leadership abilities, and to become the future fit leaders we hope for.

Therfore, it is important that we acknowledge and celebrate the merits of our diversity, as the liberation of all people must be met by the will of all people, and this can only be achieved through organised social groups. The importance of women's access to political decision making should not be underestimated. It must rely on special measures in the form of electoral systems, quotas, gender aware political parties, democratic environments, and intensified social groups (Morna, 2004). Indeed, organised women's social groups have the capacity to represent not only their own political interests and needs, but they too have the ability to represent the needs and interests of society as a whole. ■

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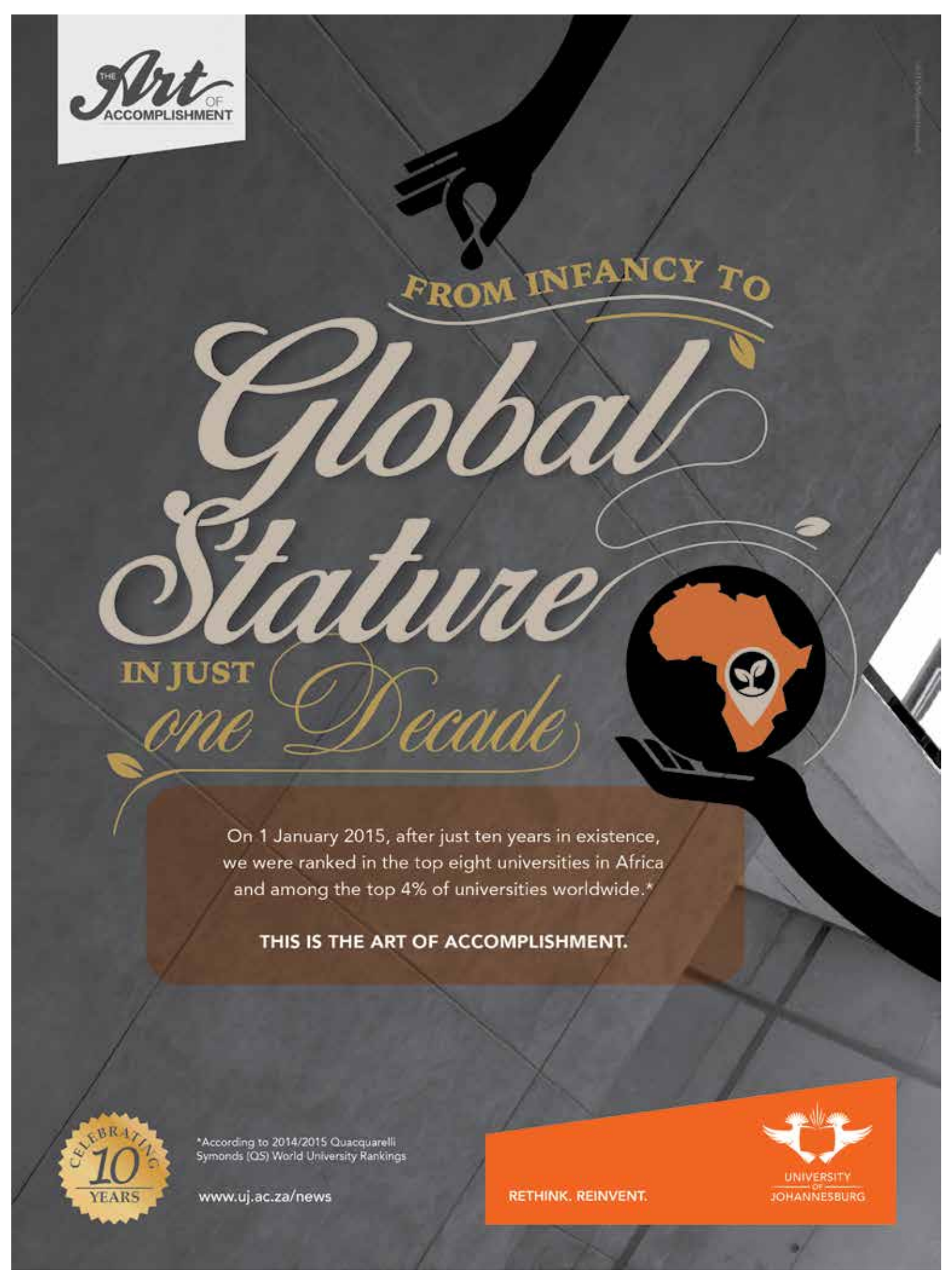
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Minister Pandor announces 42 additional research chairs for women researchers

By Department of Science & Technology

The Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, launched 42 new research chairs dedicated exclusively to women. The Research chairs, held at various higher education institutions, will assist South Africa's transformation into a knowledge economy, boost international competitiveness and improve people's quality of life.

The new research chairs, awarded to local women researchers, has increased the total number of chairs under the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) to 197, strengthening the ability of the country's universities to produce good postgraduate students and high-quality research and innovation outputs.

Established in 2006 by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and managed by the National Research Foundation (NRF), SARChI is a government human capital development intervention to strengthen and improve the scientific research and innovation capacity of South African public universities.

SARChI's key objectives are to attract established researchers from abroad and industry to South African higher education institutions, and to retain experts already in the system. Research chairs are awarded in diverse disciplines in the natural sciences, engineering, humanities and social sciences in response to government priorities.

SARChI also seeks to drive strategic

DST DG DR Phil Mjwara, Prof Nonhlanhla Khumalo Chairholder: Dermatology and Toxicology, Dr Beverely Damonse, Acting CEO NRF.

partnerships within the National System of Innovation and with the international research community, with the aim of creating a vibrant culture of excellence in research, thus strengthening research capacity to advance the frontiers of knowledge.

Transforming the racial and gender imbalance of the research and scientific workforce is an important aspect of the programme.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Pandor said that so far SARChI had involved mostly men, with four out of five research chairs going to male professors.

"Today, that changes. Today, we make history. Today, we have 42 new female research professors. From now, nearly half of our 201 research professors are women," said the Minister.

She remarked that the radical transformation intervention by government would shape the future of South African higher education in terms of global rankings and whether parents sent their children to contact universities in the country or online universities abroad.

Minister Pandor emphasised that the additional women research chairs were not "quota appointments", but impressive candidates of a high calibre.

"SARChI has given women the opportunity that men have always had," she explained.

South Africa has made progress, but gender disparity remains a challenge in research fields. UNESCO data show that 42% of South African researchers are women. Only 30% of researchers with an NRF rating are women. Census data indicates that only 11,3% of the females with post-school education in South Africa are in the areas of natural sciences, computer sciences and engineering.

Minister Pandor said the dominance of the humanities and social sciences was only to be expected because women had been directed, from an early age, into the "soft" rather than the "hard" sciences.

"We want to change that. And we are changing it at school, where we have to start," she added.

Dr Beverley Damonse, Acting CEO of the National Research Foundation, said the NRF had contributed more than R340 million to the research projects of female scientists in 2014 alone; and, since 2002, supported more than 18 000 women in obtaining their postgraduate qualifications.

"Today's announcement of 42 new female research chair holders is part of our joint effort with the DST to address the gender disparity in the research community. We offer our congratulations to the respected researchers who take up these research chairs and we look forward to their research outputs," concluded Dr Damonse.

The new research chairs announced include the following: Biomedical Engineering and Innovation; Laser Applications in Health; Integrated Studies of Learning Language, Mathematics and Science in the Primary School; Gender Politics; and Paediatric Tuberculosis. ■

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THROUGH A CREATIVE LENS

As our regular readers will know, Neal Hall's highly acclaimed first poetry collection *Nigger for Life* has won countless prizes. Interviewed at the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival in Bali, Dr Hall explained that he began writing poetry in his mid-30s after he realised that "everything I'd been taught was a lie." After attending Cornell and Harvard and becoming an ophthalmic surgeon, he discovered that "I would always be judged by the color of my skin. Everything I did would be diminished because of that."

For this issue we are pleased to offer our readers two of Neal Hall's latest poems.

Where Do I Sit

Shadowed and casted,
where do I sit
where do I fit

where's the slit in the white
that lets the black in

between which lines of black and white,
which longing for longitude and latitude
do I reside

around which circles that circle back
around black and white and shades of gray
do I fit

where do I sit
to emit absorption,
to absorb reflection

where amongst the white
is the night of the round table I'm to set
and sit my seal and shield upon

which square squares things
which angle tries to rectify wrecked corners, tangled angles
of negative and positive space
I'm to choose my face upon

where do I fit

upon what, when
and
where do I sit

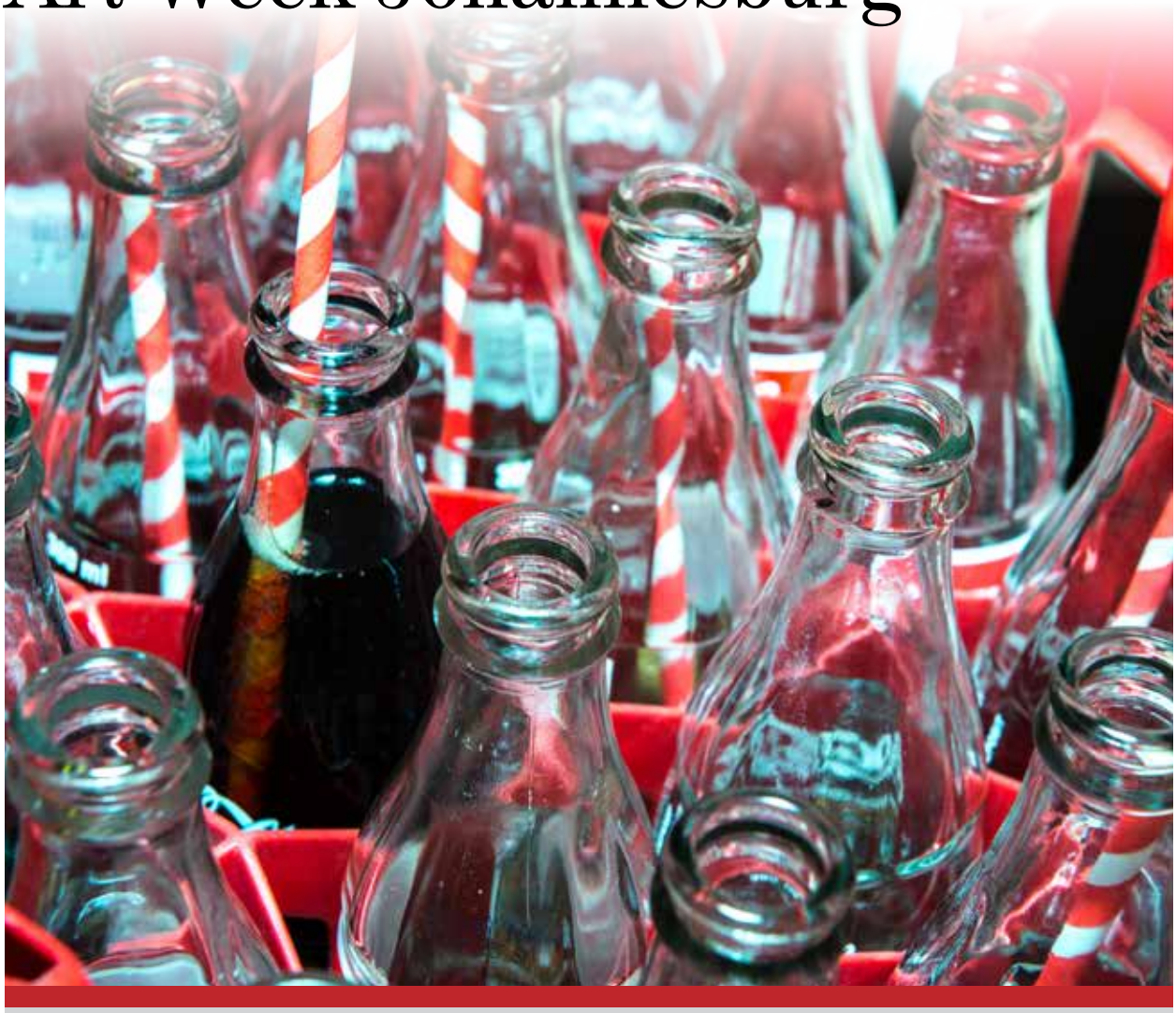
Golf Ball White

Ornamental bush black,
kept back, bushed whack,
sand trapped country club colors,
cast and colorized by tribal colors - gang colors
to keep bush black divided amongst itself

Ornamental bush black,
par for the course for Cain[s] and Abel[s], unable to
resist the golf ball's white call to one up the other;
to be one par under the other in order to be
the only one sitting atop the other black,
bushed whack brothers;
the only one selling one's souls to be the sole one
to get the carrot stick hole in one

White golf balls.
leopards without black spots
driving big swinging ethnic putters down and around into
small white holes scattered across green-lined, leafy tree-lined
color coded country club courses
white balls roll smoothly over.

Coca-Cola celebrates 100 years of the Contour Bottle during Art Week Johannesburg



By Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola® South Africa continues to celebrate 100 years of the contour through a platform created for artists to exhibit artworks inspired by the glass packaging at the Art Week Joburg, in Maboneng precinct.

The Coca-Cola® contour bottle exhibition features South African artists Mbongeni Buthelezi, Tony Gum, Simon Parkin and Namibian artist Kabelo Kim Modise - bringing together a combination of experienced and young artists under the curatorship of Zanele Mashumi.

Known as a design classic, the Coca-Cola contour bottle has been celebrated in art, music and advertising. It has inspired countless moments of happiness in film, social history, design and fine arts and has gained iconic status as a muse to many artists and designers globally for 100 years.

"Although the Coca-Cola® contour bottle is a global icon, there is a very distinctive beauty about the way in which South African artists have used the contour bottle to express their craft. We also see this as an opportunity to help lesser known and up and coming

artists to exhibit their work," said Vukani Magubane, Public Affairs and Communications Director of Coca-Cola® Southern Africa.

Initial celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Coca-Cola Contour Bottle kicked off in Cape Town and Johannesburg earlier this year through a global art travelling exhibition featuring world famous artists such as Clive Barker, Burton Morris and Andy Warhol. South Africans were the first to view these artworks, a selection from Coca-Cola's 33 000 art piece collection which the company has amassed since 1928.

Art Week Joburg is platform that gives young artists on the rise an opportunity to showcase their artwork, unique techniques and talents. Through a collaborative partnership with Art Week Joburg, Coca-Cola South Africa is able to support our talented youth by creating awareness of our budding contemporary art scene in South Africa.

The Coca Cola Contour bottle exhibition displayed at Art Week Joburg is curated by Soweto-based curator Zanele Mashumi, who makes art accessible to the masses by bridging the gap between emerging artists and inexperienced art buyers.

Mbongeni Buthelezi is a world renowned South African artist who creatively converts waste material and recycled products into masterpieces. Tony Gum is a vibrant 20 year old artist who uses photography to communicate her unique perspective on the world and is on a steady rise to critical acclaim for her distinctive work.

Simon Parkin is a well-travelled South African artist who expresses himself through oil painting, mainly landscapes. Kabelo Kim Modise is a Botswana born, Namibian-based artist who uses 2 remarkable methods to create his artwork; the first method being expressive oil paint and the second being the distinctive artistic method of linocuts.

The Coca-Cola® contour bottle is the ultimate blend of form and function. Its beautiful contoured fluid curves have evolved over the years but remained the same so distinctive that it could be recognised by touch alone and so unique it could identified when shattered on the ground.

The contour bottle was granted its trademark status after appearing on the cover of *Time Magazine*. It was the first commercial product to appear on the cover – cementing it as a global icon of popular culture.

"The Coca-Cola contour bottle continues to be at the centre of the happiest moments shared by our consumers everywhere in the world today, as it was in 1915 when it was first patented. We believe that the contour bottle will continue to inspire artists as Coca-Cola will continue to support local artists in their craft," said Magubane.

An enduring classic icon in the history of packaging design, the contour bottle remains a canvas for innovation today, including the development of the Coca-Cola aluminium contour bottle and varying package. ■

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