

# The Thinker

F O R T H O U G H T L E A D E R S

Thabo Mbeki on

## AFRICA MUST UNITE



**OAU@50**  
**Vukani**  
**ma-Afrika!**

Malcolm Ray - Ademola Araoye - Peter Lawrence - Myles Tendi - Justice Piitso  
Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni - Mongane Wally Serote - Malaika Wa Azania - Chris Mathlako  
Joel Netshitenzhe - Francis Komegay - Chris Landsberg

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# SARChi Chair: African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

This issue of *The Thinker* marking the 50th Anniversary of the OAU is in partnership with the NRF SARChi Chair: African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy.

This Chair is a newly established research and post-graduate training initiative under the aegis of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Johannesburg. It seeks to respond to the fluctuating state of Africa's international affairs by developing a research and outreach agenda embedded in strong basic and applied primary research. This NRF Chair in African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy is headed up by Prof Chris Landsberg.

The NRF SARChi Chair is committed to engaging in research which seeks to bridge the worlds of theory and practice/decision making. It adopts an inter-disciplinary approach, such as a focus on the nexus between domestic politics and foreign policy, and implements a multi-dimensional research agenda, comprising diplomatic studies, foreign policy analysis, dialogue and publishing. Workshops will be held with post-doctoral fellows, Masters and Doctoral students, aimed at identifying and clarifying issues and challenges pertaining to the theoretical and conceptual foundations of diplomacy and foreign policy. In terms of its research agenda, it pursues the triple foci of (1) South African foreign policy; (2) African diplomacy, (3) African integration at continental, regional and sub-regional levels; and (4) Africa's international relations and search for strategic partnerships.

In terms of diplomacy, the emphasis of our work will be on investigating the inter-state dimensions of African peace and security; development and stability; a continental development agenda; and Africa's international co-operation. The Research agenda will focus on issues like the status and implementation of the Constitutive Act; the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community; the challenges pertaining to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights; the Protocols of the Pan-African Parliament; the Court on Human and People's Rights; the Court of Justice; the Conventions Preventing and Combating Corruption, Terrorism, Mercenary activity; and the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

Emphasis will be placed on the need for "pivotal states", or "regional powers" like South Africa and Nigeria to play the lead role in the continent's peace and development arenas, and that the continent, with its fragmented continental environment.

In terms of South African foreign policy, the SARChi research agenda will endeavour to unpack and critically assess South Africa's African Agenda; its South-South-co-operation agenda; its strategic relations with the North; active global governance and multi-lateralism goals; and its attempts to forge partnerships at the bi-lateral level, and its new stress on economic diplomacy. Some of the research areas we will conduct focus on include: national interests and the domestic sources of South Africa's foreign policy; the Republic's key bi-lateral relations and ties with "anchor states", bilateralism and multilateralism in South Africa's Africa relations; South-South relations in its foreign policy, including relations with Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Arab world; relations with the North; multi-lateralism and global governance strategies; South African diplomacy, including economic and commercial diplomacy.



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## On the Cover:

“African Nationalism is meaningless, is anachronistic, and is dangerous, if it is not at the same time Pan Africanism.”

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere

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# Vukani ma-Afrika



The OAU and one of its principle instruments, the OAU liberation committee, played a seminal role in bringing to an end national oppression and the super-exploitation of labour power and natural resources in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde.

Since its founding in May 1963, inspired and led by African luminaries such as Nkrumah, Nyerere, Nasser, Haile Selassie, Modibo Keita and Ben Bella, the OAU endeavoured to give content and meaning to the ideal of Pan-African unity and cohesion.

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary this issue of *The Thinker* contains articles looking at the history and achievements of the OAU as well as critically analysing the contemporary challenges confronting the continent and its people.

After many years of Afro-pessimism within reputable international media circles, political and civil society bodies in Europe, North America and parts of Africa as well as multi-lateral institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, we now witness a turn-around. The continent, awash with an abundance of natural resources and lush agricultural land, is growing at a rate faster than any other continent. More and more, Africa is seen as the next engine of economic growth and development world-wide. Afro-pessimism is fast becoming afro-optimism.

But this growth and development has to be harnessed not in the interests of multi-nationals and other private institutions or powerful elites but for the benefit of the overwhelming majority of the people. To achieve this objective it is necessary to deal decisively with political and security instability in some regions and countries as well as neo-

colonial and imperialist interventions.

We are fortunate to have obtained this month articles by leading intellectuals and writers of the highest calibre. These come not only from within South Africa, but other parts of Africa and the diaspora, as well as the UK. The contributions to this issue cover a wide range of economic, historical, political, cultural, academic and conflict resolution challenges facing our continent and its peoples.

For example, Francis Kornegay provides an African American perspective, considering the implications of the idea that “the pan-Africanism rooted in the African diaspora’s alienation in the slavery and post-slavery racial regimes in the New World was transformed into an accommodation with the colonial partitioning of Africa as the very basis of the OAU.”

Ademola Araoye and Miles Tendi, from a continental perspective, both consider the nature, characteristics and power of national sovereignty in Africa. Whilst analysing this question from different viewpoints, they share concern about the likelihood of the AU achieving its goals without first challenging and radically re-thinking some of the fundamental assumptions on this issue.

In the lead article, “Africa must unite: An Imperative of our Time”, former president Thabo Mbeki writes:

“Nevertheless, the hard reality is that, if indeed African unity is a fundamental condition for the Renaissance of Africa, then we must ask the critical questions –

- what indigenous forces in Africa will serve as the vanguard (organising) movement to lead the African masses to engage in struggle to achieve this unity; and
- around what specific objectives

would this movement coalesce which would define the content and purposes of this unity?”

Progressive and revolutionary forces need to pay special attention to these critical questions. The unity, cohesion and socio-economic growth and development of the continent depends on the mobilisation and actions of its peoples. But such actions will dissipate and not bear fruit, unless they are organised and led by progressive political formations with clearly formulated goals and strategies to achieve these goals. Reactionary and neo-colonial forces will not stand aside but rather fight Africa’s renaissance with all means at their disposal, fair or foul.

We invite readers of the journal to consider these questions and those raised and discussed in the many other significant articles offered here. We hope to receive your contributions in response, to assist in their resolution.

The demand for African solutions to African problems must become a rallying cry.

Over the next few decades Africa can bring about, in the words of Joel Netshitenzhe, “an all-encompassing Continental Democratic Revolution.”

Vukani ma-Afrika!

In this issue we reproduce an open letter to the UN Secretary General from Concerned South Africans. To endorse this letter, visit [www.concernedafricanforum.org](http://www.concernedafricanforum.org) ■

# CORPORATE SOCIAL INITIATIVES



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## The UN fails to act while Syria slides deeper into anarchy

15 April 2013 - The violence in Syria continues unabated and has claimed thousands of lives and left many more injured while the country's infrastructure is being razed to the ground.

It is now general knowledge that thousands of fundamentalists, supported by armed foreign groups, are fighting against the government forces. The terrorist attacks have increased sharply. Recently the leader of the al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) announced that al-Nusra was an extension of the AQI and called on the Syrian people to implement Sharia law.

These disastrous developments in Syria have forced the United Nations Security Council to place the matter on the table for discussion. Tragically, however, the draft resolution of the "Friends of Syria" is heavily biased towards the opposition with very scant regard for the government. The resolution offers no solutions to reach a negotiated settlement in that country.

From the very start of the conflict in Syria, the position taken by the UN has not assisted in averting the loss of innocent lives and the situation quite clearly has catastrophic consequences for regional and international peace and security.

The "Friends of Syria" are not innocent in the unfolding

destruction of Syria. If the regime change policies in Syria succeed, the world will be confronted with a new geo-strategic base for extremist forces that will destabilise, not only the Middle East region, but North Africa as well. This will undoubtedly have serious consequences for the entire African continent.

As we predicted two years ago, the regime change in Libya has now destabilised the entire Sahel region. In addition, the unfolding events in Mali should serve as a warning about the dangers facing the African continent. Some major western powers and their allies consistently and deliberately ignore the disastrous and dangerous regime change policies in Libya, Cote d'Ivoire, Syria and elsewhere.

It is for this reason that the group of Concerned South Africans felt compelled to write an Open Letter to the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in which Concerned South Africans expressed their serious concern about the failure of the Security Council to act decisively to carry out its mandate to stop the carnage in Syria.

We invite you to engage with the Open Letter on Syria, which we have placed on our website attached.

Issued on Behalf of the Concerned South Africans  
[www.concernedafricanforum.org](http://www.concernedafricanforum.org)

## An open letter to H.E. Mr Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation

March 2013

Dear Secretary General,

All of us, the undersigned, are South Africans.

You will therefore understand it if our observations draw on our own national experience to end what had been a very deadly conflict stretching over a much longer period than the Syrian conflict.

For some time we have been gravely concerned about the deadly conflict in Syria, very interested that it should be solved expeditiously and peacefully.

We were therefore very happy that together with the League of Arab States, successively you appointed the eminent Africans, Kofi Annan and then Lakhdar Brahimi, charged with the onerous task to facilitate this outcome.

In this regard we were very encouraged that the UN, and you

personally, were associated with a determined effort to assist the Syrian people to arrive at a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict.

We have absolutely no doubt that this solution must include a fundamental reform of the Syrian constitutional and political system.

We believe that everybody committed to the genuine interests of the Syrian people and the peace and stability in the region, agree with this, including the Syrian Government. The intransigent demands of sections of the armed groups for regime change as preconditions for any discussions are unacceptable.

The attitude of the Friends of Syria is provocative and an obstacle to finding a peaceful negotiated settlement

The obvious challenge your eminent envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, faces is to elaborate the process which would enable all concerned, including the

Syrian Government and Opposition, to arrive at an agreement about what should be done to end the conflict and bring about the fundamental constitutional and political reforms we have mentioned.

We would like to explain that this Open Letter was provoked by the major speech delivered by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on 6 January 2013, after a silence of many months.

The first thing we would like to say in this regard is that it seemed obvious to us that those genuinely interested in resolving the conflict in Syria should study this speech carefully, which we have done.

The UNSG, in terms of your mandate must encourage everybody to seek a political solution.

Any untimely and ill-advised statement foreclosed all options envoy Lakhdar Brahimi might have had to

build on what President Assad had said, and seriously compromised his possibility to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict.

At this point we would like to make one of the observations we believe is fundamental to the resolution of the Syrian conflict.

You may recall, Mr Secretary General, that a critical matter on which the global community agreed to with regard to the resolution of the conflict in South Africa, was that a negotiated resolution of this conflict would only be possible if the belligerents, without exception, entered into direct negotiations to determine the future of our country.

Prior to this, the world community, through the UN General Assembly, had declared the system of apartheid a crime against humanity, the first and only time, since the demise of Nazism, that any system of government had been declared as such a crime.

And yet absolutely nobody, including the South Africans themselves, ever thought it correct to exclude from the negotiations representatives of the regime which formally, according to the relevant Convention, was guilty of a grave "crime against humanity".

We therefore find it very strange and monstrous indeed that in the Syrian case an absurd and counter-productive pre-condition is being advanced that one of the principal belligerents, the Syrian Government, should therefore first step down, thus to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict!

To add to this absurdity, similarly strange and monstrous demands have been made that one of the belligerents, the Syrian Government, should unilaterally cease its military operations, with no similar demand being made about the other belligerent, the armed Opposition.

To this we must add that, as openly acknowledged by everybody, there are foreigners who constitute an important part of the 'Syrian' armed Opposition. Fundamentalist armed forces from Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan Chechnya and other countries are fighting in Syria

We never had this phenomenon in our case. Everybody was therefore certain, as happened, that once

the political leaders of the principal belligerents in our country decided to engage in negotiations to arrive at a peaceful settlement, the armed forces on both sides of the conflict would respect this decision.

It is obvious that this is one of the critical and challenging matters that must be addressed in the search for a negotiated resolution of the Syrian conflict.

The second observation we would like to make, related to the above, is that what obstructs the peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict is that some in the international community who exercise very significant power in various respects, are pursuing only one objective with regard to Syria – namely, regime change!

Despite the fact that at the moment we began our negotiations to end the system of apartheid, our country was governed by a regime presumed to be guilty of the grievous crime against humanity, nobody, including the countries now calling for regime change in Syria, ever suggested that "regime change" in South Africa was a pre-condition for the peaceful resolution of our challenges!

UN/LAS Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi must try his best to encourage a global consensus to strengthen his possibility to encourage the various Syrian belligerents to engage in serious negotiations.

That he has so far failed, is due to the fact some of the external players involved directly or indirectly in the Syrian crisis, are not in the least interested in creating the space for the Syrian people to resolve their problems.

Rather, they are focused on 'regime change' to address what they believe are their important geo-strategic interests, which have nothing to do with the welfare of the Syrian people or peace and stability in the region and international peace and security.

We are very concerned, Mr Secretary General, that it seems that some powerful forces have taken sides in this regard, in favour of the forces seeking 'regime change'.

We have absolutely no doubt that the position of some countries in the Friends of Syria grouping in this regard have contributed to the stubborn

position of the Syrian Opposition which has so far insisted that it will not enter into negotiations with the Syrian Government,

At this point we would like to identify various elements in President Assad's 6 January 2013 speech which we believe constitutes elements of a basis for the peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict.

In particular, among others, President Assad committed his Government to:

- (i) a negotiated resolution of the Syrian conflict, indicating the willingness of his Government to talk to the Opposition;
- (ii) engage all genuine Syrian 'peace partners' in this regard, a demand akin to what the late Yassir Arafat repeatedly stated when he described his interaction with the late Yitzhak Rabin, (and the Israelis later demanded with regard to Yassir Arafat), involving all Opposition forces, those based both inside and outside Syria;
- (iii) the formation of a broad-based Government, effectively a Government-of-National Unity;
- (iv) the elaboration under this Government of a new "constitutional and judicial system and the political and economic features, as it will also include agreement on new laws for the parties, elections and local administration, etc." through a process of an inclusive national dialogue, and National Conference, whose results would be submitted to a National Referendum;
- (v) accordingly, the protection of the sovereign right of all the Syrian people to determine their destiny, without foreign interference;
- (vi) the right and duty of the Syrian Government to protect all parts of the Syrian infrastructure, the national heritage, from destruction, and ensure peace and stability in the country;
- (vii) the negotiation of an arrangement(s) to ensure the mutual security of Syria and its neighbours;

- (viii) the holding of new elections to enable the Syrian people to choose a new Government, held on the basis of the agreement that would result from the processes indicated in (iv) above;
- (ix) the implementation of a 'general amnesty' for all those who had been involved in the armed conflict, through the processes indicated in (iv) above, while respecting the right of individuals to resort to the courts to seek justice for any harm they might have suffered from the actions of any of the armed belligerents, including a provision for the necessary reparation;
- (x) the convening of a Conference and process for "national reconciliation" through the processes indicated in (iv) above; and,
- (xi) a programme decided during the process indicated in (iv) above to respond to the challenge of rebuilding and restoring the infrastructure destroyed or damaged during the armed conflict.

Quite frankly, Mr Secretary General, we find it extremely difficult to understand why and how you made the determination that these proposals, in themselves, do not "contribute to a solution that could end the terrible suffering of the Syrian people".

To the contrary, we believe that you should have publicly stated that all the objectives above are a necessary and acceptable but incomplete part of what is required peacefully to resolve the Syrian conflict.

We fully accept that it will be impossible for the Syrian Opposition to accept the proposal made by President Assad that his Government should have exclusive powers to guide the entire process indicated in the suggestions detailed above.

Mr Secretary General, we cannot but note that you have been very silent about the demand in the Geneva Communiqué that "All parties must re-commit to a sustained cessation of armed violence in all its forms and implementation of the six-point plan immediately and without waiting for the actions of others."

Those seeking a genuine political solution in Syria reject the demands of the faction favouring a 'regime change' and that only the Syrian Government should act to 'cease armed violence', without demanding the same of the armed Opposition.

Indeed, the UNSC has been very silent when some of the very same signatories of the Geneva Communiqué have spoken publicly about their determination to strengthen and encourage the Syrian armed Opposition!

We will now return to the matter of the establishment of a transitional governing body in Syria.

It is perfectly obvious that this cannot be imposed from outside.

We strongly suggest that this should be a result of negotiations among the Syrians, and not a pre-condition for such negotiations.

Again you will recall that in our South African case, we did not establish any 'transitional governing body' in our country. We allowed the regime ostensibly guilty of the crime against humanity, to remain as the governing body throughout the process of negotiations, until it was replaced through the 1994 democratic elections.

An all Party Transitional National Council ensured that the than all white apartheid Parliament did not take any decisions that could impact negatively on the negotiations process and a future democratic government in South Africa.

The esteemed UN/LAS Envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, should have taken advantage of the positive commitments made by President Assad on 6 January 2013, to engage the Syrian Government about what might be done to address this one matter of devising an arrangement such that the Opposition would be assured that it would play its due and legitimate role during the transitional and negotiations period, without giving the Syrian Government any veto powers in this regard.

We are certain that with the necessary will and creativity, this outcome can be achieved, with no requirement for a condition precedent of 'regime change'.

This was done in South Africa. We can see no reason why this cannot be

achieved in Syria.

Fundamental to everything we have said, Mr Secretary General, is the requirement on the part of absolutely everybody concerned, including yourself and the UN as a whole, to understand the imperative practically to respect, without equivocation, the sovereign right of the people of Syria to determine their destiny.

This is a fundamental and inalienable precept in all the principal documents of the UN, a precept that you, as the UN Secretary General, independent of all Member States of the UN, have an obligation to defend at all costs.

In other words you have the obligation to defend the rule of law as represented in the international law represented in many UN documents, starting with the UN Charter, which international rule of law is being blatantly violated in the case of Syria, most unfortunately with the encouragement of the Friends of Syria.

One of the undeniable realities about Syria is that those who pursue the objective of 'regime change' made a fundamental mistake when they thought or assumed that it would be possible 'easily' to overthrow the Syrian Government through armed rebellion.

Despite repeated assertions by the international 'regime change' faction that 'the Assad regime' is about to fall, life has proved this wishful forecast wrong, and will continue to do so.

One reason for this is that important sections of the Syrian population support the Syrian Government, which means that it is radically wrong to pretend that this Government represents nobody but itself.

Yet another of the undeniable realities about Syria is that what has sustained the armed rebellion is not so much its internal support as external all-round support and encouragement.

This is despite the solemn commitment made by the signatories of the Geneva Communiqué that "Action Group members are opposed to any further militarisation of the conflict", some of whom have done everything they can precisely to 'militarise' the Syrian conflict.

Because of all manner of deceit, dishonesty, double standards and pursuit of national geo-strategic interests

at all costs, even after the signing of the Geneva Communiqué, many Syrians have died, many have been displaced internally and turned into refugees, and much infrastructure has been destroyed, when the possibility existed, with the active involvement of the UN and the LAS, peacefully to resolve the Syrian conflict.

Those in the rest of the world, outside Syria, who are responsible for this reality, have determined that the lives of the Syrian people are worth nothing, provided that they achieve their geo-strategic goals.

Today sections of the Syrian National Council and the unarmed opposition are calling for negotiations without preconditions.

The failure of the UNSC to act decisively and collectively to find a peaceful negotiated solution to end the tragic violence further eroded the prestige of the UN, and the Office of the UN Secretary General, as defenders of the interests of the smaller countries, such as our own, against the diktat by the major powers.

We strongly suggest, Mr Secretary General, that you position yourself on the side of the Syrian people, both those who support and those who oppose the Syrian government.

Millions of people in Africa and the rest of the world are concerned that the UN is increasingly being transformed into an instrument of the West.

As Secretary General, you must do something to help restore the prestige of the UN and the UN Secretary General.

We have no doubt that if you acted decisively to assist the Syrian people peacefully and speedily to resolve their conflict, this would help you to achieve these objectives.

We suggest, humbly, that you might find it very useful to draw on the South African experience, among others, to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict.

We hope you will understand, Mr Secretary General, that the pursuit of the objective of 'regime change' in Syria, under whatever guise, and the attendant external support and encouragement of the armed Opposition, only means the death and displacement of yet more Syrians,

the destruction of infrastructure, and further enormous destabilisation of the Middle East, with unforeseen consequences.

We have addressed this Open Letter to you, Mr Secretary General, simply because we wish for the people of Syria the same benefits of peace, democracy, national reconciliation and development which our own process of negotiations among all belligerents, without none excluded, brought to all our people.

Please accept, Mr Secretary General, the assurance of our respect.

- 1 Dr Wally Serote – Author and Indigenous Knowledge Systems expert
- 2 Prof Pedro Tabensky - Director of the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics, in the Department of Philosophy: Rhodes University
- 3 Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo – Former South African Ambassador to the UN
- 4 Dr Sydney Mufamadi – Director of the School of Leadership, UJ and Former Cabinet Minister
- 5 Nelson Godi – Chairperson of Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts
- 6 Prof Anthoni van Nieuwkerk – Centre for Defence and Security Management, Wits
- 7 Reverend Frank Chikane – Author and Former Director- General in the Office of the President
- 8 Prof Chris Landsberg - National Chair of African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, University of Johannesburg
- 9 Dr Essop Pahad – Editor, The Thinker and Former Minister in the Presidency
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- 22 Tshepo Thlaku - 2013 Africa and the Middle East Development Councillor, Junior Chamber International
- 23 Mr S. Donga
- 24 Meiya G. Nthoesane – Manager: Corporate Services, Centre for Business Management, Unisa
- 25 Nomonde Mapetla - Economist & CEO Forever Africa Holdings (Pty) Ltd
- 26 Hazel Setzin - Director Rochefauld International
- 27 Vusi Maqubela – TM Foundation
- 28 Marthe Muller – COO, South African Women in Dialogue
- 29 Miranda Strydom – Former Journalist
- 30 Sekgobola Thobakgale – African Renaissance Youth Network
- 31 Amanda Dlamini – President of The African Pioneers and member of the African Youth Coalition
- 32 Mbongeni Magubane – Vice Chair, Pan African Youth Dialogue
- 33 Theresa Strydom – Social Worker
- 34 Sithembiso Khanyile - Executive Director of South African for Peace in Africa Initiative (SAPAI)
- 35 Nkululo D. Lawu – Director, Inkululo African Solutions
- 36 Shehnaaz Bulbulia - Media, Knowledge Production and consultant.
- 37 Suraya Bibi Khan –
- 38 Faizal Kalla –
- 39 Tshepo Neito – Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (TMALI)
- 40 Mandisa Khaile - Student of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (TMALI) ■

## All contributing analysts write in their personal capacity



**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 as the University of Liberia, Monrovia.

**Malaika Wa Azania** is a first year student at Rhodes University. She is the newly elected Branch Chairperson of the South African Students Congress, the founder and Chairperson of the Black Consciousness Book Club in Grahamstown and the Director of Pen and Azanian Revolution (Pty) Ltd. She was elected into the Steering Committee of the African Unity Coalition at the TMF Youth Retreat.

**Francis Kornegay** is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and a Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars. He is a specialist on the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Trilateral Dialogue Forum as well as one who has tracked closely the recent emergence of BRICS bringing together Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Francis is also a specialist on US-South African relations and American foreign policy with an MA in African Studies from Howard University and a Masters in International Public Policy from the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.

**Professor Chris Landsberg** is Head of the NRF Chair in African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy based at the University of Johannesburg. He

holds MPhil and DPhil International Relations Degrees from Oxford University, and is a life-time member of Christ Church College. In May 2009, he became the National Higher Education champion for India-Brazil-South Africa Tri-lateral Forum (IBSA). He has written many articles and contributed chapters to books dealing with the history and contemporary challenges of governance and foreign policy analysis in South Africa and Africa. He is the author of *The Quiet Diplomacy of Liberation: International Politics and South Africa's Transition* (Jacana, 2004).

**Professor Peter Lawrence** is Emeritus Professor of Development Economics at Keele University, UK. He has taught economics in Tanzania and Uganda and researched on development issues in several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. His main research interests have been in rural development and unemployment in the UK and European transition economies. More recently his interests have been in financial liberalisation and its impact on household behaviour, and the development of a water poverty index. He has published widely in journals and books. He is a founding editor of the *Review of African Political Economy*.

**Chris Mathlako** is a former student activist and a member of the ANC. He served as provincial secretary of the SACP in the Northern Cape and as senior advisor to former Premiers Manne Dipico and Dipuo Peters. Presently is a member of the CC and Politburo of the SACP and Secretary for International Relations. He is General Secretary of the Friends of Cuba Society, South Africa, member of the

Working Group of the International Communist and Workers Parties and serves on the secretariat of the World Peace Council (WPC).

**Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki** was Deputy President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 and President from June 1999 to September 2008. He was for over three decades a member of the NEC of the ANC. Mbeki was the architect of NEPAD and the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) forum. He has mediated in African conflict situations including Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Ivory Coast and Sudan and Southern Sudan. Recently he was appointed to chair the UN Economic Commission on Africa panel to investigate and report to African leaders on the illegal export of capital and money laundering.

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# The Thinker

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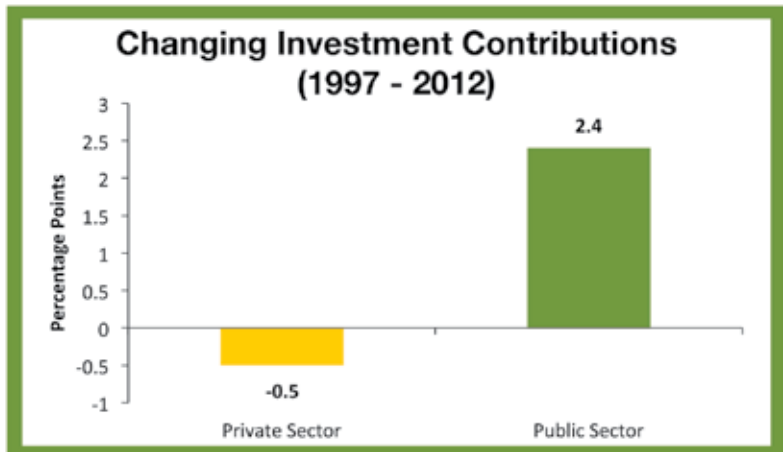
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# Active Citizenry and Investments

The investment landscape in democratic South Africa has evolved significantly over time. According to South African Reserve Bank data, the contribution of private sector investment to GDP actually declined by 0.5 percentage points between the last quarters of 1997 and 2012. By contrast, the contribution of public sector investment to GDP increased by 2.4 percentage points over the same fifteen-year period.

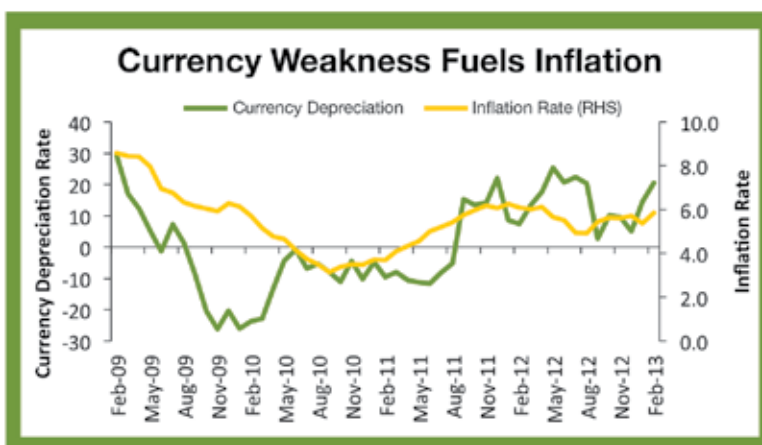
In part, the unwillingness of corporate South Africa to invest in our country reflects a more difficult and uncertain economic environment. However, it also reflects a generally inadequate appreciation of long term returns, sustainability, and social responsibility in the private sector. The lack of sufficient investment in South Africa's production capacity is glaringly illustrated in our trade account deficit. Unable to manufacture our own machinery and equipment, the country has to import these goods in order to expand our network infrastructure. Additionally, a wide mix of consumer goods, which range from food to textiles, is imported into the country every month. The resulting oversupply of domestic currency on the international market causes the Rand to weaken, driving effective prices for these imported goods higher, which then leads to faster inflation – further squeezing already pressured budgets.

In a bid to remedy the trade imbalance we currently experience, government is looking to become more aggressive in protecting domestic industries from international competition. For example, we have already seen in 2013 the imposition of an anti-dumping tariff on mirrors imported from China, with other glass products such as windscreens also benefitting from similar interventions. This is broadly in line with the Industrial



Policy Action Plan, the Trade Policy and Strategy Framework, the New Growth Path and National Development Plan documents, which all acknowledge the benefits of thoughtful intervention in the outward-facing and labour-intensive sectors of our economy.

While clearly beneficial over the short term, protective measures such as these should not be considered a permanent or sustainable way to boost the competitive position of our country. If South Africa wishes to maintain its political standing in various international forums, it will need to stay within agreed free trade measures and allow fair global trade to thrive over the long term. In addition, if our exporting industries are to survive the volatile movements of the foreign exchange market without putting undue pressure on government capacity, we will require a much more fundamental boost to competitiveness. In this respect, it is the private sector that must come to the fore. Investment in human and physical capacity evidently feeds strongly into higher productivity, lower prices, and a more robust economy. However, greater investment in more uncertain times requires a broader view of the link between sustainability, security, stability, and ultimately profitability.



In March, the Oasis Group announced an investment of R460 million into Rainbow Chicken Limited as part of the rights issue offer by Rainbow. Post this investment, Oasis on behalf of its clients, will continue to represent 11.9% of the total outstanding shares of the company. Currently, Rainbow and other domestic chicken producers are facing a significant competitive threat from foreign companies, many of which are based in Brazil, Argentina, the EU, and the USA. Creating a competitive mismatch, some of these foreign producers appear to be benefitting from unsustainable government subsidies in their countries, allowing them to undercut South African companies in the domestic poultry market.

Although measures to protect our poultry industry have been taken previously, a provisional anti-dumping tariff lapsed in February of this year. Thus while further protective measures are being debated in government, we believe that it is

appropriate for investors to provide domestic companies such as Rainbow with the capital necessary to further establish themselves in the local and global markets. Investing in the food security of our country is an important step to developing our economy, with growing demand in the rest of Africa providing ample profitable opportunities for the well positioned South African company. Over the short term Rainbow has seen tough competition from international producers, but we believe that the long term benefits of this investment significantly outweigh the current risks. Our investment into Rainbow thus reflects our view that it is time for the private sector to step in for budget-constrained governments the world over. Socially responsible investments create stability, foster social cohesion, and improve long term returns. Private sector investment can do a lot more in the future to boost our country's competitive position, reversing the deficit in our trade account and keeping growth and inflation at healthy levels. ■



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**AFRICA MUST UNITE!**

# An imperative of our Time



Oliver Tambo chatting with President Kaunda of Zambia and President Nyerere of Tanzania as the leaders depart from the Dar Es Salaam Summit

I believe that the fundamental question we must consider, critically, as we celebrate the OAU@50, is - what have we done over half-a-century to advance towards the achievement of the objective of African unity?

By Thabo Mbeki

This year, 2013, Africa celebrates 50 years of the existence of the very first Organisation in the entirety of the existence of our Continent, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), established to assert and pursue the unity of Africa among and despite its immensely diverse nationalities, cultures, languages and religious beliefs, and imposed national boundaries.

Thus must we understand that the historic effort to achieve practically the unity of Africa, expressed through the establishment of the OAU, is only 50 years old, and is therefore in its infancy.

In this context we must take into account the first historic task the OAU correctly set itself at its foundation. This was to unite in the ultimately successful but otherwise complex and protracted struggle to ensure the total liberation of Africa from colonialism and white minority rule. This objective was only achieved in 1994, 31 years after the establishment of the OAU, with the liberation of South Africa.

#### **African historical reality**

During the millennia before the colonisation of our Continent, we did indeed have a few Kingdoms as established state formations, many of them with ill-defined jurisdictions in terms of territory and sovereignty over distinct ethnic groups.

The fact is that largely, as Africans, we did not have the hard borders of individual "nation states", even in the Sudan, Egyptian and Carthaginian antiquity. These were imposed on the Continent as a result of the infamous 1885 Berlin Conference, which carved up Africa into geographically defined territories owned by the various European colonial powers. These boundaries largely serve as Africa's current State borders.

Over the millennia the Africans migrated freely and widely across our Continent, effectively treating our Continent as a common patrimony and matrimony.

This is the reason that even today large swathes of our Continent, across and without regard to the many colonially imposed boundaries, share the same languages and cultures, and

therefore a common African identity.

It is because of this common African identity that we find that the various languages, such as Hausa in Nigeria, the indigenous languages in Southern Africa, and kiSwahili in East Africa, to some extent, share some common words, proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

Indeed, in antiquity, some Africans, part of the very first members of the species homo sapiens, the global modern humanity, migrated out of Africa, not bound by any physical or political boundaries, to constitute the founding base of today's diverse world community of peoples, in all Continents.

In effect, by the time of the Berlin Conference, the Africans had established the fact in practice, through the millennia, that they were bound

“Even today large swathes of our Continent, across and without regard to the many colonially imposed boundaries, share the same languages and cultures, and therefore a common African identity.”

together by a common identity, not defined by any borders or boundaries.

The periods of slavery and colonialism obliged the then African leadership, certainly during the 19th Century, to recall and evoke the fact of this historical common African identity. Accordingly it called for the unity of all Africans to defend themselves against the predations of the foreign colonising powers.

#### **Early African resistance to Colonialism**

For instance, when the Sudan Mahdist forces were about to invade Ethiopia, Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia sent this prescient message to the Mahdist leader, Hamdan Abu Anja,

in 1888:

“We as well as you are of the Kush tribe. We are African brothers. In addition we are close neighbours, as a result of which we ought to be united and fight back and stand together against the European colonialists...”

Abu Anja rejected this proposal on grounds that continue to play a role in Africa's efforts to unite. He wrote to the Emperor:

“As for your request for peace while you remain (a Christian) infidel this is impossible. There is nothing between you and us, the Italians and the Europeans. Your safety is in Islam and your destruction in your disbelief.”

However, early in the 1890s Mahdist Sudan came into conflict with the Italian forces that had occupied Eritrea. Among others this resulted in the defeat of the Sudanese forces by the Italians in a battle in eastern Sudan, at Kassala, in 1894.

The following year, as Ethiopia prepared to confront the Italian colonial forces, Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II wrote to the ruler of Sudan, Khalifa Abdullahi, suggesting the same cooperation between Ethiopia and Sudan against European colonialism which Emperor Yohannes IV had proposed.

In his letter sent in April 1895, Menelik wrote:

“When you were at war against Emperor Yohannes, I was also fighting against him; there has never been a war between us, (Sudan and the Ethiopian regional Shoa Kingdom)...Now, we are confronted by an enemy worse than ever. The (European) enemy has come to enslave both of us. We are of the same colour. Therefore, we must co-operate to get rid of our common enemy.”

This time, eight days before, and subsequently, during the historic Battle of Adwa, at which the Ethiopians defeated the Italians, ensuring the independence of Ethiopia, the Sudanese forces engaged the Italians in a number of battles in eastern Sudan, but were defeated.

However, despite their temporary victories, the Italians were obliged to maintain significant forces at Kassala during the period of the Battle of Adwa, to ensure that Khalifa Abdullahi's

Sudan forces did not attack the Italians from the rear. Thus, by reducing the size of the forces the Italians could commit at Adwa, Sudan contributed to the Ethiopian victory at Adwa.

These interactions between the then two independent African States of Ethiopia and Sudan, towards the end of the 19th Century, especially in the context of the colonisation of Africa, tell an important story which I believe still holds important lessons for Africa as we continue to address the challenge of achieving the unity of Africa.

With regard to our own country, South Africa, many of us who were brought up politically by the ANC have always known that the goal of African unity has stood out as one of the central objectives of our national liberation movement. This is because of what we learnt from our history, from the period of the establishment of the 'Ethiopian Church' in our country - a Church independent of the colonial European Church towards the end of the 19th Century - and even earlier, to the moment of the establishment of the ANC.

What emphasised this for us was that the ANC was established with one of its specifically expressed objectives being "*to bury the demon of tribalism*" - the tribalism which had created the African disunity that resulted in the victory of the European project (which was disastrous for us as Africans), to colonise our Continent!

#### **What Mwalimu Julius Nyerere said**

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere captured the all-Africa sentiment for African unity when he addressed the World Assembly of Youth in Dar-es-Salaam in 1961.

On this occasion he said:

"I am a firm advocate of African unity. I am convinced that, just as unity was necessary for the achievement of the independence of Tanganyika, or in any other nation, unity is necessary for the whole of Africa, to achieve and maintain her independence.

"I believe that the phase from which we are now emerging successfully is the phase of the First Scramble for Africa, and Africa's reaction to it. We are now entering a new phase - the phase of the Second Scramble for Africa. And

just as, in the First Scramble for Africa, one tribe was divided against another to make the division of Africa easier, in the Second Scramble for Africa one nation is going to be divided against another nation to make it easier to control Africa by making her weak and divided against herself...

"African Nationalism is meaningless, is anachronistic, and is dangerous, if it is not at the same time Pan Africanism."

In the same speech Mwalimu Nyerere reflected on capitalism. This was to discuss the development path which independent and united Africa would have to pursue, in Mwalimu's view, taking care to refuse to be dominated by either the Western or the then Socialist countries.

Mwalimu said:

"To my mind, capitalism went wrong when it divorced Wealth from its true purpose. The true purpose of Wealth is to satisfy very simple needs: the need for food, the need for shelter, the need for education and so on. In other words, the end of Wealth is the banishment of Poverty; and Wealth is to Poverty what Light is to Darkness...

"There is enough Wealth in every state for every individual to satisfy these basic needs. But the moment any individuals in a single state begin to use Wealth, not for the satisfaction of those needs, not for the abolition of poverty, but for the purpose of acquiring power and prestige, then there is not enough (Wealth). Then Wealth tolerates Poverty; then Wealth is not to Poverty what Light is to Darkness.

"There is not enough Wealth in any nation to satisfy the desire for power and prestige of every individual, so what happens? There is then ruthless competition between individuals...to seize enough Wealth to give themselves more power, more prestige than their fellows. That is, Wealth which exceeds their real need and which will enable them to dominate other individuals."

Mwalimu Nyerere saw African unity as being of decisive importance to all African countries with regard to three matters, especially during the period of the Cold War. These were:

- the successful defence of Africa's hard-won independence;
- the use of that independence to chart an independent path of

development, to achieve the socio-economic transformation of our Continent in favour of the ordinary African masses; and

- the building of a system of politics and governance on our Continent not dominated by domestic and international private capital, which capital would produce politicians interested in self-enrichment, rather than the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment for the benefit of the working people.

#### **What Emperor Haile Selassie said**

Two years after Mwalimu Nyerere delivered the speech we have cited, on May 23, 1963, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I delivered his historic Opening Address to begin the proceedings of the Conference of Independent African States which established the Organisation of African Unity - the OAU.

This seminal speech was fully consistent with what Mwalimu Nyerere had said. In fact it defined in greater detail what should be done to give content to the shared aspiration for the unity of Africa.

It might be that some readers of this article may be surprised and amazed that I will refer so insistently to what was said by a feudal African monarch, Emperor Haile Selassie I.

In this regard I would humbly advise these to bear in mind that this feudal monarch represented a millennia-old African Kingdom. During the period of colonialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries, like the rest of our indigenous traditional African state formations, throughout Africa, it occupied the front trenches in the struggle to defend the independence of the peoples of Africa.

In this context, specifically, inspired especially by the historic victory at Adwa during which the Ethiopian masses were led by his preceding Emperor, Haile Selassie had to lead the resistance to the brutal Italian occupation of Ethiopia during the period of the Second World War. This process began with the Italian colonial war in Ethiopia in 1935, and ultimately led to the recovery of Ethiopia's independence from Italian colonialism in 1941.

In this struggle, Haile Selassie led

his people and country inspired by everything his predecessors, particularly Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu, had done to defend the independence of Ethiopia, including during the Battle of Adwa, which resulted in the defeat of colonising Italy in the aftermath of the Berlin Conference.

This Italian invasion and occupation in the 20th Century sought to reverse the humiliating defeat which imperialist Italy had suffered in the previous Century, in 1896, at Adwa.

Thus it was that Ethiopia was one of the three African countries which participated in the establishment of the United Nations Organisation (UN) at the end of the Second World War, these being Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa.

What Haile Selassie said 50 years ago, at the founding Conference of the OAU, remains, to this day, a defining statement in terms of what Africa must do to realise her hopes. This includes the achievement of her unity, the defence of her independence, the implementation of an independent development programme, and constructing a polity in favour of the emancipation of the ordinary African people from poverty and underdevelopment.

Having laid out a very clear roadmap, the Emperor sounded a warning and a call which must surely be at the centre of our reflections as we celebrate the OAU@50.

He said:

"A century hence, when future generations study the pages of history, seeking to follow and fathom the growth and development of the African continent, what will they find of this Conference?

"Will it be remembered as an occasion on which the leaders of a liberated Africa, acting boldly and with determination, bent events to their will and shaped the future destinies of the African people?

"Will this meeting be memorialised for its solid achievements, for the intelligence and maturity which marked the decisions taken here?

"Or will it be recalled for its failure, for the inability of Africa's leaders to transcend local prejudice and individual differences, for the

disappointment and disillusionment which followed in its train?"

We are half-a-century hence after the establishment of the OAU. We must respond to the questions and challenges which Emperor Haile Selassie posed on the very eve of the establishment of our Continental Organisation.

### **What has been done to achieve African unity?**

I believe that the fundamental question we must consider, critically, as we celebrate the OAU@50, is - what have we done over half-a-century to advance towards the achievement of the objective of African unity?

**“What Haile Selassie said 50 years ago, at the founding Conference of the OAU, remains, to this day, a defining statement in terms of what Africa must do to realise her hopes.”**

This is particularly important because I believe that the perspective advanced by Mwalimu Nyerere and Emperor Haile Selassie, so many decades ago, and even as early as the 19th Century by other African patriots is true and correct - that as Africans we cannot achieve our all-round liberation and renaissance unless we act in unity.

This means that none of our countries can achieve its individual fundamental objectives, to guarantee its independence and to determine its own independent path of socio-economic development, acting on its own, outside the context of united African action.

It is for this reason that I am convinced that the task to reflect on the challenges and opportunities to realise the objective of meaningful African unity must stand at the centre of our celebration of the OAU@50.

In this context, in the Address at the Conference which established the

OAU we have cited, Haile Selassie made important comments which remain relevant to this day.

In fact, these served as the Agenda of the critical *“Grand Debate on the Union Government of Africa”*, the theme of the AU Summit Meeting held in Accra, Ghana in 2007, which also celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the independence of Ghana.

In the 1963 Address by Emperor Haile Selassie we have cited, he said:

"While we agree that the ultimate destiny of this Continent lies in political Union, we must at the same time recognise that the obstacles to be overcome in its achievement are at once numerous and formidable.

"Africa's people did not emerge into liberty under uniform conditions. Africans maintain different political systems. Our economies are diverse. Our social orders are rooted in differing cultures and traditions.

"Further, no clear consensus exists on the "how" and the "what" of this Union. Is it to be, in form, federal, confederal or unitary? Is the sovereignty of individual states to be reduced, and if so, by how much, and in what areas?

"On these and other questions there is no agreement, and if we wait for agreed answers generations hence, matters will be little advanced, while the debate still rages.

"We should, therefore, not be concerned that complete Union is not attained from one day to the next. The Union which we seek can only come gradually, as the day-to-day progress which we achieve carries us slowly but inexorably along this course...When a solid foundation is laid, if the mason is able and his materials good, a strong house can be built...

"Through all that has been said and written and done (on our Continent)..., there runs a common theme. Unity is the accepted goal.

"We argue about means. We discuss alternative paths to the same objectives. We engage in debates about techniques and tactics.

"But when semantics are stripped away, there is little argument among us. We are determined to create a Union of Africans.

"In a very real sense, our continent is unmade. It still awaits its creation

and its creators.

"It is our duty and privilege to rouse the slumbering giant of Africa, not to the nationalism of Europe in the Nineteenth Century, not to regional consciousness, but to the vision of a single African brotherhood bending its united efforts toward the achievement of a greater and nobler goal."

**What Kwame Nkrumah said**

For his part, and at the same founding Conference of the OAU in 1963, the outstanding African patriot, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, said:

"We are fast learning that political independence is not enough to rid us of the consequences of colonial rule. The movement of the masses of the people of Africa for freedom from that kind of rule was not only a revolt against the conditions which it imposed.

"Our people supported us in our fight for independence because they believed that African governments could cure the ills of the past in a way which could never be accomplished under colonial rule...

"It is said, of course, that we have no capital, no industrial skill, no communications and no internal markets, and that we cannot even agree among ourselves how best to utilise our resources for our own social needs. Yet all stock exchanges in the world are pre-occupied with Africa's gold, diamonds, uranium, platinum, copper and iron ore.

"Our capital flows out in streams to irrigate the whole system of Western economy. Fifty-two per cent of the gold in Fort Knox at this moment, where the USA stores its bullion, is believed to have originated from our shores...

"No independent African state today by itself has a chance to follow an independent course of economic development, and many of us who have tried to do this have been almost ruined or have had to return to the fold of the former colonial rulers. This position will not change unless we have a unified policy working at the Continental level...

"What need is there for us to remain hewers of wood and drawers of water for the industrialised areas of the world?...

"We cannot afford to pace our needs, our development, our security,



Samora Machel

to the gait of camels and donkeys. We cannot afford not to cut down the overgrown bush of outmoded attitudes that obstruct our path to the modern open road of the widest and earlier achievement of economic independence and the raising up of the lives of our people to the highest level...

"Even for other continents lacking the resources of Africa, this is the age that sees the end of human want. For us, it is a simple matter of grasping with certainty our heritage by using the political might of unity. All we need to do is to develop with our united strength the enormous resources of our continent...

"African unity is above all, a political kingdom which can only be gained by political means. The social and economic development of Africa will come only within the political kingdom, not the other way round. Is it not unity alone that can weld us into an effective force, capable of creating our own progress and making our valuable contribution to world peace?...

"So many blessings flow from our unity; so many disasters must follow on our continued disunity. The hour of history which has brought us to this Assembly is a revolutionary hour. It is the hour of decision. The masses of the people of Africa are crying for unity. The people of Africa call for the breaking down of the boundaries that keep them apart...

"This Conference should mark the end of our various groupings and regional blocs...

"But if we fail and let this grand and historic opportunity slip by, then we shall give way to greater dissension and division among us for which the people of Africa will never forgive us. And the popular and progressive forces and movement within Africa will condemn us...

"Africa must unite!"

**Africa unmade!**

To answer the vital and historic question - *what is to be done?* - concerning the challenge to achieve the unity of Africa, so vital to the future of our Continent, we will have to respond honestly and frankly to the stark summary of our condition which Emperor Haile Selassie described when he said:

*"In a very real sense, our Continent is unmade. It still awaits its creation and its creators."*

I am convinced that the Centuries-long period of the violent seizure and export of African slaves to the Americas and Arabia, and the European imperialist and colonial domination of Africa, 'unmade Africa'.

Accordingly, our striving to achieve the Renaissance of Africa must focus on the 'remaking' of Africa!

That 'remaking' must aim to achieve exactly the objectives which Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Emperor Haile Selassie and Kwame Nkrumah set before and during the establishment of the OAU.

Some of the central questions we will have to answer in this regard, as we celebrate the OAU@50, to respond to the challenges posed by Emperor Haile Selassie, are:

- of what should this *remaking* of Africa (and *re-creation*) consist?; and
- who will be the *creators*?

Kwame Nkrumah answered the second of these questions when he said at Addis Ababa in 1963, *"the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa will condemn us...(if we disappoint) "the (call of the) people of Africa...for the breaking down of the boundaries that keep them apart..."*

As I have said, these boundaries were imposed on Africa as a consequence of the Berlin Conference and were therefore themselves part of the colonial legacy which anti-colonial

and anti-imperialist Africa had to address!

In reality, the 'boundary' that Kwame Nkrumah was talking about was the divide between "the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa" on one hand, and the opposed tendency on the other, which had coalesced as the 'Monrovia' and 'Casablanca' groups, prior to the 1963 founding Conference of the OAU.

In this regard, in a lecture delivered in Tripoli, Libya, on September 23, 2002, one Abdalla Bujra said:

"Indeed two ideologically opposed blocks of countries, the Casablanca and Monrovia blocks, emerged - one stood for development based on social planning and the other for market driven development. The two blocks also had different approaches to external relations - delinking and re-linking as opposed to strengthening inherited colonial links. Hence at the time the atmosphere throughout the Continent was militantly and passionately discussing these issues. And the militancy and passion over these issues expressed themselves fully during the debates at the founding of the OAU."

In this regard, whatever the merits of his broadly correct characterisation and argument, we must of course also take into account the impact on Bujra's views of the simplistic and militant views about African unity which were consistently advanced by the then Libyan leader, the late Colonel Gaddafi.

Nevertheless, the hard reality is that, if indeed African unity is a fundamental condition for the Renaissance of Africa, then we must ask the critical questions -

- what indigenous forces in Africa will serve as the vanguard (organising) movement to lead the African masses to engage in struggle to achieve this unity; and
- around what specific objectives would this movement coalesce which would define the content and purposes of this unity?

#### What African unity?

Our objective reality is that in fact and in practice, we have not achieved the objective of African unity.

In a sense, to put this matter broadly,

we can say that we have not succeeded in bridging the divide between the 'Monrovia' and 'Casablanca' groups. This is necessary to build the African political coalition which would lead the sustained offensive for genuine and durable African unity, bearing in mind the African reality which Haile Selassie detailed.

In this regard I would like to quote a famous observation made by Karl Marx in his treatise, "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte". He wrote:

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they

“Centrally, our collective African history over the last 57 years since the independence of Sudan, communicates the unequivocal message that we have failed to build the cohesive and critical Pan African movement to which Kwame Nkrumah referred when he spoke about “the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa”.”

do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."

As Africans we have had the obligation to make our own history.

In the speech we have cited, Haile Selassie made the dramatic statement:

"The task on which we have embarked, the making of Africa, will not wait. We must act, to shape and mould the future and leave our imprint

on events as they pass into history."

The fact however is that, as Marx had said, the African leaders gathered in Addis Ababa in 1963 did not have the liberty, as Nyerere and Nkrumah had argued, indeed from different perspectives, freely to "mould the future (of Africa)", as they pleased.

Centrally, our collective African history over the last 57 years since the independence of Sudan, communicates the unequivocal message that we have failed to build the cohesive and critical Pan African movement to which Kwame Nkrumah referred when he spoke about "the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa".

Practically, objectively and in strategic terms, it is not possible to achieve the strategic goal of meaningful African unity, and therefore the Continent-wide transformation of Africa, its Renaissance, in the absence of, and without the leadership of these forces and movements.

However, we must understand that objective reality, bearing in mind what Marx said, will bear heavily on Africa's ability to develop and sustain these popular and progressive forces.

In this regard, on the face of it, we had the advantage that much of our political leadership, especially in the immediate aftermath of the victory of the anti-colonial struggles, had been steeled in these struggles to understand and be inspired by the imperatives of what would make for the Renaissance of Africa.

Nevertheless, great theoreticians of the African Revolution, among them Frantz Fanon, had warned us about what might go wrong.

Among others, Fanon warned that because of "circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past", the very same militant African fighters against imperialism and colonialism might very well be recaptured by this past, willingly or otherwise obliged "to return to the fold of the former colonial rulers", in Nkrumah's words.

As we celebrate the OAU@50, we must ponder the correctness or otherwise of this prediction, which emerged from the profound reflections, researches and practical experience on

our Continent of a brilliant mind. These came to all of us, as Africans, through African Algeria, but originally from the African Diaspora in Martinique in the Caribbean, home both to Fanon and also the celebrated poet and Pan Africanist, Aimé Césaire.

Fanon warned us that it was possible that the African Revolution might be betrayed during the period of what Mwalimu Julius Nyerere described as the Second Scramble for Africa, against the objectives which Haile Selassie and Kwame Nkrumah detailed. Thus would we have to contend with the possible defeat of the objective to achieve African unity, and its use to realise the Renaissance of Africa.

It will take another article to discuss all the obstacles to the achievement of the unity of Africa towards which all Africans aspire.

### A rent-seeking leadership

The late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, revolutionary inheritor of the sentiments conveyed in the 19th Century by Emperors Yohannes IV and Menelik II, pointed to a fundamental factor in this regard.

In 2002, speaking about the generality of the predatory ruling groups on our Continent, he said:

“African states have been given names such as neo-patrimonial, prebendial (paying financial tribute to a State religious autocracy), vampire and various other exotic names. The underlying fact is that African states are systems of patronage and are closely associated with rent-seeking activities.

“Their external relationship is designed to generate funds that oil this network of patronage. Their trading system is designed to collect revenue to oil the system. Much of the productive activity is mired in a system of irrational licenses and protection that is designed to augment the possibilities of rent collection.

“Much of the private sector on the Continent is an active and central element of this network of patronage and rent-seeking activity.

“A large part of the NGO community and civil society organisations constitutes a parallel network of patronage and rent-seeking activity that

coincides and diverges from the State network depending on circumstances.

“Just as in the case of the State network the NGO and civil society organisations network is also oiled by funds and guidelines from abroad. Leadership positions in such organisations are used for personal enrichment and for the establishment of patronage networks.

“It is this structure that is fundamentally inimical to the establishment of an effective and strong (African) State... (and is therefore supportive of) the imposition of the Washington Consensus from outside. It is this structure which inhibits the establishment of developmental States in Africa that are able to adapt the rational elements of the neo-liberal paradigm to their specific circumstances and design others to supplement it.”

The “rent-seeking” of which Meles Zenawi spoke, describes the parasitic abuse of power, of whatever kind, to extract wealth from society for personal benefit, self-enrichment. Thus would individuals in positions of power personally benefit from wealth that had been created by others, and therefore adopt all measures to hold on to power.

He was saying that in many instances our African post-colonial States had become predatory States. Our ruling elites in these countries had turned into self-enriching thieves exercising State power, who are grabbing as much wealth as they could, which wealth others had created.

In reality, Meles Zenawi was addressing the consequences for us of what Mwalimu Nyerere had raised when he spoke about the inherent nature of capitalism, relating to the uses and abuses of Wealth.

Clearly, we must consider very seriously what Meles Zenawi said, seeking to characterise many who sit at the helm of State in many of our countries, many of them ‘democratically elected’. If his assertion is correct, Africa would have no choice but, objectively, to bid farewell to the goal to achieve the African unity that is fundamental to the realisation of the objective of Africa’s Renaissance.

Meles Zenawi spoke on the basis of his familiarity with actual African experience, effectively to substantiate what Frantz Fanon had foreseen very early during the period of the comprehensive defeat of colonialism in Africa.

He spoke about the emergence of a parasitic and craven leadership and ruling elites on our Continent all of whom do not care ‘two hoots’ about the genuine and sustained welfare of the billion African working people in our urban and rural areas.

These are those who have willingly been absorbed into the globalised system of personal wealth acquisition, in their personal interest and at all costs, as venal, junior, subsidiary and dependent partners effectively of the global capitalist system.

### What is to be done?

The challenging question that faces all of us as we celebrate the OAU@50 is – what is to be done to defeat this entrenched elite, and thus re-open the road towards the genuine unity of Africa and the realisation of its purposes?

What shall we do genuinely to pursue the future visualised by such outstanding African patriots as Julius Nyerere, Haile Selassie, Kwame Nkrumah, Modibo Keita of Mali, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Abdul Gamal Nasser of Egypt, Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria, Mohamed V of Morocco, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Seewoosagur Ramgoolam of Mauritius, Albert Luthuli of South Africa, and others?

In the end, whatever the challenges in this regard, to realise the objective that ‘Africa Must Unite’, and thus create the conditions for the Renaissance of Africa, we must work to re-build and activate “the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa” of which Kwame Nkrumah spoke during the historic moment of the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity.

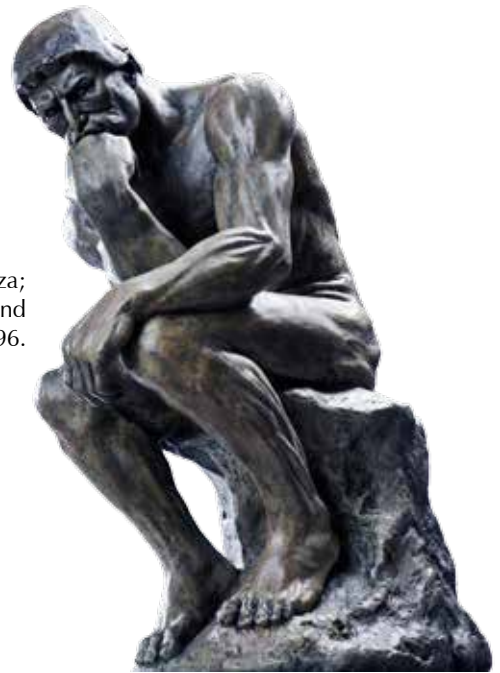
Indeed, in our collective interest as Africans, as well as our salute to the OAU@50, and the AU@10, we must act together to realise the objective - Africa Must Unite! ■

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**TOWARDS AGENDA 2063**

# A Pan-African Renaissance in the next 50 years?



Africa is poised for a renaissance across all indicators of human endeavour; and it should develop its strategies taking into account a variety of possibilities on the continent and further afield.

By Joel Netshitenzhe

Over the past two decades, the conference circuit has been awash with events to reflect on 'Africa strategies'. The irony though is that many of these engagements are organised by, and on, other continents to review other countries' approaches to a region that has started to show much promise. Instructively, Africa

itself – and indeed a majority of the countries on the continent – does not have an America or Asia or Europe strategy.

The growing interest in the continent over the past two decades is understandable. Africa is showing great potential and its future development trajectory, undergirded in part by vast

natural endowments, is becoming clearer. Countries such as China, India, Russia, Brazil, Turkey, South Korea and Malaysia are enhancing their involvement in Africa and thus reconfiguring the continent's multifaceted international relations that were historically informed by colonialism, neo-colonialism and the

dictates of the Cold War. At the same time, the so-called “war on terror” has elevated Africa’s strategic significance in international security considerations.

In the context of all this, and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the OAU, it is appropriate to pose the question: whither Africa! Where will the continent be in another 50 years, in 2063? Africa not only needs to map out scenarios about where it wants to be in the medium- to long-term; it needs to do this proceeding from the premise that it is Africa’s own actions or omissions that will define its 50-year rendezvous.

In this period, Africa’s collective discourse has revolved around the notions of Pan-Africanism and an African Renaissance, as philosophical underpinnings to its endeavours. What is the relevance of these concepts?

From luminaries such as Marcus Garvey and WEB du Bois – with the latter asserting that the problem of the 20th Century would be about the colour-line<sup>1</sup> – to Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) and Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria), Pan-Africanism has been about the recognition of the common experience and common destiny of Africa’s people against colonialism and slavery, and for unity, independence and self-determination.

From Pixley ka Seme (South Africa) on the regeneration of Africa and a new and unique civilisation that is thoroughly spiritual and humanistic<sup>2</sup>; to Sheikh Anta Diop (Senegal) in his essays on culture and development<sup>3</sup> and Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), the African Renaissance has been conceptualised as rejecting the notion that Africans are exotic objects of others’ curiosity but that the people of the continent have immensely contributed to, and should by their own actions help to shape, human civilisation.

It is in this context that the continent should reflect on what the successor to the OAU, the African Union (AU), characterises as Agenda 2063. The notions of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance have not lost their relevance. But their inheritors are more than just fighters against what Africa does not like. Today’s generations are – and should in their mindset act as – architects of a new socio-economic

system in what should be an all-encompassing Continental Democratic Revolution.

The question though is whether the regeneration of the continent, signalled in a variety of ways over the past two decades, is sustainable! Do endogenous and exogenous conditions point in the direction of an accomplished Pan-African Renaissance by 2063?

To answer these questions, it would be critical to identify the key driving forces that have shaped Africa’s trajectory in the past 20 years.

In most regions of the continent, peace and stability have been attained. South Africa, the last bastion of white colonial domination, has been liberated. Debilitating conflicts in countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Liberia have been resolved.

“Already, parts of Africa are starting to experience such relocations as labour and other costs in Asia ramp up. For instance, a Chinese shoe maker, Huajian Group plans to build a manufacturing zone in Ethiopia that may generate \$4 billion of exports a year within a decade.”

In most African countries, a new corps of leaders has emerged; capable states are being built; law-governed systems are being forged; and democracy and citizen participation have improved. A critical element of this is the activism of the African intelligentsia and much of the middle strata, including the media.

These and other factors have contributed to higher rates of economic growth, coupled with a discernible improvement in people’s quality of life. According to the United Nations,

in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>4</sup>:

- the proportion of the working population with income of less than US\$1.25 a day decreased from 67% in 1998 to 58% in 2008
- primary education enrolment grew from 58% in 2000 to 74% in 2007 and this is increasingly reflecting gender balances
- under-five mortality rates declined from 165 deaths per 1 000 live births in 1990 to 118 in 2009 – about 20% in 20 years.

This is on the back of an economy in which average real GDP growth per capita has increased by 2.3% per annum between 1995 and 2009(5); trade with world has increased by some 200% since 2000; and foreign debt has declined by 25%<sup>6</sup>.

It is in this context that Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Christine Lagarde, acknowledged earlier this year that Africa’s emerging nations had become a driving force for world economic growth<sup>7</sup>. Her compatriot, France’s Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici was more direct about external self-interest: “It’s evident that China is more and more present in Africa... (French) companies that have the means must go on the offensive. They must be more present on the ground. They have to fight”<sup>8</sup>.

The *Economist*, which a few years ago designated Africa ‘a hopeless continent’, was by 2011 even more effusive in its optimism:

“From Ghana in the west to Mozambique in the south, Africa’s economies are consistently growing faster than those of almost any other region of the world. At least a dozen have expanded by more than 6% a year for six or more years. Ethiopia will grow by 7.5% this year, without a drop of oil to export. Once a byword for famine, it is now the world’s tenth-largest producer of livestock...”

Severe income disparities persist through much of the continent; but a genuine middle class is emerging. According to Standard Bank, which operates throughout Africa, 60m African households have annual incomes greater than \$3,000 at market exchange rates. By 2015, that number is expected to reach 100m—almost the

same as in India now.”<sup>9</sup>

If these are some of the driving forces that have helped shape Africa’s recent progress, what are the factors that inhibit faster movement? Among the insidious negative factors are issues of identity and control of resources that drive recurrent conflicts in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and the Central African Republic. Added to this is the failure to extend formal democracy to embrace genuine inclusivity, which, for instance, is nibbling at the outcome of the ‘Arab Spring’ in Tunisia and Egypt. Similarly, even in cases where conflicts have been resolved and formal democracy attained, economic growth in many countries is coupled with an accumulation regime that worsens inequality as rent-seeking elites amass wealth at the expense of their states and populations.

The fundamental question is whether these insidious negatives will overwhelm the positives going forward! While internal developments are fundamental, the answer to this question cannot be delinked from global developments.

Many positive global shifts have undergirded the rise of Africa. The high growth rates in China, India, Malaysia, Brazil, South Korea and other emerging economies have resulted in economic power and growth centres steadily shifting from the North. As a consequence of the thirst of these countries for Africa’s primary resources and their deliberate activism on the continent, we are starting to witness global economic decoupling and recoupling that, for instance, have resulted in China in 2012 surpassing the US as Africa’s largest trading partner(10); and growth correlation of 92% between Africa and China since 1999<sup>11</sup>.

Arvind Subramanian of the Peterson Institute argues:

*“Cyclically – that is, in the short run – everyone is coupled: if the US slows, so will China; and vice versa. That is a fact of interdependence. But the phenomenon of convergence suggests there is structural decoupling: in the medium to long term, the rise in living standards relative to that of the rich world depends mostly on what*

*developing countries themselves do and less on the external environment.”<sup>12</sup>*

Yet there have been many insidious negatives in the global arena, with profound implications for Africa.

Among these challenges is the economic crisis in Europe and North America which reflects the inability and unwillingness to tame the markets and stabilise the polities. The manner in which the political leadership in the United States of America has handled the threats of a fiscal cliff and sequestration reflects a political paralysis with major implications for the global economy. What the leader of the Social Democratic Party in Germany referred to as the victory of “two clowns”<sup>13</sup> in Italy’s

**“As shown in the cellphone industry including cellphone banking, Africa will also be able to leapfrog some of the stages through which other regions had to pass in their development trajectories.”**

recent elections reflects yet another deficit of leadership and the social distance within the European Union as technocratic template-based solutions are imposed with little regard to their impact on workers and the middle strata.

This period has also witnessed blatant interventionism to impose the diktat of NATO countries on parts of the continent, ignoring Africa’s own attempts at resolving the conflicts in countries such as Cote d’Ivoire and Libya. In addition, some of the “new actors” on the continent have evinced bad practices on issues such as workers’ rights and land grabs.

And so, in the build-up to 2063, will the positives overwhelm the negatives or vice versa – or will these continue to be in precarious balance?

Macro-projections are that, by 2050, the global economic pecking order will have China as the largest global economy, followed by the US, India, Brazil, Russia and Japan as the top 6 economies. However, at the politico-military level, the US will still be the dominant power, with its military strength currently greater than that of about 10 of the next powers combined. This is besides the dominance of the capitalist socio-economic system of which the US is the epicentre. It can thus be argued that, for most of the next 50 years, global relations will be characterised by primary unipolarity with secondary multipolar features – albeit with significant shifts towards multipolarity.

Another global trend which should intensify in the coming decades is the constant migration of production sites. China is already climbing up the manufacturing sophistication ladder and the current production sites such as Vietnam will steadily follow suit; and the multinationals will seek new locations. Already, parts of Africa are starting to experience such relocations as labour and other costs in Asia ramp up. For instance, a Chinese shoe maker, Huajian Group plans to build a manufacturing zone in Ethiopia that may generate \$4 billion of exports a year within a decade<sup>14</sup>.

Further, Africa’s infrastructure programme, which the Africa Development Bank says will require some US\$360-billion by 2040<sup>15</sup>, should continue apace. With this, as well as development of mining, agriculture and green technologies, the continent should experience major opportunities for industrialisation through backward and forward linkages. This will also be underpinned by the demographic dividend, an increase in numbers of employed people and the middle strata and urbanisation, with massive growth of consumer demand and ensuing opportunities for manufacturing. As shown in the cellphone industry including cellphone banking, Africa will also be able to leapfrog some of the stages through which other regions had to pass in their development trajectories.

Maybe this is a tad too optimistic?

What we do know, as shown over

the past 15 years, is that high rates of economic growth can be achieved – along with an improvement in quality of life indicators. In some scenario planning exercises, the middle-range storyline posits an Africa that in 2050 will collectively be where China is today: in terms of economic power, infrastructure development, manufacturing, extrication of millions out of poverty, as well as some of the spatial imbalances that China today experiences. Along the same lines, Arvind Subramanian asserts that, if the current pace of growth in Africa is maintained, “sub-Saharan Africa – and, indeed, 80 per cent of all countries – could in 50 years be in a situation comparable to that of Chile today.”<sup>16</sup>

The trajectory could be higher or even lower. And this will be conditional primarily on what Africans do. Some of the critical questions in this regard are:

- Will the capability and effectiveness of the African state, the quality of leadership and the activism of citizens be attained?
- Will formal democracy be deepened to include adept management of social contradictions, promotion of social inclusivity and forging of social compacts?
- Will there be preparedness across Africa to pool sovereignties in political and economic policy and praxis including regional and inter-regional trade – not so much in grand ideas of an African government but, as East Asia did, in mutually-beneficial osmosis?
- Will there be strategic acumen to manage changing economic power balances across the continent or will these changing balances lead to increased unhealthy competition and even conflict?
- Will non-state actors such as academics, researchers and activists in the media and the arts be afforded, or themselves capture, the space to act as midwives and nurturers of the Pan-African Renaissance?

To reiterate: how all this pans out in the coming 50 years will depend on the African people themselves.

However, we cannot altogether rule out the possibility of global ‘black swans’ exerting such a profound impact on humanity that Africa’s own

development is massively enhanced or circumscribed. For instance, a China that succeeds in breaking out of a middle-income trap, achieving higher levels of domestic consumption and moving further up the manufacturing sophistication ladder would have a positive influence on Africa’s growth and development.

On the other hand, failure on the part of humanity to address the challenges of global warming would redound negatively on the continent. And the ‘black swan’ of debilitating wars in parts of the globe cannot be entirely ruled out, given that in history, qualitative changes in global power balances have come along with increased international tensions and conflict. Does the sabre-rattling

“ A Pan-African renaissance will not come of its own accord. It requires foresight in leadership, activism of society and a renaissance of Africa’s ‘think industry’.”

from North Korea, the Sino-Japanese tensions and the US Pacific pivot presage such global disaster?

Africa is poised for a renaissance across all indicators of human endeavour; and it should develop its strategies taking into account a variety of possibilities on the continent and further afield. The Continental Democratic Revolution which should underpin a Pan-African Renaissance should be informed by a deliberate strategy to develop the continent’s productive forces, ensure inclusive economic growth and foster an environment in which the creative energy of Africa’s peoples finds free reign. Improvement in the condition of life of Africa’s people should entail attention to all aspects of human rights – political, economic, social, environmental and ‘informational’.

In relating to the world, the

continent should be inspired by the need to pursue the interests of Africa’s people, while at the same time ensuring the kind of diversity that transcends the erstwhile relations of colonialism and neo-colonialism. It should rebuff external efforts to divide, dominate and rule.

In Africa’s pre-colonial history, the continent enjoyed strong relations with Asia and the Middle East, as a natural consequence of geography. The strengthening of such relations should come naturally, as part of post-colonial geo-strategic normalisation; and it should not be seen as a threat to anyone. As this happens, the continent cannot afford to lower its guard on such tendencies among some of the “new actors” as backward practices in labour relations and mass importation of labour. Nor can Africa shirk its responsibility to ensure global security of supply of the resources it has in abundance.

A Pan-African renaissance will not come of its own accord. It requires foresight in leadership, activism of society and a renaissance of Africa’s ‘think industry’. In this regard, the successor to the Organisation of African Unity, the African Union should play a more active role particularly through bodies such as the AU Commission and the Pan-African Parliament. In partnership with the intelligentsia and the rest of civil society, these bodies can serve as critical continental thought-leaders, facilitators and monitors. ■

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## LINCOLN &amp; DJANGO


 Barack Obama, wearing a white shirt and blue tie, is shown from the waist up, smiling and waving his right hand. He is standing in front of a crowd of people, some of whom are visible in the background. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on Obama.
 

# Obama, Black America and Africa Quo Vadis

However and whenever Obama decides to turn his attention to Africa, the African-American challenge is to rekindle a pan-African vision that links its future in America to an African future mediated by South Africa's membership in BRICS.

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By Francis Kornegay

Metaphorically, the umbilical cord between Stephen Spielberg's *LINCOLN* and Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* encompasses history's umbilical linking of the Abraham Lincoln and Barack Obama presidencies and the journey of Black America from slavery to what seems a post-civil rights future in the twilight zone. Everything in between is like endless layers beneath the tip of an iceberg except that in different ways *LINCOLN* and *Django* do contain glimpses of much remaining to be brought to the surface in understanding the political history of the United States and the African-American cultural nation within it.

Unraveling this conundrum is compounded by complexities in trying to decipher where America is going in its contemporary relations with the rest of the world, Africa most of all during the second coming of the Obama presidency. That 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity underlines such an expectation. More on that later. For now, foregrounding the American background to this commemoration in the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation comes in for a major lift from exploring the wider historical significance of the Tarantino and Spielberg productions.

Given the stark difference in genre reflected in *LINCOLN* and *Django*, it would not be surprising if how they relate to one another is not readily apparent. This is especially so given the jarringly violent offering served up by Tarantino and his willing accomplices, Jamie Foxx and Samuel Jackson (to the chagrin of Spike Lee), in their rendition of the antebellum id to the ego of American 'exceptionalism' and its socio-racial discontents.

### The Exceptionalism that dares call its name

After all, this was the exceptionalism that our first Illinois president of the US, Abraham Lincoln, was sworn to dismantle in the synthesis of abolitionism and capitalist industrialism that gave birth to an emancipationist Republican party. It was Lincoln's victory over his own racism with the help of fugitive slave leader, Frederick Douglass, that

sealed his fate in a civil war triumph that cost him his life and an unfulfilled second term of Reconstruction at Ford's Theater, a death foretold in the vividness of his own dreams.

Of course the majesty of Spielberg's *LINCOLN* is in such sharp contrast to the retributionist violence of Tarantino's revenge classic that one is at pains not to go as far as prescribing *Django* as a mandatory compliment in any American studies programme. Nevertheless, the two films are joined at the hip in what they reveal about the nation-building of America and the black nation within it. As such, *LINCOLN* certainly is a must for anyone wanting to genuinely introduce themselves to the complexity of the American experience, one in which the global South and the global North intimately confronted one another in a still unfolding dialectic as 'white America' demographically fades into a majority-minority 'plurality nation.'

The antebellum nadir of racial slavery and its civil war aftermath entailed a veritable 'clash of civilizations.' This clash, to this day, continues to resonate beneath the surface of a resistant but declining 'Dixie' in an America inexorably moving toward a post-racial future wherein the party of emancipation was fated to trade places with the party of the slavocracy.

This is truly the stuff of a uniquely American exceptionalism that its most vocal proponents dare not confront. But violence is Tarantino's forte. What is problematic is that in its hybrid spaghetti western-like depiction of the gun-slinger as hero coming at a time when America has been emotionally wrenched into confronting gun violence as an out-of-control national epidemic, the bloodiness of *Django* almost deflects from the dehumanising brutality of the black experience under the lash of slavery – and the fact that its legacy lives on in the marginalisation of the African-American black male in spite of the presidential ascendance of Nina Simone's 'young, gifted and black' personified in Barack Obama as a reincarnated Lincoln.

### Inter-American blackness

But the violence of the inter-American slave regime and the counter-

violence of black resistance needs confronting in understanding how a triple dialectic between Amerindian, African and European has shaped the political, cultural and economic contours of a multicultural Western Hemisphere. The traumas of violence as the hand maiden of change in the Americas has wiped out much of our historical memory in racially motivated omissions and misinterpretations of what that bygone era was all about from the latter part of the 18th century on up to the conflagration of the American civil war and beyond.

The so-called Age of Revolution was not just an interplay between the American and French Revolutions but between the American, French and Haitian Revolutions. The overthrow of the slave regime in Saint Domingue check-mated Napoleonic expansionism in North America. This was to the everlasting benefit of a Louisiana Purchase that fleshed out the American slave power along the eastern sea board.

But in what was a forerunner of America's more recent attempts at overthrowing Castro's Cuba, the inheritors of the American and French revolutions succeeded in strangling the Haitian revolution in the crib of its infancy. Thus was born America's interventionist reflex in the non-West. It was a denouement that Haiti has never overcome in its chronic instability of state collapse and external intervention. Ironically this comes in the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) led by a Brazil that has a racial legacy all its own to come to terms with in its putative emerging market rise to aspirational great power status within BRICS.

Yet Haiti occupies a special place in the making of the Americas and as such, demands a special dispensation. That aside, the traumatic retributive violence of the Haitian upheaval sent shudders through the inter-American slavocracy. Tarantino's imaginings of a *Django* unchained is but the tip of the iceberg of nightmares that kept the antebellum aristocracy awake at night until the ever-present threat of incipient slave revolts became channelled into the Union army's civil war against the 'confederate states of America.'

### Black America's armed struggle

It should be understood that the American civil war doubled as a black liberation struggle against a slave power of expansionist intent (slavocracy's expansionism having been the main trigger of the civil war to begin with). The black soldiers of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) were organised into 175 regiments comprising 178,000 troops or one-tenth of the Union forces. (The US War Department, at the time had a Bureau of Colored Troops.) So it can never be said that African-Americans never fought for our freedom. The urban insurgent Sixties was not the first and only armed expression of black resistance in America. Ours was among the first of such struggles following the slave uprising in Saint Domingue.

This is where *LINCOLN* can be critiqued as being in Hollywood's inimical 'White Savior' genre. It has been pointed out elsewhere that it was "fugitive slaves who forced the slaveholders to face the alternative of surrendering to the North or surrendering to the Negro" and that without blacks in the Union army and about another 200,000 in supporting roles, the North might have lost the war or at best, "the white supremacist South would have remained as it is – slavery and all," none of which is remotely hinted at in *LINCOLN*.

Not only was the USCT a decisive factor in deciding the civil war, it completed the failed and abortive insurrections by Nat Turner, Denmark Vessey and Gabriel Prosser not to mention expanding this legacy to such black military geniuses as the Haitian vanguard of Toussaint L'Overture, Dessalines and Christophe, the Palmares resistance against the Portuguese in Brazil and *the first black president in North America, Mexican revolutionary, Vicente Guerrero* who abolished slavery in Mexico thereby setting in train the scenario of secession that saw Texas eventually end up in the US. Then there is the great Afro-Cuban revolutionary in Cuba's independence wars, Antonio Maceo and the exploits of the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II. They are the stuff of legend in the pantheon of African diaspora military exploits against white supremacy.

Yet white liberalism the world over likes to fancy blacks as forgiving and forgetting, 'grinning and bearing it' as Gil Scott Heron's *Amnesia Express* alludes to as a means of obliterating such historical episodes of shame. These are not unlike the threat perception that went with Martin Luther King to his untimely grave. At the time, King had become isolated by an establishment that did not take kindly to the militancy his anti-Vietnam war posturing and support for Muhammed Ali's martyrdom from the ring because Ali had nothing against the Viet-Cong who never called him 'nigger.' MLK had forgotten his less threatening 'place!' This is all conveniently forgotten in the national holiday of interracial reconciliation bearing his name.

The fact of the matter is that the postwar American establishment has never suffered signs of intellectual autonomy among African-Americans on foreign policy issues as was the forte of the likes of WEB DuBois, the father of pan-Africanism and founding UN diplomat, Ralph Bunch. The Uncle Tomism of the 'House Negro' performed so brilliantly by the very antithesis of such a character in Samuel Jackson has always been much preferred in the American politics of race to the 'angry black' of retribution against racial abuse by Jamie Foxx's antebellum version of Malcolm X. Yet it is a mistake to romanticise violence, either retributionist or revolutionary. Violence defies all moral justification, only to be rationalised as an unavoidable default outcome from breakdowns in non-violent means of conflict resolution or where survival mandates armed action.

This soliloquy into some of the subterranean wells running deep under the surface of black endurance may provide a glimpse into internalised constraints working against an Obama 'unchained' who, in a sense, must live out the legacy of his Illinois predecessor, Abraham Lincoln. As historical and contemporary bookends on the racial journey of the American democratic project, Obama and Lincoln are inextricably linked with Lincoln, in a sense, being Obama's burden in his quest for greatness as he contemplates

his legacy in an already transformative presidency. By the same token, Obama vindicates Lincoln's martyred legacy as truly the Great Emancipator.

### **Black America's Obama reprieve – and Africa?**

But where does this leave all black America and America's relations with the homeland of its ancestors? For black America, the presidential rise of Barack Obama has been something of a reprieve and rescue from isolation. Anti-black racism is so much 'American as apple pie' that all other non-white and non-Anglo minorities and immigrants, Africans included, feel that

“The so-called Age of Revolution was not just an interplay between the American and French Revolutions but between the American, French *and Haitian* Revolutions. The overthrow of the slave regime in Saint Domingue check-mated Napoleonic expansionism in North America.”

racism against African-Americans is part of their integrationist rites of passage into what passes for mainstreaming into America.

The parochialism of African-American ethnicity, however, tends to play into this dynamic in a manner that prompted a foreboding by Harold Cruse in his classic, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership* (Morrow, 1967): "What is called a racial struggle over civil rights is, in reality, the contention in America among several different ethnic groups, of which Anglo-Saxon Protestants and American Negroes are only two. However, among all the groups in contention

these two are the most crucial: The fate of all the others depends on how they resolve the undemocratic differences in American society. Moreover, since no other ethnic minority in America is so thoroughly committed to racial democratization, the Negro group's civil rights engagement is, plainly, the most active force for social change. However, it is evident that if the Negro leadership is hampered by deficient conceptualizing of American group reality, then the Negro movement will defeat itself in the long run. It will defeat itself by encouraging other unassimilated ethnic groups to turn against the Negro minority, in a pro-Anglo-Saxon Protestant 'racial' coalition."

Cruse was prescient. In the wake of MLK's April 1968 assassination, The Poor People's Campaign leading to the erection of 'Resurrection City' by his Southern Christian Leadership Conference fell apart in acrimony amongst the gaggle of Hispanic, Amerindian, Asian and poor whites who made up a rainbow coalition which Jesse Jackson never managed to reassemble. The subsequent GOP 'Southern Strategy' ushered in under President Richard Nixon aimed to do exactly what Cruse warned about except that post-Reagan, Republicans have moved so far right along a nativist and narrowly Christian nationalist path of extremism that other non-black minorities had nowhere else to go except to a heavily black-influenced Democratic party. The GOP has not been able to escape the extremist logic of the racism embedded in its southernisation.

This Republican cul-de-sac, combined with the demographic realignment in the American electorate, made it possible for an unlikely Barack Obama to reap the benefits of this historical shift and radically change the socio-racial and ethnic balance of forces at the national level of presidential elections. The rise of Obama opened space for resolving the bi-racial dialectic as preconditional to fulfilling a truly post-racial transition. Yet it remains to be seen if the Obama coalition can rescue the African-American ethnic group and cultural nation from its parochial tendencies

and into a longer-term multicultural alignment with other immigrants and minorities along with women and younger and more educated cohorts comprising the Democratic base.

Can they proactively generate an urban renaissance tied to a strategy for consolidating this base to a point that pushes rightist reactionary tendencies in American politics to the margins? Can African-Americans parley Obama's implicit community organising-based cultural nationalism in his all-American 'nation-building at home' exhortation into a truly national as opposed to a narrowly 'racial' integration agenda? In this regard, there are intriguing international implications and foreign policy-national security dimensions in play.

Africa, after all, has emerged as yet another front in the economic 'rise of the rest' whereas President Obama's understandable Asian focus has obscured the need for him to develop a tricontinental global South strategy with Africa as its geostrategic fulcrum. Meanwhile, the African-American cohort of an African diaspora including an emerging African immigrant community in the US needs to figure out how to restart its own economic outreach to the 'mother continent.' Herein lies a still-born agenda that never gained traction in the aftermath of South Africa's post-apartheid transition. Neither Africans nor African-Americans can wait on Obama in renewing this agenda's promise.

### **Toward a new pan-African compact between Africa and its diaspora?**

In the 50th anniversary year of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), it is hoped that Obama will balance his Indonesian-inspired Asia 'pivot' with a Kenyan-inspired African dimension while he is clearly intent on a global North revival revolving around his Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. If he is to become the truly 'Global President' that his Indian chronicler Dinesh Sharma touts him as being, he will have to stake his claim to being America's first pan-African president as well as its first Asia-Pacific president.

However and whenever Obama decides to turn his attention to Africa,

the African-American challenge is to rekindle a pan-African vision that links its future in America to an African future mediated by South Africa's membership in BRICS. However, any rekindling of such a vision in commemoration of the OAU's 50th anniversary must be accompanied by an historical reckoning between Africa and its diaspora in the Americas on the deficient African nationalist conceptualisation of what was required to overcome the partitionist legacy of Berlin. Instead, what resulted were narrow nationalist deviations in retreat from pan-Africanism, culminating OAU's 1963 founding. Let's be clear: commemorating the 50th anniversary of the OAU amounts to commemorating its ratification of Berlin! For the pan-Africanism rooted in the African diaspora's alienation in the slavery and post-slavery racial regimes in the New World was transformed into an accommodation with the colonial partitioning of Africa as the very basis of the OAU.

In effect, the Africanisation of pan-Africanism into different renditions of African nationalism was but in reality, the Africanising of colonialism as the neocolonial settlement ratified in Addis. The African Union as the OAU's successor has yet to overcome this legacy except through the commitment it and its member states have unevenly taken to move toward regional and continental integration; political as well as economic integration is the only means by which the pan-African compact between Africa and its diaspora can be restored in fulfilment of an authentic decolonisation that atones for the 'original sin' as well: the diaspora's roots in Africa's partnership with Europe in the transatlantic slave trade.

In practical political terms, this means building constituencies of support amongst immigrant Africans in the diaspora as well as those of the historical diaspora (born of the slave trade) in support of Africa's regional economic communities (RECs) as pillars of the AU and its development agenda. African diaspora constituencies of 'Friends of the RECs' can serve as vehicles for mobilising support for continental integration through the strengthening of the RECs and their infrastructural and capacity-building

governance initiatives. As a pan-African renewal project, such an initiative goes well beyond a more dynamic and strategic but ultimately conventional Africa policy one would hope to see forthcoming from President Obama during his second term. (Even here, however, there is room for strategic imagination in adopting the East African Community as a model in fashioning a US-Africa integrationist policy toward continental renewal.)

### **The African diaspora's pan-American corollary**

But there is also an inter-American corollary to this pan-African equation that must be attended to, given the hemispheric scope of Africa's diaspora in the Americas. Thus, Obama and black America must fashion a pan-American vision as a corollary to the 'Black Atlantic' implications of a pan-Africanism balancing a northern transatlantic economic recovery factoring in Europe with the needs of the global South. Here there is urgent need for an endgame concluding the anti-communist cold war against Cuba.

Havana's isolation prevents an inter-American renaissance that will not only benefit African-Americans but Diasporans throughout the hemisphere. There needs to be established an *Inter-American Congress of African Diaspora Communities* inclusive of major Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Cuban as well as African-American and Afro-West Indian investment in advancing a post-racial multiculturalist project of inter-hemispheric integration linked with Africa's restoration as the centre of humanity.

The inter-American struggle against the legacies of slavery, therefore, is still in play. It began with Toussaint L'Overture in Haiti, followed by the revolutionary Mexican presidency of Vicente Guerrero. It is now in its Obama phase as the contemporary 'book end' to Lincolnian Emancipation and its aftermath in a struggle that continues into the 21st century and includes the unfinished liberation of Africa. LINCOLN and the unchaining of Django are reminders of this past which inescapably is the past as prologue. The Global African future continues to unfold. ■

## THE OAU AND THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Lest we forget we are African!

South Africa cannot hope for a better life for its people while its neighbours live under conditions of poverty, underdevelopment and war. This explains why the primary focus of the ANC-led government in Africa has been on development issues and peace and security.

By Chris Landsberg and Malcolm Ray

Five decades separated the African continent's first liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC), from the emergence of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. A mere decade since the end of apartheid had seen the supersession of the OAU by the African Union (AU) in 2002. Although the birth of the ANC and OAU were decades apart, their significance has yet to acquire historical meaning. If we may denominate their historical significance by an era, we see the formation of the ANC at the very moment the British empire had formally constituted a white protectorate in South Africa under the Union Government - more than three decades before the rise of Afrikaner nationalist government - as

a direct response to the condition of coloniality that had arisen with the retreat of formal empire from the African continent, and eventually given birth to the OAU. The OAU, it may well be argued, was thus the institutional expression of the ANC's Pan-Africanism.

Indeed, well before 25 May 1963, when the OAU was established, the ANC reached out to Africa and fellow Africans just as Africa embraced it and other liberation movements during their hour of need. Thus, the Freedom Charter of 1955 stated: "The people of the Protectorates - Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland - shall be free to decide for themselves their own future". With respect to the continent, the Charter proclaimed:

"The right of all people of Africa to independence and self-governance shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close cooperation!"

Put another way, if we denominate the ANC and OAU by an era rather than single moment in time, we see the birth of the OAU and its succession by the AU following the rise and fall of internal colonialism in South Africa and its equivalent on the continent, neo-colonialism. In multiple ways, then, the struggle for liberation in South Africa and the African continent can be said to be united, historically, by its epochal appeal to the Pan-Africanist vision. Certainly, no one doubts, fifty years after the formation of the OAU, that we are today living through an era in which the liberation of South Africa in 1994 has in a sense more explicitly dispatched the historical mission of the ANC and OAU to the AU and the revivalist impulse of the latter's mission on the African continent.

From a historical perspective, 1994, the year South Africa finally achieved freedom from white minority rule, revived an era of Pan-Africanism as a generative source of the economic renewal and culture of Africity begun by the ANC a century ago and the OAU 50 years later.

As we mark the fiftieth year since the formation of the OAU, it is only fitting that we step back to our distance-giving vantage point in 1961, the moment of the assertion of the Republic of South Africa as an internal colony of white minority domination. This was one of the most parochial societies on earth, and it simultaneously looked towards, and yearned to be, part of the West, not Africa. Successive racist regimes had imprinted onto the psyche of South Africans the scurrilous idea that 'Africa' was a continent to be despised and loathed; an inferiority complex was associated with Africa and Africans, and an imagined superiority was associated with the West and whiteness.

Little did many South Africans appreciate that Africa and Africans were at the forefront of their struggle for freedom and liberation. Apart from individual state actions and bi-lateral efforts, Africans displayed solidarity and camaraderie with the liberation struggle through key liberation and Pan-African

institutions like the OAU, organisations which many South Africans know little about, and care even less. Yet the liberation of South Africa is emblematic: the triumph of democracy exemplifies and symptomises precisely the Pan-Africanist object of critique the apartheid government opposed; the sense of triumph over a form of rule that has yet to reinscribe more fully the truth of the OAU as the agential modality in which the vitality of the national liberation struggle lived as a Pan-Africanist ideal.

Let us take a leaf out of the OAU and the African solidarity movement's annals during the ANC's exile years before returning to the historical significance of the OAU today.

### African solidarity during the age of exile

There is no denying the historicity of Pan-Africanism as a modality for mobilisation during the national liberation struggle. After the banning of the ANC in 1960 and the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), in 1961, many Africans opened their doors to the military wing and reinforced their comradeship with the South African struggle. So intertwined were the struggles on the African continent that MK cadres benefitted from training in armed struggle in countries like Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Tanzania, Angola and Morocco, and even fought alongside progressive forces in Angola and Zimbabwe.

It is important to point out here that different South African liberation movements had to fight for the support of different African countries. While some supported the ANC, others pledged their support to the Pan-African Congress (PAC). Some supported Marxist-Leninist South African organisations, while others supported those that were more Pan-Africanist in their outlook.

As it turned out, the ANC gradually won over the majority of African countries due to the escalation of the struggle at home, the actions of MK and the tireless efforts of charismatic leaders like OR Tambo to build the fourth pillar of its struggle: the "international isolation of South Africa". Eventually, the work of the ANC was

greatly enhanced by the hard-won independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

But the conventional assumption is still maintained that, in reality, the ANC had been prosecuting its national liberation struggle from rear bases offered by African countries. Yet the OAU, together with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other Third World states, were in the vanguard of efforts to, firstly, isolate the white-ruled state, and, secondly, democratise the *pariah* state. Seen from this point of view, we are no longer talking about the enlightened rationalism of African nationalists in the ANC per se. As a first approach, one might single out three processes as decisive for the ANC's Pan-Africanism:

- South Africa's cultural and geographic commonality with the rest of the continent;
- South Africa's ostracism as a crucial mobilising platform within the OAU for the ANC; and
- the 'outward' foreign policy of apartheid governments since John Vorster's government, and the consequent encroachments on the sovereignty of neighbouring African

“There is no denying the historicity of Pan-Africanism as a modality for mobilisation during the national liberation struggle.”

countries.

There must then have been another weighty factor, besides armed struggle and internal mobilisation, that typically helped to lend impetus to the ANC-led national liberation movement. We have termed this factor a nationally relevant Pan-Africanism – in other words, a struggle waged by the OAU for decolonisation in which the ANC was the principle modality in South Africa. It covered four areas of isolation: the diplomatic, economic, military and socio-cultural. As South Africa became

a leper state, so the OAU prioritised the self-determination and equality of African peoples.

If we see this specific historicity as the central element of the ANC's struggle for national liberation, the corollary, in a continental sense, was the push for self-determination by the OAU as the highest institutional expression of Pan-Africanism. Indeed, examples of the OAU being at the forefront of initiatives to intervene against apartheid abound. It campaigned for sanctions, ostracism, international propaganda and armed struggle against apartheid. The objectives of this campaign were very clear in its intent: securing democracy in South Africa by bringing "...an end to the illegal government of a settler minority". Not only did the OAU set out to discredit and de-legitimise the white minority regime, it also sought to legitimise in its place national liberation movements.

The OAU had done more than give material support to this "government in exile". It called into existence a Liberation Committee in the "Service of the Liberation of Africa" and established a "Special Fund for the Liberation of African Territories still under Colonial and Racist Rule". In 1969, the OAU's "Lusaka Manifesto" expressed itself clearly on the issue in Southern Africa. "One of the objectives of liberation", the Manifesto vowed, "is we can neither surrender nor compromise. We have preferred and we still prefer to achieve it without physical violence. We would prefer to negotiate rather than kill...But while peaceful progress is blocked...in southern Africa, we have no choice but to give the people of those territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggle against their oppressors."

Convinced that economic coercion would be crucial in forging "a rapid and positive change in South Africa", the OAU appealed to its member states and allies in other parts of the world to "cut all their trade links" and apply a "strict and total oil embargo" against the "fascist and racist regime". The OAU appealed for Afro-Arab solidarity and co-operation to ensure the strictest implementation of the oil embargo, specifically targeting Ecuador, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia,

Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. As oil producing countries, these states were all expected by the OAU to lead the charge of imposing an oil embargo against apartheid South Africa.

Years later, the six African states of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe took their camaraderie against apartheid, colonialism and white domination to a new strategic level when they regarded themselves as being at the “frontline” of “the struggle against the racist Pretoria regime”. So much so that the “frontline states” sought to maintain a solid front that was able to wear down the apartheid regime to the point that it yielded on the major demand of black majority rule.

In reaction to the 1976 student revolt and the murder in custody of Black Consciousness leader Bantu Steven Biko, the OAU was once again at the forefront of calls for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. It is in the aftermath of these events that the former president of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, urged the international community to pursue a more comprehensive isolation of the South African regime. Given its steadfast commitment to the self-determination of African peoples, the OAU was emphatic that the apartheid regime “had no right to represent the people of South Africa”, and it annointed the liberation movements as the “sole authentic representatives of the overwhelming majority of the South African people”.

After ‘Rhodesia’ became liberated in 1980, and after March of that year when an independent Republic of Zimbabwe came into existence, regional states were even more militant in their opposition to apartheid. Thus was apartheid South Africa’s project of creating a buffer zone of friendly states in southern Africa dealt a severe blow. On 1 April 1980, less than one month after the election in Zimbabwe, a summit meeting of nine southern African countries in Lusaka decided to form the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). Far from acting as a shield for apartheid, SADCC sought to expose and isolate apartheid South

Africa, vowing to lessen dependence on the Republic and promote regional development, even at the cost of Pretoria’s aggressive destabilisation campaign in the region.

In 1984, the OAU Heads of State and Government summit labelled the hawkish P. W. Botha’s “so-called internal reforms” nothing more than “...the denationalisation of the black majority in order to preserve apartheid”. Eight years after SADCC’s creation, the ANC, OAU and SADCC all proved that they stood for progressive values as they openly embraced a “pro-negotiations” stance. The ANC formulated its *Constitutional Principles* of 1988 and *Harare Declaration* of 1989, backed by African companionship and thus endorsed by the OAU as well as the UN and other international organisations.

“ While some supported the ANC, others pledged their support to the Pan-African Congress (PAC). Some supported Marxist-Leninist South African organisations, while others supported those that were more Pan-Africanist in their outlook. ”

These became strategic documents which committed the movement to a future South Africa that was non-racial, non-sexist, unified and independent. Both these strategic documents reinforced the ANC’s positions during the negotiations process which led to a free and democratic South Africa in 1994, and the adoption of one of the world’s most progressive constitutions in 1996.

#### **From liberation movement to governing party**

That was then. Fast forward to 2003. To hear a new generation of AU leaders tell it then, since the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-91 and apartheid in 1994, the biggest challenges have been the economic revival within

integrated African economies and the creation of a continental geo-political architecture. Yet insitutional memory seems to have lapsed and many in South Africa have not grasped the fact that the Pan-Africanist impulses that stirred AU leaders like Thabo Mbeki were simply a reawakening of hope after decades of isolation during apartheid. It’s an object lesson Mbeki and others had mastered with ease in exile. After decades working besides fellow Africans in the OAU, Mbeki had become mindful of how ill-considered self-interest could cause countries to slide into narrow economic nationalism and stagnation.

Part of the problem today, fifty years after the OAU’s birth, is that after years in gestation, moves by founders of the AU to revive the African continent have been stalled. Certainly, since the introduction of the New Economic Partnership for Africa’ Development (NEPAD) as the AU’s economic blueprint, not nearly enough has been done to implement the sweeping reforms recommended by the document and the AU’s founding manifesto. Granted, the AU’s manifesto for social cohesion and economic revival could hardly be expected to be implemented overnight. But these days, we seem to be opening up ourselves to changes that some of our actions are motivated by self-interest - as in the case of the Central African Republic.

Unarguably, the AU and its institutions have added flesh to a Pan-Africanist integration ideal. Yet such noble initiatives may very well be debilitated by historical amnesia – a failure to disinherit entirely and thereby transcend the pariah status – now transposed as ‘hegemony’ – of the apartheid legacy and instead embrace the ANC’s history in the African continent.

Now that the ANC is in government, it should take a lesson from the decades of African solidarity and continue to struggle for “Peace and Friendship” in Africa and with Africans. South Africa is duty-bound to give real and meaningful expression to the idea expressed in the Freedom Charter that “we will have a South Africa which will live in peace with its neighbours...”.

To that effect, the ANC government has committed itself to continental solidarity and strong party-to-party relations. As the international solidarity posture of post-apartheid South Africa evolved under the leadership of the ANC, several themes emerged. The strategic focus of the ANC-led government, for one, was squarely on Africa and the many challenges that have prevented the continent from realising its full potential. Beginning with the presidency of Nelson Mandela, Africa became the centrepiece of the foreign policy of the new South Africa. Mandela's successor, Thabo Mbeki, became a leading champion of what became known as the "African Renaissance" – a movement that cuts across governments, regional intergovernmental organisations, and civil society, whose objective is to take responsibility for the destiny of the African continent. By 2002, this movement transformed the OAU, established primarily as a movement for decolonisation, into a new continental body, the AU, with the purpose of driving the development agenda of the continent and eradicating poverty and wars.

#### **Lest we forget our Pan-African heritage**

There is also an historical consideration at play here. Lest we forget that the ANC was formed as a Pan-African movement, the philosophy behind the ANC's emphasis on Africa in the foreign policy of the post-apartheid government did not emerge out of the blue but had been grounded in the tradition of African solidarity that found expression in the OAU. It is certainly the case, contrary to various critiques that have been advanced lately, that the ANC does not see South Africa, with its comparatively more developed economy in Africa, in isolation from the rest of the continent. Here the reality behind the miasma is relatively straightforward. To the ANC, South Africa's present situation and that of its future are inseparably linked to that of the African continent. South Africa cannot hope for a better life for its people while its neighbours live under conditions of poverty, underdevelopment and war. This

explains why the primary focus of the ANC-led government in Africa has been on development issues and peace and security.

To be sure, South Africa, together with its African partners, has invested enormous amounts of political, financial and human resource capital in the establishment of formations like the AU and programmes like NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). It is axiomatic, then, that as part of its heritage South Africa should take the lead in reclaiming and strengthening these entities to serve the common African interest.

Having already placed Africa at the centre of its foreign policy, the ANC government is now challenged to ensure that its international engagements make the case for Africa and seek to advance African interests in multilateral fora, in bi-lateral engagements, and in cross-

**“We have termed this factor a nationally relevant Pan-Africanism – in other words, a struggle waged by the OAU for decolonisation in which the ANC was the principle modality in South Africa.”**

continental engagements. So when South Africa engages the industrialised North, it ought to advance African interests rather than engage these powers in manners that serve their interests. It goes without saying that South Africa cannot hope to place Africa at the centre unless it is willing to contest the hegemony of the North in the international system. When the Republic's foreign policy states that it seeks to transform institutions of global governance such as the United Nations and the Bretton Woods bodies, it should do so informed by the rationale that Africa's voice and interests have to be advanced. Even when it engages formations from the South, such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the G77

plus China, IBSA, NAASP, and of course BRICS, South Africa is challenged to place Africa at the centre of its engagements and interactions. Seeking strategic partnerships with countries from the South and formations like BRICS should be done on the basis of a clear and unambiguous answer to the question: how will Africa's interests be served?

#### **Actions, South Africa, speak louder than words!**

In conclusion, it may well be asked: how indeed might Africa's interests be served? The basic precondition of all progressive movements – yesterday and today – is a breakdown of the ideas and institutions of the old order, and of the legitimacy that sustained it. In the case of the OAU's successor, the AU, this hiatus has been combined with a dissolution of old anti-colonial bonds and the threat of widespread social decline, generating popular distress on the African continent. But in this respect, a crucial element is that old tensions that coincided with post-colonial struggles have been given new meaning by the strategic thrust of the AU towards continental renewal. It is for the institutions and ideas – past and present – to add flesh to these new impulses towards continental revival.

As an economic powerhouse on the African continent, South Africa can either facilitate or scupper effective remedies against the dangers of what some have termed coloniality. Since 1994, the ANC-led government had pledged to show solidarity with fellow Africans, just as it had benefitted from eight decades of continental comradeship. But as the cliché goes, talk is cheap. One hundred years after the formation of the ANC, and almost 20 years into its hard-won freedom and democracy, it is crucial that the ANC government's stated commitment to the transformation of the continent – for "a better Africa" – does not end up becoming mere rhetoric. This pledge will have to be backed by deeds and actions. Translating government's pro-Africa statements into actions, and placing the emphasis on execution and implementation, President Zuma, is the key. ■

**WANTED**

# A New Type of Leadership



Traditional state-centric approaches to dealing with important developments have become obsolete. New conceptual tools and approaches are called for to grapple with the reality of proto states and their leadership in the emerged political landscape.

By Ademola Araoye

As a result of the geo-political transformations in the whole of Africa, especially south of the Sahara, many simmering conflicts remain under the radar. Due to deft public relations management, many a crisis incurring incalculable human and material costs, such as in the Casamance, has faded from global consciousness. The unremitting blood bath in the Niger Delta is consigned to obscure segments of global narratives. Slavery in Mauretania is a mere underreported snippet of news. The rampage of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, the Janajaweed militia in South Sudan, Darfur and the fringes of

Tchad, and a legion of such organised chaos elements clutter the political landscape.

All these amorphous groups and elements, rather unfortunately with some justification, arrogate to themselves some tenuous claims to absolute control of significant swathes of territory - within and along the outer fringes of conventional states. These enclaves have lives of their own, even as they survive as proxies for important state actors in the neighbourhood. As a result, the concrete existence of real proto states surviving along with and in close juxtaposition with conventional states, has been consolidated beyond

a shade of reasonable doubt in the African political firmament. They have become quasi-legitimate, even if despised, stakeholders, and unwanted but inevitable interlocutors in international life. Their engagements transcend the battle field where they first stamp their presence. In no time, navigating and exploiting the spaces around them, they foist their credentials as validated voices in regional and international diplomacy on their host states and international actors. These proto states rub shoulders with run of the mill sovereign states in their immediate environment. In effect the basic assumption of a

normal state-system is invalidated in this environment and critical local actors have a perfect understanding and, more importantly, appreciate the import of this reality. In the face of this conundrum, calls have been made for the re-conceptualisation of the African state, authority and power<sup>1</sup>. In this setting traditional state-centric approaches to dealing with important developments have become obsolete. New conceptual tools and approaches are called for to grapple with the reality of proto states and their leadership in the emerged political landscape.

For ease of conceptual clarity, it is necessary to delineate the proto state from the concept of quasi state coined by Robert Jackson to describe those states which,

*despite the recognition of other states and international institutions within the global system, nonetheless often lacked 'substantial and credible statehood by the empirical criteria of classical positive international law. Established states enjoyed what Jackson described as 'positive sovereignty': they had governments which exercised effective dominion over their peoples and territories, and they were capable of defending themselves, on their own or with allies, against external threats. Over time, they generally built up a level of legitimacy which helped both to demarcate their peoples and territories from others and to assure the stability and effectiveness of their domestic political systems. The 'negative sovereignty' of the quasi state, on the other hand, rested to a considerable extent on international recognition<sup>2</sup>.*

Jackson's quasi state would refer to more than 80% of the post-colonial states that populate the African states system. Elsewhere, in a typology to capture the evolutionary trajectory of the Westphalian state that has led to a revolutionary repudiation of the central tenets and attributes of the Westphalian state concept and given birth to the Post Modern state from an earlier Classic Modern state, the post-colonial state is distinguished from the heuristic Westphalian State. In these differentiations, the classic modern state is represented by the

United States by virtue of its continuing fixated attachment to a puritanical and undiminished sovereignty. The evolved Post Modern State, comprising of advanced states that formed the first cluster of the classic modern states in Europe, is the high water mark at which states begin to repudiate some of the central tenets of the Westphalian concept and of the classic modern state. Their sovereignty as states has become negotiable and their societies have developed multiple identities in the pursuit of transnational values that transcend or are contrary to the immediate interests of the old nation states. Finally, there are the pre-Westphalian entities such as Afghanistan under the Taliban which are considered throwbacks to the

**“The true culprits are the perpetrators of a dangerous myth in international and African power circuits who impede negotiated settlement, reform, and the restructuring of the floundering African state, or even the outright liquidation of the killing fields that they call sovereign states.”**

ecclesiastic communities pre-dating 1648. The proto state referred to in this discourse results from the very weaknesses of entities that Jackson refers to as quasi states. Proto states are crudescent political entities that often play overtly in the global system as unwanted intrusions into the scheme of things. They are denied even the negative sovereignty of Jackson, but have a firm presence in the consciousness of the international community. At the local level, they control territory and are involved in the diplomatic life of the larger

universe of the quasi states of their immediate intermestic environment, in particular in negotiations with the paradoxical mandate of ensuring their dismantlement. The records reflect the capacity of proto states to survive. Jonas Savimbi's control of more than a third of the territory of Angola for over two decades; Charles Taylor's over greater Liberia with its capital in Gbarnga for a decade; and later the capture of the formal Liberia state and the Forces Nouvelles in Cote d'Ivoire exemplify this longevity.

The rise of proto states in the African political firmament is therefore the logical consequence of the fictional character of the post-colonial state and its inability to consolidate its hegemonic control of political space through effective penetration, entailing control of peoples, winning the loyalty of the people for the new state and developing strong political institutions. The negative sovereignty on which the states rested could only be a temporary device for easing the passage of 'new states' into the international order<sup>3</sup>. Over time such states were expected either to make good their claims to sovereignty, or else their inadequacies would be revealed. The emergence of the proto state resulting from the continuous unravelling of the state and the state system constituted by the quasi state informs of the heavy odds against the implantation of the strange concept of the nation state in the traditional setting where clearly defined social systems of organisation were evolving. As Clapham further notes, the regimes of these quasi states in Africa could only be sustained as long as they were able to supply benefits to their protectors at a price which they were prepared to pay.

The evolution of the global international system has removed this cover that gave a veneer of external legitimacy to the quasi state. Without domestic legitimacy and increasingly deprived of this external cover, the states began to disintegrate. Where the people were able to talk about a new dispensation in national conferences in the post cold war era as in the Republic of Benin and Congo Brazzaville, the states avoided imploding. In every state that had a long period of one

party state or a long period of one man rule that did not go for a conference, civil war ensued: as in Liberia following the end of the 150 years of Americo-Liberian hegemony and in the death of Houphouët Boigny in Cote d'Ivoire after almost four decades of the rule of the Parti Democratique de Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI). In both countries, proto states emerged to challenge the legitimacy of the old quasi state.

The grudging accommodation afforded proto states and their agents, that our fixated lexicon and antiquated conceptual systems persist in categorising as rebels, around the table by the tested and tired system, inform that the rules and protocols of the game that nations in these parts play have changed in the post cold war era. And nowhere have these changes been more manifest than in Central and West Africa. No major conflict in Africa in the post cold war era, from Sierra Leone, through to the newly emerged narco-state of Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Casamance, Sudan, Tchad, Mali and even Somalia since the fall of the Berlin Wall has been purely domestic. All have been largely intertwined with complex transnational affinities in their immediate sub region. In this new era, armed hostilities neither break out simply on account of internal developments nor also on account of the poverty of the people! This may seem a sacrilegious assertion here, but it is the rude and important fact, even in the face of the grinding poverty in Africa.

Conflicts are not purely domestic: not in Guinea Bissau where armed hostilities were instigated in 1998 by the controversy over the way forward with the historic relations between the military dominated hegemonic party PAIGC, which was undergoing internal decay, with the Movement for the Development of the Casamance (MFDC) in the Senegalese province of the same name. Fifty per cent of the fighting cadres of the Guinea Bissau army were Casamacaíses who had fought in the revolutionary war that defeated the Portuguese military in one of the most brutal struggles for liberation in West Africa. Not in well-endowed Cote d'Ivoire, where 90% of

the coupists of September 2002 were Burkinabes and a major issue was the legitimacy of the Ivorian identity of a vast segment of society. This crisis of national identity and integration was expressed in the refusal of the Ivorian establishment to recognise the claims to Ivorian nationality of a prominent citizen of the country who was aspiring to the Presidency. He was treated as a Burkinabe, even when he had been Prime Minister under the founding father of the Ivorian nation. The economy of crisis ridden Cote d'Ivoire's is 400% that of Senegal. Not in Liberia where the three major warring factions – the NPFL, the LURD and the MODEL – were formed, financed as well as armed in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

**“The concept is revealing of the very lazy, unimaginative and limited vision of the mercantilist attitudes of Africa’s discredited leadership.”**

In 1980, when the slide to conflict effectively began, Liberia's per head capital of \$950.00 was easily one of the highest in the sub region. Conflict has therefore struck in the richest and the poorest countries in Africa. Notwithstanding the undoubtedly significant impact of economic factors on conflict, it is necessary to begin a serious interrogation of the very concept and expression of the post-colonial African state to come to a determination of the real sources of conflict.

The post-colonial state has to be deconstructed and somehow de-validated in order to begin to reconstruct the foundations for peace. There is palpable tension in the confounding realities in society and the phantom state that has been validated by the myth of an international legitimacy. The practical implications of this persistent and convenient myth are manifest all over

Africa. See the Niger Delta, South Sudan, Darfur, Congo Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, not to talk of Somalia. The unabating clamour for a sovereign conference of Nigeria's ethnic nationalities, which is championed by the very erudite Octogenarian who moved the motion for Nigeria's independence, is an eloquent testimony of this tension. In this scenario, the merchants of death are not the poor underfed opportunistic profiteers of chaos mining a paltry ounce of gold in the absence of an effective state who are vilified on international air waves every day. They are not even the child soldiers whose childhoods are stolen forever. The true culprits are the perpetrators of a dangerous myth in international and African power circuits who impede negotiated settlement, reform, and the restructuring of the floundering African state, or even the outright liquidation of the killing fields that they call sovereign states.

In the contemporary African state and states system, the scale and nature of tensions are often influenced by the structure of relations and interaction among forces that populate the shared social and geo-political spaces. These forces include states, proto states and transnational societies of various hues with stakes that they consider legitimate to protect in the floundering micro sub divisions of the macro sub-regional geo-political space. The structure of these interactions can be competitive/adversarial or collaborative, but always involves the relative capacity to project power vis-à-vis other interlocutors in that space. If relations among interacting state and non-state actors alike are adversarial, the environment will necessarily be volatile, and conflict among constituent elements in one state or proto state or between any two forces will attract key allies that may include transnational communities.

The implication of this is the transformation of the canvass that the international business of managing Africa's conflict has to deal with. A second implication is that in this intermestic environment, the character of regimes in second and third party states, relations among the transnational communities with

competing claims and agendas which may define the undercurrents of the structure of relations among them especially where they share contiguous borders, are significant predictors of conflict in neighbouring states. They also provide early indicators of looming instability of the sub-region. Also conflicts generated in intermestic environments tend to spread fast across international frontiers. The structure of the ensuing conflict, among unlike units with a range of confusing structures of relations, can at best be only described as amorphous. The hostilities are not mediated by any known international protocols either in terms of the conduct of the war or the protection of unarmed civilians, including women or children. International rules of engagement or the Geneva Law of War requires a certain structure in the war itself to function effectively. While there is limited room for the international actors to try to monitor the conduct of war in an intermestic scenario, the more structured and formalised the military formations in hostilities are, the greater the room to manoeuvre.

The more unstructured the rag tag militia is, the less room there is to moderate its conduct in battle. There is always a focus of international accountability with formal armies of internationally recognised states. In advanced proto states, such as the UNITA enclave that existed within the legitimate state of Angola for over three decades, the putative head of state may be held accountable. This is more so if the proto state eventually succeeds in vacating the power of the state sovereign. Charles Taylor and Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh come to mind. Among non-state actors, there is no such acknowledged focal point and their kind of war is unlimited and unmediated by any civilised protocols. This has been the situation in West Africa, Central Africa and the Lake region, the Horn as well as in the Sudan-Darfur-Tchad-Kenya-Somalia conflict axis. These regions are suffused with proto states in control of significant swathes of territory with the support of, and in quasi public interaction with, neighbouring states that offer them more than just military

support to include critical diplomatic leverage.

These conflicts in these peculiar universes populated by states with limited penetrations of their usually vast expanse of territories that provide opportunities for non-state actors to thrive at limited costs, have intermestic attributes that derive from the unique character of their environments. When the state fails to manage the challenges of the high salience of the intermesticity of their respective environments, a conflict may be sparked. Such conflicts are often intractable because there are transnational stakeholders that may explicitly declare their interests or simply egg on their proxy proto state actors. The logic of the intermesticity, as witnessed in the Kabila Pa

**“The archaic conceptual tools applied in the mass media reflecting attitudes to the Laurent Nkundas betray the unfortunate lag in popular appreciation of the transformed nature of the conflict environment in Africa.”**

insurgency against the Mobutist Zaire, that has famously been dubbed Africa's first world war, was to impose on states the imperative to act in conjunction with non-state actors in alliances that they could not escape. That same logic accounts for the facility with which the current war between Kabila Jr's Congo and the Laurent Nkunda's Tutsi Congolese proto state has attracted neighbouring state actors. As with Kabila Senior's AFDL's successes, Nkunda's Tutsi proto state may yet vacate the sovereign rights of Kabila Jr. This would be a recipe for chaos as international forces, like those of France, are likely to be sensitive to this overt takeover of the DRC.

As a result of its peculiar evolution, the post-colonial African states system is unlike the conventional state system with like units. Actors in this kind of state environment are composed of unlike units jostling for pre-eminence in a near Hobbesian state. A first and dominant group of acting units arrogate to themselves the fiction of being conventional states. This status is largely validated by the continuous recognition of that status by elite actors in the global system. A second group comprises of emerged proto states with varying longevity that is a function of how the situation in the intermestic environment evolves, outright rebels and often-times chaos elements all interacting with conventional states in a peculiar dynamic that is yet to be systematically fathomed into the management of conflict.

The archaic conceptual tools applied in the mass media reflecting attitudes to the Laurent Nkundas betray the unfortunate lag in popular appreciation of the transformed nature of the conflict environment in Africa. The danger is that this attitude obfuscates reality and renders more challenging the task of designing tools and approaches to conflict management that are based on the essential realities of the transformed configurations in the confused theatre of the post-colonial state system. It may be recalled that in defence of Mobutu, Morocco went to battle to support the embattled defunct Mobutist *Forces Armées du Zaire (FAZ)* with UNITA - the Savimbi led proto state - in tow. On the other side were the Ugandan-Rwanda-Angolan MPLA forces fighting alongside the Kabila Pa forces. The presence of the unconventional non-state entities interacting with state actors in the political landscape, the leverage that they have acquired, including the historically proven capacity to transform themselves into legitimate states by vacating the powers of the host states in the long term, represents a serious indictment of the main philosophical planks on which interventions in African crises rest. Laurent Nkunda, like Jonas Savimbi of UNITA before him, has come to personify the nemesis of the dangerous good intentioned, but highly controversial, intervention,

of the international community. A second important factor is the structure of intervention and the ineffectual character of the tools of intervention fashioned in the fecund minds of extra-African experts and effectively sold to the good natured financiers of their twenty first century *mission civilatrice* adventures in Africa.

Also in this regard, the emerging nebulous responses to assaults on democratic advances by status quo forces reflects the mindset of extra-African status quo forces working in conjunction with local status quo exploiters of international goodwill. The eventual delegitimation of the controversial concept of union administrations in the face of egregious assaults on democracy is a question of time, in the short rather than medium term. The concept is revealing of the very lazy, unimaginative and limited vision of the mercantilist attitudes of Africa's discredited leadership. Against this international backdrop, African conflicts have remained intractable as they have defied the well-intentioned interventions of the international community. The situation raises many questions regarding the premises, nature and agenda of international interventions in conflict and the related humanitarian complexes in Africa. A close examination of the premises of these interventions and the methods of the major actors suggest fundamental lapses in the understanding of these conflicts.

A careful examination of the postures adopted by the major institutions engaged in the management of the various dimensions of conflict in Africa suggests that positions purveyed and the character of the engagements of these institutions are driven by the respective institutional agendas and interests of the major actors. Serious attempts at understanding the real causes of the wars are not that important in the media controlled world of good sound bites. The tragedies are exploited to sharpen their institutional relevance as well strengthen their places in the cut-throat competition for resources available at the international do-gooder elite clubs.

A factor in the success of this is the abject absence of an autonomous

discursive platform for alternative voices, in particular for the airing of authentic African perspectives. The controversial response to conflicts in Africa and its humanitarian challenges also results from a serious lacunae in the discourse on African Affairs, that is dominated by foreign and extraneous 'experts', who with little more than anecdotal perspectives that bear no relevance to the profound questions involved, dominate the scanty theoretical firmament, round table conversations and the global airwaves. Related to this is an entrenched nebulous political economy of the theorisation of conflict which encourages researchers to validate status quo understandings. Young experts and local non-governmental

“Serious attempts at understanding the real causes of the wars are not that important in the media controlled world of good sound bites.”

organisations, if only to be legitimised and cast in the mould required to attract the funding that is critical for their survival and recognition, must toe the line. A critical interrogation of the whole business of international conflict management and prevention is imperative, in the least to shore up the dwindling legitimacy of international intervention in the difficult African cauldron...

For now, the jury is still out on the engagement of African status quo forces in managing conflicts in which they are implicated, or that they even instigate, and which may even have direct implications for their personal political careers in the immediate future. Is it a case of employing a seasoned thief to track the footprints of another thief on a rocky path? In the intermestic context of African conflicts, an interplay of the implied or explicitly stated interests of state and non-state transnational actors in the conflict generates an international politics of not only the crisis but also of the conflict mediation.

This has generated a unique dynamic of conflict mediation processes that has often rendered more complicated the management of the conflict and the restoration of peace.

The Liberia peace process provided critical challenges to the internal cohesion of the Economic Community of West African States. Tensions along colonial orientations emerged as Nigeria and a reluctant Ghana with troops on the ground squared off with Burkina Faso and Houphouet Boigny's Cote d'Ivoire, a proxy of France in the sub region, on the way forward. This was re-enacted again in Cote d'Ivoire itself as African states were divided between those sympathetic to the Africanist orientation of the Laurent Gbagbo administration and those perceived as advancing the solidarity of Francophonie in the manner of the resolution of the Ivorian crisis. The outcome of recent crises in Kenya and Zimbabwe in which key African personalities and institutions played significant roles are illustrative of the potential for a well-organised Africa to manage its challenges without the dubious meddling of ostensible do-gooders from outside the continent.

These challenges represent threats to the future of Africa even as they have contributed immensely to the mortgaging of our recent past. The critical interrogations must commence with an exploration of the ideational foundations of action by Africans and continental as well as sub-regional institutions. It is important for Africa to come to certain understandings among itself and a clear sense of its locus within the universe. These understandings should then direct our energies on how to take our destiny in our hands in all the realms of our existential enterprises. Indeed, the elaboration of common understandings has not been the problem as such. Concepts such as Ethiopianism, pan-Africanism and more contemporaneously the African Renaissance, provide ample theological tenets for true emancipation of our spaces and selves. It is time to go back to the drawing board with authentic African perspectives in the lead on African affairs. As Thabo Mbeki affirms:

*the defence of the independence*

of Africa surely means that we (Africa) should not delegate to others the similarly strategic task to which we must respond without equivocation, to entrench democracy in our countries, to protect human rights, and to ensure that our countries are governed properly, in the interests of the masses of our people.

It also means that we (Africa) have to strengthen our Continent's cohesion, and therefore its capacity to act in unity, around a broad, progressive agenda, some of which is already contained in policies agreed through the AOU and the AU<sup>4</sup>.

The main task around the drawing boards in Africa must begin with the infusion of the African Union with a commonly shared continental civic theology that should constitute the basic axiomatic foundations for political, social and economic action. It may be recalled that early attempts, since the days of Ethiopianism, that argued that the African nation was one of the oldest continuous civilizations in the world, Sylvester William's Pan-Africanism, Marcus Garvey's Garveyism the Lembede inspired African Renaissance of the 1940s, Nnamdi Azikiwe's Zikism, Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism, seeking to entrench a quintessentially black philosophy of modernity faltered on the altar of differentiated African micro-identities defined along linguistic and ethnic lines. This problem merely expressed the historic debacle of divisive black identities leading false interest articulation. In fact, it would seem that linguistic barriers were what prevented Marcus Garvey from having the same galvanising effect in the modern black world of Latin America, especially in Cuba, Brazil and Columbia.<sup>5</sup> The same fate must not befall Mbeki's and Mandela's resuscitation of the African Renaissance at the end of the last century. Drawing from the African Renaissance is the intrinsic oneness and indivisibility of the destiny of black humanity. Mbeki's affirmation of "I am an African" essentially distils this integrated commonness of a unity of an emergent African identity that is the common patrimony that transcends all perceived social divides across the universe of black humanity. This

is transcendental in rising above the incongruous construction of the ethnic basis of the externally contrived African state system that has been at the heart of the pervasive crisis of the African state and its traumatised society. It is this incongruity that has been exploited by predatory global forces as well as a segment of African leadership that has been historically supportive of the falsified exploitative project of black humanity. The international conflict consortium falls squarely into this category.

Only a continental response can begin to roll back these forces. For the African Union to be relevant for the future of Africa, it must be transformed into an instrument for the advancement of this emergent transcendental African

**“This has generated a unique dynamic of conflict mediation processes that has often rendered the management of the conflict and the restoration of peace.”**

identity through the articulation of the renaissance African vision. The logical outcome of this process would be the emergence of a true African Union. This new African Union would be the perfect antidote to the Laurent Nkunda phenomenon or the rise of proto-states feeding on contrived identities that set Africans apart and accordingly, define conflicting partisan interests within the larger umbrella of the African identity.

To achieve this singular definitive objective, a new generation of African-intellectuals, youth, students, women and technocrats-rather than opportunistic and discredited African politicians-should be groomed as the main arrow heads of this new expansive vision of the transcendental African identity. This new vanguard forces have to lead the way in the new partnership between Africa and the global Other as well as the global

order. This includes new relationship to be forged with foreign peace activists other do-gooder consortiums operating in Africa. It is time to open up the discourse with authentic African voices in the lead. It is the historic task of the AU to midwife the vibrant new African voices. The African Union should begin to establish institutions dedicated to the formulation and support of Afrocentric ideas that push an integrated and common identity in in the context of this new African order. Africa has to learn to generate knowledge on, of and about his affairs as a first step toward the emancipation envisioned in the African Renaissance project. The discourse with the world on Africa must be led and driven by a new generation of gifted and youthful thinkers who can effectively challenge the distortions conveyed by the dominant extra African understandings of the African condition. The long term transformation of the deplorable state of the African Being must begin at the level of new ideas generated by Africans confidently envisioning a new future for Africans. One of the historic challenges of the African Union is to rise above itself and midwife this new era. The rebranding of the AU of 9 July 2002, in Durban, South Africa, must purvey more than just crass symbolism. It must acquire a new resilience to sanitize itself of dubious members who represent the failed past. The AU must be an expression of new beginnings, representing a tectonic shift marking the substantive rebirth of black humanity. As Mwalimu Julius Nyerere enjoins:

*The current generation of leaders and peoples of Africa must pick of the flickering torch of African freedom, refuel it with their enthusiasm and determination, carry it forward<sup>6</sup>.* ■

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## THE PEOPLE AND THE POWERFUL

## Can we keep power in check?



By Peter Lawrence

*'we regard the relationship of politics, that reflects underlying structures of power in a society, as being the primary influence on overall accountability relations'*<sup>1</sup>

*'Micro-survey informants believed power in Tanzania to be held by a combination of politicians, government leaders, business and rich people. Many informants believed that this group used their power to provide services and benefit the community generally. A roughly equivalent number felt that they only used it to help themselves.'*<sup>2</sup>

*'The real truth of the matter is, as you and I know, that a financial element in the large centers has owned the government ever since the days of Andrew Jackson...'*<sup>3</sup>

*'.....government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth'*<sup>4</sup>.

Sitting at dinner recently with an eminent British parliamentarian, I recalled with some nostalgia the days when political parties got elected to government and proceeded to do pretty much what they said they would do. At which point he interrupted me, and throwing his hands up despairingly, said: 'yes and not do exactly the opposite of what they said they would do!'. I had just been speaking on a panel discussing issues of power and accountability in Africa. I had also recently finished reading Laurence Cockroft's excellent study of global corruption<sup>5</sup> and concluded that there was little hope for tackling corruption without first addressing the issue of power, or rather the web of relationships between powerful economic and powerful political interests, and how to democratise it. By way of reminder that this was a worldwide issue, and one much closer to home, a report had appeared a few days earlier<sup>6</sup> that the UK

government was expanding its 'strategic relations initiative' which gave 38 multinational companies 'including oil, telecoms and pharmaceutical giants' a ministerial 'buddy', to include a further 12 companies with the possibility of a further 30 being added during this year. Two thirds of the initial set of companies are based overseas and between them they held nearly 700 meetings with ministers since the coalition government took office; no longer simply the revolving door between the corporates and government but now the open door. Close relations between Corporate Capital and the State, always effected more subtly and discreetly, are now formalised.

The traditional Marxist view of the State under capitalism saw its role as protecting and furthering the interests of Capital as personified by the capitalist class, whether private owners or managers of Capital on behalf of the shareholders of the joint

stock companies. The rise of the labour movement and allied social movements represented a challenge to the capitalist state which was resolved less through revolution and more through an evolution of State policy which led to theorists of the State writing about its 'relative autonomy' or its location as an arena of struggle between Capital and Labour in which Labour was able to gain as much influence over state policy as was Capital. The triumph of neo-liberalism in the 1980s was as much a return to a Capital-dominated State as it was a break with Keynesian economic policy. Indeed the two phenomena went hand in hand. It is no accident that during this period we witnessed the decline of the trades union movement, a shift in the share of national income from wages to profits, and the effective co-option to neo-liberalism of political forces which traditionally supported Keynesian economic policy, namely trades unions and other social movements, a restraint on profits and a fiscal policy that supported re-distribution and collective social welfare systems. The accompanying rise of finance since the liberalisations of that sector (now 'industry') in the 1980s, especially in the US and UK, together with the resurgence of the military-industrial complex has led to what one writer has called the 'petroleum-industrial-financial complex', dominated by a 'military-financial' complex'.<sup>7</sup> Added to this there is the increasing evidence of the existence of the 'Deep State' and the 'security state' in which the military, state security and allied corporate interests run a covert set of policies unknown to and in opposition to those of the civilian state, or influence policy such that the civilian state follows. These more sinister characterisations of the State, because of their very nature, are of course much harder to document, let alone control. But the sense of a power beyond the civil state is very strong and has for some time even been part of the political and crime thriller diet dramatised in our cinemas and on our televisions.

The pursuit of military engagement to the tune of the Al-Qaeda threat only strengthens the coercive arm of the State. The association of external threat

with internal enemy only strengthens the 'security state'. The web of connectivity between the coercive and security arm of the State and the commercial interests of companies connected with the military-financial-industrial complex, and the critical mineral supply chain that feeds it, requires the shadier activity of the 'deep state' to prevent any disruption to this web.

For African countries, this is a far cry from the expectations of the State at Independence. Then, the State was charged with the task of actively promoting economic and social development. The absence of a classic bourgeoisie, accumulating capital and investing, especially in manufacturing,

**“...there was little hope for tackling corruption without first addressing the issue of power, or rather the web of relationships between powerful economic and powerful political interests, and how to democratise it.”**

meant that the State would have to fill the gap using its power to tax to accumulate investible resources either on its own or in cooperation with foreign capital, which could bring advanced technologies with it. However, the new governments were ill-equipped to pursue this strategy. Participation in education was very low. There were very few university graduates to run the ministries of state with the result that either the old colonial expatriates continued to be employed or new expatriates in many cases more sympathetic to a post-colonial future were hired to help. However, there was a capacity gap and it was not surprising that over time the temptations and inducements presented to government ministers and state officials to gain privately

from deals made with foreign capital, increased.

Accountability in these circumstances was limited. Elections in what were mostly one-party states were not going to result in the overthrow of the government. Military coups with the ostensible purpose of getting rid of corrupt politicians simply replaced them with corrupt generals. The separations of powers which in theory made the executive arm of the State accountable to the legislature and both to the judiciary was seriously compromised by the connections through ethnic and other networks between these theoretically separate powers.

The mechanisms of accountability as they had evolved in the developed economies included an independent trades union movement, judiciary, press and (usually) broadcasting network. However in newly independent Africa, these were scarcely present. Not being able to hold politicians and state officials to account, taken together with the possibilities for rent-seeking by such individuals, led to the State becoming a vehicle for private accumulation, and not for the private investment that might have led to domestic capital accumulation and development. Rather the ill-gotten gains of the elite flowed out of the country to private accumulation in Swiss banks and more recently in the myriad of tax havens popping up around the world, leading to levels of conspicuous consumption that became quite breath-taking. It didn't take long for conspicuous consumption to become an issue in Kwame Nkrumah's government, nor for General Mobutu to squirrel away \$250 million a year from the revenues of the nationalised mining company in Katanga or for Sani Abacha to expropriate \$5 billion during his four years as military dictator of Nigeria<sup>8</sup>.

Julius Nyerere regarded corruption as a serious issue and through the adoption of the Arusha Declaration in 1967 placed strict limits on the salaries of ministers and officials as part of a leadership code. This Code also prevented ministers and officials from engaging in private business. This was designed to prevent corrupt aggrandisement all too evident elsewhere on the continent. The Code

was enforced over a long period – well into the late 1980s. The one-party state was moderated at election time by giving constituencies a choice between two candidates to be the party representatives in the National Assembly. There was a significant turnover of MPs at each election, suggesting that at least this quinquennial exercise of accountability had some force. But Tanzania was an exception, and Nyerere an exceptional leader.

In the economic crisis of the 1980s many governments could not pay their civil servants salaries which enabled them to live sufficiently well to do their jobs. So they were obliged to have their own private businesses, whatever the potential conflicts of interest. I recall talking to senior civil servants in one country who had formed a consultancy and won tenders for World Bank consultancy contracts in the very country of whose administration they were a part. When I raised the question of a conflict of interest, their response was to ask me how else they were expected to live given a government salary of \$75 a month. It became commonplace in some countries for poorly paid public servants at levels lower down the civil service to make ends meet by levying bribes on ordinary citizens wanting to get the services they required and to which they were in theory entitled. Corruption enquiries and anti-corruption measures quite often attacked these kind of activities occurring at the middle and lower levels of public service provision while avoiding confronting those of the more economically powerful, thus again emphasising the importance of dealing with the issue of power and its control; rather than with corruption as one of the outcomes of such power. In any event the idea of using State resources as a basis for private accumulation became well entrenched through its various organs.

The adoption by most countries of democratic accountability through multi-party elections as part of the neo-liberal projects was based on the assumption that electoral competition would work in much the same way as economic competition was supposed to work in 'free' markets. But just as competition in markets has led to monopoly and oligopoly, so

competition in the political sphere has more often than not simply affirmed the effective monopoly of power of a permanently dominant party or in cases where there are two parties with roughly equal strength, a duopoly which becomes a coalition. While there have been some changes of governing party, and many countries limiting presidential terms, there are still many cases of dominant party monopolies, and even where power changes hands one section of the elite is substituted by another. Structures of political patronage and clientelism ensure that as long as resources are channelled to a significantly large proportion of the electorate, victory

**“Opposition on the African continent to the increasing number of ‘land grabs’ by corporates, politicians, military and local and foreign investors on a large scale to produce biofuels and other high value crops, faces a formidable alliance of State and Capital both centrally and locally.”**

is guaranteed and old ethnic loyalties maintained. Struggles then follow inside the winning parties to gain control over State resources.<sup>9</sup>

For the majority of African countries, the adoption of neo-liberal economics, associated with the World Bank's structural adjustment policy, changed the landscape, in many cases literally, though there were some exceptions, at least for a while, such as Tanzania, where the Nyerere legacy influenced resistance to liberalisation well into the 1990s. Now Africa is reportedly rising, though less because of the liberalisation policies but more because of its mineral wealth making it a profitable investment

ground for the international corporates, its land a potential source of wealth for the large scale farming of food, bio-fuels and the traditional export crops and its cheap labour force a source of large profits for the corporates. The financial corporates provide the financing for the rapid development of raw material extraction and prospecting. But manufacturing remains a small part of the mineral rich economies. Power is essentially vested in the corporates and the institutions of the State both administrative and coercive, both central and local, aided by the organisation of the dominant political party.

The neo-liberal policies of privatisation and public private partnerships have provided opportunities for the accumulation of wealth by private individuals, especially those who have held positions in government administration. Inequality has grown. Half the population of the African continent is living on less than US\$1.25 a day. The African Development Bank<sup>10</sup> reports that the top 4.8% of the population, termed the 'rich class', receiving more than US\$20 a day have 18.8% of the income, while an 'upper middle class' comprising the next 4.7% of the population receiving between US\$10 and US\$20 a day have 10.8% of total income. Within the rich group there are the 'super-rich' with incomes in the hundreds of thousand to millions of dollars a year and with an accumulated individual wealth of over US\$30 million. It has been reported that in 2012, Africa had an increase of 5.1% in its super-rich to 2,535 people, who held a combined wealth of US\$329 billion. Much of the growth in this wealth is derived from the mineral boom of the last few years, but some of it originates in a different kind of mining of the resources of the State.

The most recent reported example concerns Zimbabwe. At the end of January 2013 Zimbabwe Finance Minister Tendai Biti reported that there remained US\$217 in Zimbabwe's public account balance after paying its workers' salaries. This despite Zimbabwe's diamond wealth of which little is getting to the Treasury – it is alleged that US\$ 2 billion has been diverted away from Treasury coffers and has instead enriched politicians, especially

the Minister of Mines, and others connected with the management of the industry.<sup>11</sup> Porsche has a sales centre in Luanda because, with Angola's double digit growth rate based on its oil and other mineral wealth, there are many super rich customers for this prestige car, retailing at \$170,000.

Stories of obscene wealth and increasing inequality can be told in many countries around the world, both rich and poor. While most people in the developed economies were seeing rising living standards before the recession of 2008 and after, the super-rich and the source of their wealth did not worry the majority of people. The attitude seemed to be that as long as we could all aspire to become rich, we quite admired ostentatious wealth and the chances of becoming wealthy through good connections at the top to state lotteries giving a chance to those nearer the bottom seemed to be increasing. A Labour government minister famously declared that his party was 'intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich', though more recently he has somewhat modified his position in the wake of the problems of the financial sector which made a lot of people 'filthy rich' but not, it turns out, in a particularly clean way.

However, even in developed countries, there is concern about poverty and inequality as public services and those employed in them are retrenched and as opportunities, especially for young people, even university educated, dry up. So now serious questions are being raised about accountability, especially of bankers; and about tax avoiders, parliamentarians' expenses, and the revolving doors of politics and business. Moreover, developed countries believe they have the institutions which can force such accountability and a civil society which can force the issue of bringing power to account. Rupert Murdoch's News International phone tapping scandal and the UK parliamentary expenses scandal are but two examples of how diligent members of the fourth estate can set in chain a series of events which brings to book a powerful media mogul and commutes the careers of politicians who have been over-creative with their expenses claims. However, ruling classes have

always been willing to sacrifice a few individuals for the greater good of the class, and while these are important victories against the corruption of power, when it comes to penalising the finance industry for its recklessness, words are plenty but significant action very slow.

The obstacles faced on the African continent to check the abuse of power are huge. Civil society's development is hampered especially by the relatively poor progress of education in African countries. Still, only 70% of the age cohort complete primary education, only 42% enter secondary education and only 5% enter tertiary education. This affects both the capacity of the State to perform effectively and the capacity of people to hold governments to account. Added to this, the coercive

**“But the sense of a power beyond the civil state is very strong and has for some time even been part of the political and crime thriller diet dramatised in our cinemas and on our televisions.”**

forces of the State make civil society activism to do the necessary research to inform campaigning on the protection of people's rights a risky business. Activists are arrested, detained, threatened and sometimes murdered to prevent effective opposition to the alliance of state and mineral corporates. A recent study of the attempts by human rights campaigners in Tanzania and Uganda to resist the encroachment of mining companies on local land rights tells us what happens when they try to investigate:

*There are a lot of questions, you're questioned. If you're going to do video and pictorial documentation your camera and memory card can be confiscated...*

*confiscated by the police. Just to put it well, I think the mine*

*and the police are married, they share everything... When we are at the mining area that is where the harassment occurs. Outside of the mine, we just get harassments from outside. This can be done through a third party. For instance, one time I got information from one of the journalists who said: 'well, you're young and you're against this thing and you can lose your life easily, why can't you leave these issues?'*

Opposition on the African continent to the increasing number of 'land grabs' by corporates, politicians, military and local and foreign investors on a large scale to produce biofuels and other high value crops, faces a formidable alliance of State and Capital both centrally and locally. In northern Uganda, such interests have taken advantage of local people being placed in protective camps during the war with the Lord's Resistance Army by grabbing their land. Local chiefs whose customary responsibility is to allocate land have been bought off to sanction the land grabs or have been jointly complicit in such takeovers.

Even in South Africa, which has the most advanced civil society on the continent, recent events have suggested that the concentration of power in an alliance between the State, both administrative and coercive, Capital, the dominant governing party, its allies in the tripartite alliance and 'traditional' leaders has meant that democratic accountability faces a formidable coalition of forces. The revolving door between government and corporates cements this relationship, although the recognition by the new deputy president of the ANC (who himself had passed through a series of revolving doors from trades union leader via black economic empowerment to corporate wealth), that remaining a director of Lonmin was creating a conflict of interest could be a straw in the wind for building firewalls between State and corporate interests. Another straw could be the judiciary led inquiry into the Marikana tragedy, re-affirming the importance of the separation of powers. What happens after the inquiry will be a significant test of the effectiveness of this method of accountability.

However, there are plenty of examples of continuing and successful attempts by a growing civil society to hold the powerful to account. Politicians do get punished for corruption, policies do get changed because of effective campaigning, trans-continental initiatives such as the African Union's peer review mechanism to improve political and economic governance grows a culture of accountability, and international initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the Kimberley process are steps forward in the regulation of the minerals trade. The sign-up by both corporates and governments to these initiatives is impressive though not comprehensive and as in the Zimbabwe case referred to above does not guarantee that mining revenues flow to the Government.

There are also the external pressures of donors even though they sometimes pick and choose from whom they withdraw aid as a consequence of corrupt use of state and donor resources. There has been a long history of turning blind eyes to rulers' misdemeanours where issues of donor national security come into play and explicit statements by at least one donor that aid will be related to security issues. The activities of Transparency International and other campaigners against corruption bring to light many dubious activities, though it requires domestic action to bring people to book, and this heavily depends on domestic power relations.

Tanzania again provides some exceptional examples of attacking corruption at the top. The Warioba Commission report of 1996 identified corruption at all levels from lowly public servants taking bribes from people wanting to get their children into school, to high level civil servants abusing the tendering process for government contracts by taking bribes, or politicians offering bribes to secure re-election. Since then there have been several corruption scandals involving the dismissal of top politicians and officials, most notable being the resignation of the Tanzanian Prime Minister in 2008 in the wake of an energy corruption scandal which also resulted in the resignation of two

other ministers, the dismissal in 2012 of six ministers amid allegations of corruption and the dismissal of the Governor of the Central Bank, also in 2008, following the disappearance of some of its funds. However, even in Tanzania, there is criticism of the failure to prosecute those involved in corrupt activities.

The process of capital accumulation and industrial investment has never been a peaceful one, whether it took place in the European and North American centres of capitalist manufacturing or in the phases of rapid state socialist development in Soviet

**“So the means of violence of capitalist or statist accumulation no longer finds its justification in the ends of rapid development. Instead the levels of inequality give rise to the need for the strengthening of the coercive agencies of the State to help further this consumptionist accumulation, accompanied, as was productive accumulation, with violence and graft.”**

Russia or Maoist China. In fact these were all brutal processes of change in which migrations of rural populations denied land produced the urban reserve armies, cheap labour, high rates of accumulation, re-investment and growth. It was also a process in which accountability took second place to accumulation and in which corrupt practices were rife. Now, the existence of globalised markets of late capitalism with a range of consumer goods unimaginable in early capitalism, has fuelled a consumptionist class which maintains high rates of accumulation but now for consumption as much as

production. So the means of violence of capitalist or statist accumulation no longer finds its justification in the ends of rapid development. Instead the levels of inequality give rise to the need for the strengthening of the coercive agencies of the State to help further this consumptionist accumulation, accompanied, as was productive accumulation, with violence and graft.

In the end the discussion of accountability revolves around accountability to whom and by whom: to the people, to other sections of the elite, or to the donors, to an independent domestic quasi-judicial set of institutions, or to AU peer review mechanisms or to a combination of them? Holding power to account elsewhere in the world has proven very difficult and not by any means always successful. If the developed democracies have not yet found a way to challenge the concentration of power in the hands of Capital and the State, why should we expect Africa to be any different? Given the imbalance of power between the global corporates and African states and the power these corporates have over the State in the most developed countries, bringing power to account will be a struggle over the long haul. ■

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**SOVEREIGNTY AND MILITARIES**

# Enduring challenges for the African Union



The challenge for the AU of addressing the enduring power of sovereignty and taming African militaries is stark. The challenge is starker amid the lack of exemplary leadership in the AU, which undermines its effectiveness.

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By Miles Tendi

The matter of “crises in Africa” is a key subject the African Union (AU) continues to grapple with. The roots of these crises are manifold and complex. State failure features among these crises, as seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where between August 1998 and April 2004, 1 000 people died every day and approximately half of those deaths comprised children under 5 years of age. The cumulative total number of fatalities in the DRC’s 6 year period of state failure and civil war, which had a regional contagion effect, is 3.8 million. In terms of death toll, the DRC crisis eclipses all other major crises that have occurred since the end of the cold war, namely Bosnia (approximately 250 000

fatalities), Rwanda (800 000), Kosovo (12 000) and Darfur (70 000). The DRC conflict is the most calamitous conflict since the end of World War II.

In addition to state failure, genocide and massacres, as well as conflict spawned by stark economic inequalities, have also made their mark in Africa in recent times.

While the aforementioned crises are grave, they are not as pervasive as the problem of military involvement in politics and the power of national sovereignty in Africa. The AU’s predecessor – the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) – came and went without resolving these two factors. The AU has struggled with their enduring force and pervasiveness.

This essay focuses on why national sovereignty and militaries continue to pose significant challenges to the AU’s attempts to expunge “crises in Africa”.

**Sovereignty**

The strength of national sovereignty is a powerful factor hindering the AU’s effectiveness. Member states remain reticent about directly interfering in the domestic affairs of other states. One of the lessons from Africa’s colonial history is that if states do not vigilantly protect their sovereignty, they risk becoming easy prey to external forces and elements, which may harbour imperialist intentions. Indeed had the modern-day international system of states been as hostile as that of the

18th century, when conquest and aggressive domination of weaker states was the norm, most African states would most likely be under external control. In Africa sovereignty is an “inversion of colonialism” and an important “prerogative to resist claims and encroachments coming from outside national boundaries - the right to say no”. Sovereignty is considered an invaluable means of self defence against external intrusion, which is viewed with deep suspicion given Africa’s legacy of colonial conquest and exploitation. Colonialism was the last major Western intervention in Africa and its harmful legacies taint the morality of intervention and interference, especially from the West.

Independent African states have consistently sought to maintain and strengthen their sovereignty. This practice was first conveyed explicitly in the 1963 Charter for the former OAU, which sought to preserve and reinforce the sovereignty of African states in two ways. First, the OAU Charter made it clear that the violation or changing of Africa’s ex-colonial national boundaries was strictly prohibited. Second, it barred all African states from attempting to carry out political assassinations or any other subversive activities in another African state.

The OAU’s African human rights regime, for instance, had its foundation in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) of 1981. But the ACHPR was not a legally binding instrument that afforded extensive procedural safeguards for human rights. The ACHPR contained “clawback clauses” that permitted African states to limit the human rights of their respective citizenry in accordance with domestic laws. Every individual has “the right to assemble freely” subject to the “necessary restrictions provided for by law”, Article 11 of the ACHPR stated. Law, in this instance, denotes the particular domestic laws of African states signatory to the ACHPR. “Clawback clauses” subordinated the ACHPR to the domestic laws of signatory African states; the ACHPR largely served to protect the governors’ sovereignty and not the human rights of the governed.

The AU replaced the OAU as

Africa’s supreme continental body in 2002. The AU reaffirmed a good degree of its predecessor’s commitment to upholding sovereignty in Africa. Article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the AU states that the continental body shall function in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) Respect of borders existing on achievement of independence.
- (b) Prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among member states of the Union.
- (c) Non-interference by any member state in the internal affairs of another.

Thus, sovereignty remains a powerful motivating factor in Africa.

Contemporary African and European conceptions of sovereignty are influenced by dissimilar historical experiences. The determining historical

“Clawback clauses” subordinated the ACHPR to the domestic laws of signatory African states; the ACHPR largely served to protect the governors’ sovereignty and not the human rights of the governed.

experience of the former is external conquest, domination and exploitation at the hands of colonial forces. The formative historical experience of the latter is the Second World War (WWII) in which untold destruction along with the Holocaust instigated grave shock and horror in the European psyche. For Europe, one of the lessons of WWII and the Holocaust was that if states are left to their own devices, and a blind eye turned on their domestic activities in the name of respecting sovereignty, they may perpetrate terrible human rights abuses. The European Union’s (EU) adoption of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECPHRFF) in 1950 had its

genesis in a strong European consensus that human rights violations such as the Holocaust were never to be repeated on European soil. EU member states, in contrast to AU states, are today bound by stricter codes of conduct demanding respect for the rule of law, non-discrimination, prohibition of torture and slavery, freedom of religion and expression, and the staging of regular free and fair elections. The EU’s elaborate and robust human rights regime has weakened the sovereignty of member states considerably.

History matters for it shapes competing conceptions of sovereignty. But history is not the be all and end all. Sovereignty is a vehicle towards the good life for many African political elites. It is commonplace for ruling African political elites to privatise the institution of the state as a means to authoritarian rule and personal aggrandisement. “The desire to retain sovereignty and not to surrender it or even share it is a powerful motive perpetuating the ex-colonial status quo in Sub Saharan Africa. Sovereignty gives a relatively small number of people control of state positions which confer enormous palpable advantages and privileges. Ruling elites literally live off sovereignty and most live very well indeed – as long as they live. They fight to keep it and others fight to take it away from them.” This critique of African leaders’ uses of sovereignty highlights how ruling elites play up sovereignty as a means of protecting their hold on power. In this sense, their uses of sovereignty are less about protecting the country and its inhabitants’ sovereignty but more about protecting the “enormous palpable advantages and privileges” sovereignty affords them.

### Militaries

Military interventions have been pervasive in African politics since 1956. Africa has often resembled the “praetorian society”. A praetorian society is one in which there is a broad militarisation of institutions and social forces. Between 1956 and 2001 there were 80 successful coups d’état, 108 failed coup attempts and 139 reported coup plots in sub-Saharan Africa. Recent

successful coups include Guinea and Mauritania (2008), Niger (2010), and Mali and Guinea-Bissau (2012). Scholars have identified ethnic competition, the existence of strong militaries with factionalised officer corps, weak civil society, and the military's bureaucratic and professional attributes, as the chief causes of African militaries' involvement in politics. The AU – unlike the OAU – outlawed military coups at its inception. But as the frequency of coups shows it appears this has done little to deter African militaries from delving into politics. The response of the AU to coups has also been strong on rhetoric - via condemnations and threats – but weaker in terms of practical and united response.

While the AU's record in addressing the problem of military involvement in politics has suffered, some scholars have misguidedly suggested that the military can act as a force for good in politics. A case in point is the *fêted* British academic Paul Collier who states Military takeovers can be a good thing for African democracy.

In 2009 Collier wrote: “routinely, the international community monitors elections, declaring whether they are free and fair. The European Community and the Carter Center have been doing it for years. Yet at present these judgments have no consequences. Smart power would link them to the threat of a (military) coup. An election judged free and fair would trigger an undertaking by the major democracies to use their best efforts to protect the government from a (military) coup. Often this would be quite straightforward because the perpetrators of coups could not withstand even modest external military intervention. If a subsequent election was judged not to be free and fair this undertaking would be publicly lifted. It would be sensible to lift it because, if the army did oust a president who had won an election fraudulently, the international community would not want to be committed to restoring him. But the public lifting of protection would be a signal: in effect it would invite the military to oust the incumbent. Were a coup to take place, the international community could then recognise it, conditional upon monitored elections being held within a set period. In effect,

the international community would be providing a guidance system for the previously unguided missile of the coup.”

Collier's ideas appeared to receive a fillip in 2010 when the Niger military overthrew President Mamadou Tandja after his decision to revise the constitution in order to extend his presidency by three years at the end of his second five-year term. The military assumed power and subsequently managed an orderly return to legitimate civilian government. This was cast by some as the “good coup”. But encouraging “good coups” is treading dangerous ground because, ultimately, it is an AU lacking capacity which will

**“Ruling elites  
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have to clean up the mess when “good coups” go wrong. Coups often breed counter coups so there is no guarantee that a “bad coup” will not soon follow a “good coup”.

Still, the concentration on coups d'états and resolving the fallout has often diverted the AU's attention from other important ways that militaries intervene in politics, such as the militarisation of civilian government, and how militaries incrementally acquire and exercise a veto power on political proposals and decisions by a civilian regime without staging a coup d'état.

These processes develop with quiet force, which may help explain why they have received insufficient attention from the AU. Yet their origins, determinants and consequences are just as much in need of addressing as coups d'état, because they have profound implications for civil-military relations, state-making and democratisation. Militarisation is particularly discernible

in Southern Africa. It denotes the incremental appointment of military officers to key state institutions and the increasing power of military structures within the state.

Since 2008, Botswana President Ian Khama has established the Directorate of Internal Security (a secretive structure in the president's office composed of a consolidated military-civilian intelligence wing that has been implicated in extra-judicial killings) and appointed military officers to key state positions. In Madagascar, a civilian president, Andry Rajoelina, was unconstitutionally installed by the military in 2009, following President Marc Ravalomanana's resignation after 3 months of opposition protests. The military sent Ravalomanana into exile in South Africa, in addition to exerting its influence on the civilian government through General Camille Vital (Prime Minister, 2009-11). In Angola, militarisation occurs among the members of the Casa Militar and Casa Civil – two cabinets within the presidency responsible for dealing with military and civilian affairs respectively. The Casa Militar's influence increased in 2010 with the appointment of its head, General Manuel Helder Vieira Dias 'Kopelipa', as a minister of state responsible for coordinating government business. Militarisation presents an important challenge for the AU in the coming years.

The challenge for the AU of addressing the enduring power of sovereignty and taming African militaries is stark. The challenge is starker amid the lack of exemplary leadership in the AU, which undermines its effectiveness. Few AU leaders have the moral authority to champion democracy owing to their own chequered domestic governance practices and commitment to democratic ideals. Some AU member states have held relatively free and fair multiparty elections in recent years but this does not make them democracies. Mozambique's president Armando Guebuza, for instance, won credible elections in 2009 but in practice his rule is authoritarian. Where AU leaders ought to take a principled, united and decisive stand, therefore, they are prone to dithering. ■

# Decolonising the University in Africa



Africa continues to be inhabited by a people suffering from mental colonisation to the extent that the majority of them are comfortable with being judged by Europeans and are always striving to get validation of whatever they do from Europeans and Americans.

By Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni

At the political symbolic level, the post-1945 African sovereignty system as a subtext of the global United Nations sovereignty system, assumed the following markers: adoption of a new vernacular name for the state, composition of new national anthem and new flag, adoption of a new currency, a new university, an

appearance of a black face at state house, and black faces in parliament. Having a national university became a sign of being sovereign.

The struggle for decolonisation of the world system and the modern westernised university must be intensified now that modernity has thrown up modern problems to which

it has no modern solutions; now that disciplines are experiencing decadence and Western rationality's claim to overcome all human problems is failing; and now that an epistemic rupture is in the air. An epistemic rupture is similar to interregnum, whereby a previously dominant epistemic order becomes exhausted, opening the way for a new

one. In this instance, the Euro-American epistemology that has assumed global status is in crisis, provoking even some Western scholars like Patrick Chabal (being the latest comers in this debate) to write of 'the end of conceit' and admitting that 'the instruments we use are no longer fit for the job. [...] the social sciences we employ to explain what is happening domestically and overseas – are both historically and conceptually out of date.'<sup>1</sup>

The greatest irony of Africa is that even those people who fought heroically against imperialism and colonialism tend to develop a very complacent view towards imperialism of knowledge which is more dangerous than physical political domination. Imperialism of knowledge works on the minds of African people whereas religious colonialism works on the soul. These dangerous forces operate in the form of soft power informed by long-standing colonial matrices of power. These colonial matrices of power operate as a set of technology of subjectivation that consist of four types: *control of economy* which manifested itself through dispossession, land expropriations, exploitation of labour and control of African natural resources; *control of authority* which includes the maintenance of military superiority through stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction by western powers and monopolisation of means of violence; *control of gender and sexuality* which involves the re-imagination of family in Western-Christian-bourgeois terms and universalisation of one-wife-one-husband; and *control of subjectivity and knowledge* which includes epistemological colonisation and the re-articulation of African being as inferior and constituted by a series of 'deficits' and a catalogue of 'lacks.'<sup>2</sup>

In view of this reality one gets surprised to hear some mentally colonised Africans standing up and opening their mouths to say colonialism is over and summoning others to forget about it. The reality is that while some Africans could be tired of talking about colonialism the reality is that coloniality is not yet tired of dominating, exploiting and oppressing Africans. It is African complacency which made it hard to decolonise the inherited

westernised university. Perhaps it was this complacency that provoked Frantz Fanon to pray: 'O my body, always make me a man who questions!'<sup>3</sup> As Africans we indeed need to not be tired of raising questions about colonialism and coloniality, about received Euro-American knowledges and inherited institutions. African people need to wake up from the dangerous habit of normalising coloniality and rise up to embrace decoloniality that enables them to unmask the constitution of Euro-American modernity and to pass critical judgments on the enduring impact of slavery, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, and neo-liberalism that constitute coloniality.

Africans must open their eyes and see that the European diaspora living in Africa is justifiably right to be frantically opposed to decoloniality because they never experienced the dark side of modernity and colonialism which empowered them both economically and epistemologically. Coloniality enables them to maintain their loot while decoloniality threatens their ill-gotten wealth and racially constructed notions of white superiority.

Decolonial thinkers are called such names as dogmatic, ideological, polemic, and reverse-racists for the simple reason that they have chosen to continue the long-standing decolonisation agenda that was disciplined by coloniality into reformism and emancipatory processes away from their original formulation as liberatory processes.<sup>4</sup> Decolonial thinkers have chosen to take a position and refuse to remain neutral in a world that is not neutral. On the question of neutrality, Ngugi wa Thiong'o emphasised that African thinkers have a very clear choice to make: either on 'the side of the people or the side of the social forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics?'<sup>5</sup>

#### **Africa in the present world order**

The present world system is a socio-political construction that took shape during the expansion of Europe to the

Americas, Asia, Caribbean, and Africa. The year 1492 when Christopher Columbus reached the Americas is identified as the commencement of the making of the modern world system. The year 1648 when the Treaty of Westphalia was signed marking the end of the Thirty Years War also signalled the institutionalisation and 'norming' of a particular modern world order as a juridical political formation.<sup>6</sup>

Dominant European states, namely Germany, Spain, France, Sweden and the Netherlands, agreed to recognise and respect each other's sovereignty in the wake of the Thirty Years War. At the same time, they continued to intensify expansion beyond Europe in violation of other non-European people's dignity and freedom. While the institutionalisation of the slave trade became the first manifestation of the dark side of modernity, the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 enabled colonialism and laid a firm basis for global coloniality.<sup>7</sup> The scramble for and partition of Africa among European powers amounted to an open disregard and disdain for the African people's dignity, rights and freedoms.<sup>8</sup>

This is why those who worship at the altar of modernity and who are quick to credit it for all positive things tend to be silent on the 'dark side' of modernity that stifled innovation and invention in Africa. They are silent on coloniality as the underside of modernity. They don't understand that as modernity deposited its positive fruits of industrialisation and liberal democracy in Europe, it was simultaneously unleashing the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid in Africa that crippled endogenous innovation. They are silent on its role in the re-production of African subjectivity as that of deficient and lacking beings - lacking souls, lacking history, lacking civilization, lacking development, lacking democracy, lacking human rights and lacking knowledge. This imperial and colonial attitude enabled the use of race and scientific racism to organise and classify human beings into primitive and modern, civilised and uncivilised, western and non-western, coloniser and colonised, superior and inferior.<sup>9</sup>

The decoloniality agenda is therefore very important not only because it enables Africans to unmask Euro-American deceit but because African people continue to manifest the disease of mental colonisation which made them assist in the reproduction of a racially hierarchised world system. The implications and consequences of mental colonisation are long-standing and terrible. In the first place, a people suffering from mental colonisation cannot innovate and has no potential or agency for pace-setting. Such people develop a very low self-esteem and consistently manifest inferiority complexes. They suffer from dependency syndromes which make them very timid.<sup>10</sup> They tend to hate themselves as, and wish to be, white. This is why Albert Memmi portrayed a colonised person as someone whose 'first ambition' 'is to become equal to that splendid model [white coloniser] to resemble him to the point of disappearing in him.'<sup>11</sup>

In the second place, mentally colonised people fail to challenge existing Euro-American epistemologies mainly because although they live in Africa they were made to think as though they were in Europe and America. This is why Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his analysis of what he termed 'the education of the colonial bondsman' noted that the colonial process dislocated the African mind 'from the place he or she already knows to a foreign starting point even with the body still remaining in his or her homeland. It is a process of continuous alienation from the base, a continuous process of looking at oneself from the outside of self or with the lenses of a stranger. One may end up identifying with the foreign base as the starting point toward self, that is from another self towards one self, rather than the local being the starting point, from self to other selves.'<sup>12</sup>

Consequently people whose mentalities remain colonised consistently manifest what William Du Bois described as 'double-consciousness', revealing a worst form of alienation.<sup>13</sup> This is why a people suffering mental colonisation manifests identity crisis as they continue to think in a restrictive and programmatic way

informed by textbook knowledge. What also distinguishes a people suffering from an invisible colonial mentality is the excessive fear to critically judge European history, civilization and epistemology. Instead they live to mimic whatever Europeans do and say.<sup>14</sup> Such a people's critical thinking is compromised as they live through adaptation to what exists. They tend to be afraid

**“A clear locus of enunciation also reveals that all knowledges are partial and this reality questions the practice of Euro-American epistemology of always concealing the locus of the subject that speaks only to claim universality and to hide the dangerous imperial global designs embedded within it.”**

of radical change including the one that is beneficial to them. As aptly described by Jean-Paul Sartre, people who are mentally colonised exist as 'living lies' without any clear locus of enunciation.<sup>15</sup>

Africa continues to be inhabited by a people suffering from mental colonisation to the extent that the majority of them are comfortable with being judged by Europeans and are always striving to get validation of whatever they do from Europeans and Americans. In Zimbabwe, one finds a group of people who call themselves veterans of the liberation struggle who construct a state that is used to create what Kizito Muchemwa termed a 'Chimurenga aristocracy' while silencing and disciplining everyone who dared to question this reproduction of coloniality. In countries like South

Africa where administrative apartheid existed longer than anywhere in Africa, one finds a people that have so deeply internalised racism to the extent of hating blackness while they are black themselves. The consequences have been the challenges of Afrophobia and xenophobia.<sup>16</sup>

**The trajectory of the modern Westernised University**

Tracking the trajectory of the university, one identifies the following shifts informed by mutating imperatives of modernist Western thought: Renaissance University, Enlightenment University, Kantian-Humboldtian University, and the current Corporate University.<sup>17</sup> The Renaissance University was the centre for theological and rhetorical studies. Knowledge was organised into the trivium (in the service of the church) and quadrivium (in the service of the monarchy/crown). Just like the Euro-American constituted international system, the university and its episteme is resistant to radical decolonial change. What only occasionally happens across history is what Foucault terms 'epistemic breaks' which do not interfere with the Euro-American epistemic but signify epochal changes in the world order.

The Renaissance University was the home for humanistic learning. The Enlightenment University was the centre of secular knowledge and the triumphalism of science over theology. The Kantian-Humboldtian University was organised around philosophy and sciences in the service of emerging nation-states and colonialism. The Corporate University began to replace the Kantian-Humboldtian University in the 1970s. It was imposed on Africa in the 1980s during the heydays of structural adjustment programmes and triumphalism of neo-liberalism.

Social sciences became very important during the age of the Kantian-Humboldtian University because they were required to enable the organisation of modern governments, civil society as well as management of a capitalist political economy. This is why Immanuel Wallerstein made it clear that social sciences were never a bounded and autonomous arena of social action, rather they have always

been an important segment of larger structures of knowledge of the modern world.<sup>18</sup> Analysing the role of western social sciences from Africa, Claude Ake clearly associated them with imperialism, noting that they played an important role in keeping Africans subordinated and underdeveloped, and inhibiting African understanding of the problem of the modern world system. He elaborated that they continue to feed Africans 'noxious values and/false hopes; to make us pursue policies which undermine our competitive strength and guarantee our permanent underdevelopment and dependence.'<sup>19</sup>

The rise of the Corporate University in the 1970s did not help. It worsened the situation. It brought in coloniality of market forces within a neo-liberal global political-economic framework. The Corporate University privileged the rule of technologically-oriented social sciences such as economics and accounting. Humanities and interpretive social sciences such as history and cultural anthropology lost their previous standing. Corporate values invaded the university together with new quality controls of the faculty, departments and degree programmes. Professors came under pressure to account for their research and publications in terms of quantity rather than quality. Education and knowledge underwent commodification and marketisation. Knowledge became conceived in terms of 'technicism' and 'innovation.'<sup>20</sup> Universities introduced such portfolios as Research and Innovation as drivers of research. Peter Stewart commented that knowledge in a Corporate University became reduced to the 'polytechnic/technikon and industry mode of know-how' (mortar and brick terms).<sup>21</sup> Intellectual thought was measured in terms of its instrumentalism.

Research during the present phase of Corporate University has shifted from being a long-range diagnostic enterprise to a quick prescriptive exercise. Mahmood Mamdani described this as the invasion of the university by consultancy cultures.<sup>22</sup> The emphasis is on training in descriptive and quantitative data collection methods. The penchant for quantification of

complex human phenomena greatly reinforced the conservatism of Western social science. Fundamental issues which were not easily amenable to quantification became sidelined. Claude Ake provides the example of the complex problem of democracy which was reduced to the abstractions of political participation - which was itself 'reduced to voting and voting

**“ Universities in Africa must be radically transformed into African universities through the decolonisation of curriculum and institutional frameworks as well as faculty members. The process must include careful and deep thinking on what values should distinguish and underpin an African university... ”**

studies and attitude surveys.'<sup>23</sup>

The major point here is that the privileging of quantification of complex human phenomena cascaded from the belief that 'major problems of social life have been solved and that all that remains is a few minor problems of adjustment which do not call the foundations of the society into question, but rather require merely technical solutions.' Within this type of a university the knowledges produced are for equilibrium. Large scale and radical changes of a revolutionary nature are not envisioned and tolerated. Ake noted that 'there is bias against change as is evident in the use of concepts with negative connotations to describe elements of change - e.g., disequilibrium, deviance, crisis, stress, conflict, instability, etc.'

Consultancy reports rather than

scholarly books dominate research in a corporatised university. Universities become viewed as similar to other corporate entities whose efficiency and value is measured in monetary terms. Leadership which is based on vision is substituted by rigid managerialism.<sup>24</sup>

As this process is consolidating itself in universities across the world those academics pursuing knowledge become endangered species. Their ideas are ridiculed, distorted and deliberately misrepresented. Critical thinking is no longer valued. Intellectual timidity is tolerated. One finds full professors who even if one 'google' their name, nothing appears in terms of their publications.

At the centre of the corporate university is what Lewis R. Gordon terms disciplinary decadence.<sup>25</sup> This decadence takes the form of failure by disciplinary-based knowledge to produce solutions to pressing social problems. Gordon noted that the decadence manifests itself in the form of scientists criticising humanities of not being scientific, and literary scholars criticising scientists for not being literary. In the process, disciplines fail dismally to deal with or confront those pertinent questions 'greater than the discipline itself.' Attempts to resolve the crisis of disciplinary decadence is by way of MIT (multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary approaches). In decolonial thinking, the solution is not MIT but ecologies of knowledges.<sup>26</sup> European, African, Asian and Latin American knowledges must be allowed equal space in the academy. The crisis of disciplinary decadence is rooted in European fundamentalism, which unfolded in terms of displacement and appropriation of other knowledges. Human ontology and experience is plural and only plurality of knowledges can deal effectively with multiple human challenges. An African university as opposed to a university in Africa must be a centre of ecologies of knowledges. It must have a distinct identity and mission.

#### **The African university**

Universities in Africa must be radically transformed into African universities through the decolonisation of curriculum and

institutional frameworks as well as faculty members. The process must include careful and deep thinking on what values should distinguish and underpin an African university; what competencies and critical skills must distinguish its products; what psychologies, ideologies, visions, and worldviews, should an African University nurture and inculcate in its students; and what teaching methodologies should an African university develop in its endeavour to produce pan-African students able to creatively, innovatively and originally respond to African development challenges.

An ideal starting point is to embrace Kwasi Wiredu's point that: 'conceptually speaking, then, the maxim of the moment should be: 'African, know thyself.'<sup>27</sup> The African university must be founded on a critical Africa-centred epistemology that is focused on a deep understanding of politics of knowledge generation involving reanalysing the claims of received sciences for the benefit of Africa and its people. An African university must not be a centre of intellectual complacency but one where evaluation of the risks contained in received methodologies, epistemologies and disciplines, takes the centre-stage.<sup>28</sup>

This starting point is that the African university must always be sensitive to its location within a Euro-American world that is working hard to remain dominant. Its mission must always be cognisant of the fact that existing Western social science was not meant to solve African problems and instead was used to keep Africa and its people in a subordinate and underdeveloped state.<sup>29</sup> Following this logic one can argue that there would be no point in establishing an African University if it won't be different from existing Westernised universities in Africa. In an African university Africa must be the privileged as legitimate epistemic sites of research and African people should not be treated as objects of knowledge but must be enabled to regain their lost epistemic virtue as repositories of knowledge. An African university must be deeply aware of where is Africa coming from epistemologically speaking and build

from there. Up to today, colonisation of the mind has remained the worst form of colonisation, as it affects and shapes African people's consciousness and identity. An African university must work flat out to reverse this colonial thinking.

But the process of decolonising of the minds of Africans has proven to be very difficult, because it must take the form of restoration of displaced knowledges and realisation that Euro-American epistemology is just one among other modes of knowing and knowledges. It is this challenge that an African University needs to confront directly; and pan-

**“This means that the African University must be distinguishable by its innovative fields of study and research agendas that are directly informed by the desire to solve pressing African problems and challenges.”**

African students and their professors must brace themselves to directly confront present day 'coloniality' that has been naturalised, universalised and normalised.

The first thing to address is that of the identity of an African university. This crisis of identity is linked to other crises such as 'crisis of legitimacy,' 'crisis of relevance,' 'crisis of appropriate epistemology,' 'crisis of historical representation' and 'crisis of student identity.'<sup>30</sup> These visible and invisible crises are linked to a bigger crisis - 'the crisis of the mission of the African university against the backdrop of that university being in Africa but not being an African one by characterisation.'

The second challenge is that as the African university searches for alternatives to domination and oppression, it must be careful in

distinguishing 'between alternatives to the system of domination and oppression and alternatives within the same system.'<sup>31</sup> The persistent challenge since the dawn of political independence is how do Africans fight against Euro-American epistemological hegemony using the conceptual and political instruments given by the same epistemology and world system?

The time has come for Africans to realise that decolonisation of being can only begin with decolonising epistemology; that is, decolonising ways of knowing and knowledge production itself. The time has also come for Africans to realise that the on-going struggles for social justice are inseparable from the struggles for cognitive justice. The African University must be ready to carry forward this burden.

The mission of the African university must be to facilitate the crystallisation of the African collective vision of attaining pan-African unity and to be a driver for the social, political, and economic development of the continent through fostering of high quality basic and applied research in areas critical to African technical, economic, political, and social development. The African university must be a strategic and distinctive site for higher education teaching and research excellence capable of producing students capable of generating original and home-grown solutions to African problems while also drawing from global human experiences. By and large, it must be a centre for production of African-centred knowledge that contributes to the global knowledge economy while solving African problems and has global appeal and reach. It must not lose sight of its agenda of being a site of questioning of existing Euro-American epistemology, old models, curricula and research paradigms that constrain innovation, creativity, originality, and the spirit of invention.

The African university must reflect carefully on the problem of disciplinary decadence and avoid organising knowledge in narrow terms of rigid disciplines organised into inflexible academic 'tribes' and 'silos' of mono-disciplines. Knowledge must be organised into broad fields such as

African Studies that embraces various disciplines. This means that the African University must be distinguishable by its innovative fields of study and research agendas that are directly informed by the desire to solve pressing African problems and challenges. This means that it is home-grown and it promotes endogenous knowledge production that has been pushed to the margins of society by Euro-American epistemology.

The African university must pride itself as a generator of knowledge rather than a mere consumer of global knowledge. It must produce original thinkers in the mould of Frantz Fanon who are capable of theorising complex issues while at the same time engaged in artisanal empirical research. Such a university must be distinguishable by its epistemological position from which its faculty and students speak, which we describe as the locus of enunciation. The locus of enunciation must be clearly African including the African diaspora. It means that its faculty and students must display the values of speaking from the vantage point of 'colonial difference' and this will enable them to appreciate the reality that Africa and other parts of the ex-colonised world experienced the 'darker side' of modernity such as mercantilism, the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, and neo-colonialism that led to underdevelopment rather than development.

A clear locus of enunciation also reveals that all knowledges are partial and this reality questions the practice of Euro-American epistemology of always concealing the locus of the subject that speaks only to claim universality and to hide the dangerous imperial global designs embedded within it. In short, through their clear locus of enunciation, pan-African students, will think *from* Africa and Global South, taking full account of voices of the African subaltern groups as knowledge producers, think *with them*, learn *from them*, rather than *thinking about them* and *for them* - collaborating with them in the long process of becoming free human beings and agents of African development.

Finally, the African University must

consider fully embracing the decolonial epistemic perspective as a form of critical social theory informing its teaching and research as this is in tandem with the agenda of liberation and charting sustainable development alternatives. Decolonial epistemic perspective is rooted in African resistance to such oppressive processes as the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism as well as the disempowering effects of the globalisation process. The decolonial epistemic perspective privileges insights and knowledges cascading from African societies within the continent and in the diaspora without necessarily throwing away progressive aspects of Euro-American epistemology and the best of modernity.

### Conclusion

The African University must be careful in its recruitment of its professors because most of the African academics and intellectuals are products of the Euro-American institutions where they were fully exposed to Euro-American epistemology as the only objective, universal, truthful, neutral and disembodied way of knowing. They themselves require decolonisation of the mind and introduction to decolonial epistemic perspectives, before they can produce decolonised and fully pan-African students capable of implementing the pan-African vision.

Decoloniality seeks not only to rescue the university from corporatisation but is also pushing for restoration of African knowledges. It is premised on questions of power, being, and knowledge as central constituent elements in the making of the modern world order and production of subjectivities that are mediated by race. Decoloniality invites Africans to think from where they are as the first step towards decolonisation of the mind. It strongly advocates mental decolonisation as an important step towards unleashing African people's research and innovative potential. Decoloniality is a redemptive epistemology, a liberatory force and an ethical-humanistic project gesturing towards pluriversalism in which different worlds fit. ■

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## AN AFRICAN VISION

## Over the shoulder and upfront



We, the people of the African continent believe that the African continent belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity - Do we?

By Mongane Wally Serote

South Africa is on the road to becoming a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous country. In the nineteen years since the liberation of the country from a special kind of colonialism and the apartheid system, the nation has had to grapple with creating cohesion from a politically, economically, socially and culturally fractured and fragmented Nation, whose new institutions, which are based on a new constitution, are still maturing within a society caught in deep-seated contradictions.

The societal contradictions, couched and engaged within the context of the ideals of the liberation struggle, are not antagonistic yet, but are creating a social restlessness within the nation. The restlessness emanates from the diverseness of society; from

both social and economic inequalities; from a geo-racial land occupation which is related to the racial socio economic system which is embedded in the nation; and many other legacies of the apartheid era. One significant legacy is the superiority demeanour of white South Africans, and the inferiority demeanour of black South Africans, emanating from their having believed what the cultural expression of both colonialism and the apartheid systems articulated about them. This condition has stifled and blocked the possibility of an open South African society which is too sacrosanct for deep and broad dialogue for the transformation of the nation.

These contradictions cannot be resolved in the short space of time measured in terms of the duration of

the liberated South Africa. The colonial and apartheid systems were in place and operated for over 350 years. However, it must be remembered that the fact that the oppressed engaged in a protracted struggle for liberation, which was immensely costly in terms of both sacrifice and life, did, when the non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa emerged, create perceptions with deep expectations. Also, it does not help to have, on the one hand a pessimistic media which almost sounds foreign to the objective and subjective realities of South Africa; and on the other, the divided ANC which has become forever defensive and almost unable to give an objective view about the nation, the country and about itself. That does not auger well for the future. The ANC must seek a

solution and create conditions for unity within its ranks. Perhaps the time for another Morogoro has pounced upon the Movement.

The constitution of our country, which is the expression of the strategic objectives of the liberation struggle, which began in the 15th century when the Khoi and the San halted the Portuguese attempt at settlement and terror in the Cape shores, and made qualitative leaps in the 20th century when it became the Liberation Movement, locates the South African Nation squarely on the African continent. In its preamble, it also declares that: "We the people of South Africa ...believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity..."

All of Africa was diverse from the beginning, before colonialism, and has become even more so since and after colonialism because of the divide and rule tactics of the West. Besides the Bantu, Khoi, San and Sahel civilizations within her, there are the Maghreb and Western civilizations which have impacted on the indigenous people and on all aspects of the continent as late arrivals. Our claim to being African, in our diversity, is also our claim to this legacy. This does not mean that the indigenous Africans, who were subjugated by colonialism, apartheid and imperialism, proof of which is the six hundred years of fighting against these systems, were completely vanquished by subjugation; not to the extent that what the Africans believed in and lived for before the occupation is non-existent.

What imperialism, colonialism and apartheid achieved, are two very important elements: firstly Africans were made to believe what white domination declared – that Africans were inferior; secondly, the colonial system not only impoverished the continent but underdeveloped it and that was the base for continuous revolt by the indigenous peoples. That is the long standing contradiction of the African continent against which African Liberation Movements have fought using different strategies and tactics. Short of genocide, colonialism and imperialism sought to subjugate and exploit through the gun, which in

the process dehumanised large African populations; and also to achieve its second important objective, which still holds true today, to siphon all resources from the continent for the benefit of Western Countries.

Sixty decades of concerted struggle for liberation by the indigenous people of the continent and the founding of Pan Africanism which also encompasses the African Diaspora yielded fifty years of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). This eventually, in 1994 in partnership with the Liberation Movements which spearheaded the defeat of these imperialist intentions, although it did not uproot them, gave political freedom to the entire continent.

**“The restlessness emanates from the diverseness of society; from both social and economic inequalities; from a geo-racial land occupation which is related to the racial socio economic system which is embedded in the nation; and many other legacies of the apartheid era.”**

Ten years after came the inception of the African Union (AU) which, implementing the lessons learnt from the OAU, leaped into the formation of six (including the African Diaspora) regional economic communities which are also responsible for the peace and security of the continent.

The AU also ensured the emergence of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which buttresses the development of the continent. And it also established the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which is a tool for dialogue among Africans, a tool for debate and review of the progress of development; a tool for the forward movement of Africa, a tool which contributes directly and indirectly to the unification of

Africa, as it is a tool which must assess the Continent against the global context. However, a question must be asked - is this tool contextualised within the African reality?

This question in my view, poses a challenge which emanates from the history which I briefly refer to above. What is diversity, what are equality, freedom and progress within this diversity? In an attempt to deal with these issues, the NEPAD framework launched the APRM and also the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOC). Participating within the APRM alongside governments are civil society organisations, in the National Governing Council. Presumably, both the APRM and ECOSOC represent Civil Society, as, respectively the tools which must mobilise the masses of the continent to assess governments and to advise the AU heads of state. Given the history of Africa, this was a very important and innovative process - to mobilise the masses to come into partnership with Governments, the Private Sector, and even, it must be said, African armies, for the reconstruction of each of the African countries.

The potential for the expression of the African voice which is most audible under the circumstances is in place. But what is the source, the base of this voice, also, what is its motive force, or put in another way, what is the engine of this voice? The AU has long known and identified the basis of the voice and also that that voice is the engine of the African revolution. Late in the day, the AU founded ECOSOC. What are the constitutive pillars of this structure? What is the content of its agenda? Besides its human resources, where do its other resources emanate from? How must we address the biggest crime which Africans committed – when we believed what the West and White domination said about us? How must we address, how must we negate, how must we operate and dislodge this cancer? We, the people of the African continent believe that the African continent belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity - Do we?

What is it that divides the African diversity, which has in recent times become the incubator of coups, rebel

groups, formation of alliances against other African countries, the calling of former colonial countries to assist one African country against another? Why has the AU, which is better placed than the OAU, in so far as African social and economic upliftment and consciousness are concerned, in recent times been unable to intervene, to take appropriate action, by mobilising nationally, continentally and internationally when African countries, African people's sovereignty is threatened?

If the globe has shrunk to golf ball size, that shift is also an African shift and reality. African countries are, and have been melting pots, where elements of the pot have overflowed into another, mixed with each other, and as I pointed out above, through the APRM, through NEPAD, through the creation of regions, a likely consciousness of the breaking down of colonial borders has created interrelations, understanding and perceptions about each other. In other words, the elements for understanding, knowing and thinking about each other, no matter how rudimentary and no matter how negative, exist.

It is against this backdrop that the protests, demonstrations and strikes which take place across the continent and in different sectors of African society must be understood. The people are exercising their rights. The people, most of whom are oppressed and exploited, even as the continent as a whole has political freedom, although in recent times that seems to be changing, have to find a way to express their expectations and impatience. However, there is still a need to develop a consciousness within the nation which juxtaposes right and obligation. There is still a need to develop a consciousness which makes citizens aware of the structures created through the constitution, which are a legacy of struggle, which are in place to be used to express their dissatisfaction, grievances and outrage against oppression and exploitation, against poverty and tribalism and other abnormal practices which are a legacy of colonialism. The high level institutions of the AU, the Pan African Parliament, the Judiciaries and the

Executives are being entrenched, but are not yet stable. These institutions are being tested during periods of strife and tension in the different countries.

The manner of the recall of President Mbeki in 2008, even though it resulted in deep schisms within the ANC, illustrated the strength of commitment to the constitution. Whereas, in many other countries that dangerous situation could have resulted in dividing the nation further and more deeply, creating instability and bloodshed, in South Africa, a letter of resignation was signed and a new administration moved in, based on the letter and spirit of the constitution. This was the first and most serious test of the rule of law, of democracy, and of

**“What is it that divides the African diversity, which has in recent times become the incubator of coups, rebel groups, formation of alliances against other African countries, the calling of former colonial countries to assist one African country against another?”**

the gains of the revolution.

That test we must admit left the ANC shaken deeply to its roots. There is realignment in the South African society in so far as non-racialism has to be the knitting together of the South African nation. Compared to tribalism, which must also be a crime if committed, racialism is known to be the breaking of the law and at that, a serious crime. That does not mean that there are no racial incidents; they occur frequently across the land and at times they are violent. In those instances, the law has moved swiftly through the police, the courts and jail, to signal to the nation that that is not tolerated. There are instances of tribalism, which infringe on people's

rights, and are a breaking of the law. It is necessary that the perpetrators of such occurrences must be brought to book. There have been instances when tribalism not only resulted in violence, but also, in the loss of life. It is a social behaviour which has resulted in anti-cohesion in society, beginning with the breaking of families and communities and also creating permanent hostilities. It is also a dangerous regressive condition, which can be exploited by forces which seek to weaken the nation. The means to address this scourge were devised in 1912, when everyone in South Africa was mobilised under the African banner. Tribalism cannot be tolerated!

Non-sexism is slowly being anchored as a national consciousness, except that violence against women, high profile or not, seems to be rampant. Besides being a human rights issue, non-sexism is also a human and humane issue. It is both a political and economic issue as also, it must be a progressive culture. It is very easy to blame sexism on African culture, and in the instance that it manifests itself as such, it must be opposed and addressed. However there is no way that western culture can give birth to racism, oppression and exploitation of human beings, create colonial systems and not oppress women. It is most important not to give excuses to those who want to be sexist, by opposing non-sexist positions because they are not African. At the same time, it is important to engage programmes and projects which can empower women economically, and involve men in discussions which encourage this process. It is not correct to claim that women are better than others as this creates unnecessary hostility. It is most constructive to infuse discussion about gender equality, while also encouraging women and men to affirm themselves, to each other and about each other. We must find a context which creates harmony among men and women; rather than unintentionally create hostilities and tensions. Men and women need each other and they need each other as empowered equals.

Very strong signals must be sent across the nation that those who abuse women and children, boys and

girls, will be punished, and will not be tolerated. The media is screaming in the headlines at the nation, that South Africa is called the number one rape state in the world. Who is calling our nation that and on what basis? Can this be collaborated by statistics? Either way, action must be taken because as the Sesotho saying goes: *Lebitso lebe ke seromo*. Give a child a bad name and the child will live up to it.

How do we measure, and how do we inform the nation about the progress and non-progress of this sector? A means, which is accessible, must be created to keep the nation informed about this very important national issue. In the same way that a register will exist of corruption offenders, so must there be a register of convicted sex pests and offenders.

The issue of corruption, it must be noted, can, if not handled properly become a racist issue. Not so long ago, it was normal to say blacks are thieves, are lazy and they smell. No sane, rational person can join in this chorus which has cast a dark cloud over our country. Corruption must not be tolerated nor condoned.

However, we must be categorical in stating that the first and major corruption which was formalised in our country was when indigenous people were dispossessed almost, of everything. It must be stated that at present, we live with those who benefited from that corruption and those who were left destitute by the impact of those laws which implemented that corrupt process. What then must be done?

It is important to state that corruption will not be condoned or tolerated in a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic dispensation, which was put in place by the liberation struggle whose strategic objective was to institute freedom for all the people of South Africa. How then do we create a non-racial/non-sexist voice which seeks to address this dual corruption which exists in our country? There are institutions which the democratic dispensation in our country set up. Are they working? Where is the capacity to carry a debate and discussion of this magnitude, which will raise a consciousness in the country which says that the playing field must be levelled here. It is not

possible for poverty to exist juxtaposed with plenty without there being conflict and violence. This anomaly is, in a strange way, playing itself out in the depressed suburbs in which the majority of residents are black.

The haves have defused competition based on merit, by employing vulnerable and easily destitute residents, who are not South Africans, in these areas, by negotiating for low wages and bad working conditions motivated by maximum profit. There is also the case of non-South Africans who are skilled in the free market competitive economy, who buy bulk and under-charge on selling. There is also deep seated corruption affecting housing lists, government pensions,

**“It must be stated that at present, we live with those who benefited from that corruption and those who were left destitute by the impact of those laws which implemented that corrupt process. What then must be done?”**

health services, education services, and immigration services etc., which create destitution, poverty, hostilities and conflicts. It is extremely important to contextualise these complex conditions. It is not necessarily a fact that these hostilities are fanned by the fact that people are not South Africans. Deeper, the issue is that the pie has become smaller and the volume of residence has increased. This is not to deny that in part, some of the violent occurrences in the depressed suburbs do have xenophobic implications.

However, it is important to take an objective view so that a solution to this serious challenge is found. It is a threat to African Unity, also, it is inhuman. The Government is correct in mobilising the nation against

xenophobic tendencies, but the people will defy Government if they feel that the essence of the problem is not being addressed. The essence of the problem here is poverty. The situation is also not helped by the fact that now and then, people who are arrested for this or that criminal activity come from among non South Africans in and outside of the depressed suburbs. This creates an excuse for prejudice and chauvinism. Systems to create conditions for the legal presence of refugees must be in place, effective and be efficient.

The challenge here is: how do we propagate the concept of African Renaissance, and internationalist spirit among the masses of our country? How can we use Arts and Culture, Heritage and Indigenous Knowledge Systems, within a non-racial, non sexist and democratic context to raise consciousness about these matters? Are these not matters for the school curriculum? Are these not matters for political campaigns, by all political parties rather than being the responsibility of Government only?

In conclusion: what is the role of the tertiary institutions on the continent? Is it to compete with tertiary institutions in the west or other parts of the world, or to orientate themselves so that they can contribute not only to the mass consciousness of Africans, but to engage Indigenous Knowledge Systems, (IKS), which is the base and anchor of intellectual discourse and resistance and constitute a reference point among the masses, especially in the rural areas, but not excluding the urban areas? The masses live on the basis of IKS. IKS is a singular knowledge through which the masses think, express and act. The five categories of IKS namely, social issues, technology, biodiversity, institutions and liberatory process embody a broad, wide and deep knowledge which, as history repeats itself, become a point of reference. However, IKS has as its context world knowledge, it does not exist in isolation. The great challenge here, on the African continent, is: How do we mobilise the masses of the African people to enter centre stage of the continent, and to contribute and to shape the context of the global village? ■

# Is Africa a Lion on the Move?



In order to grow the economies of the region sustainably, market access alone is not sufficient. It should be supplemented by the development of new industries and regional value chains to address supply side constraints and spur diversification, as well as cross-border infrastructural development.

By Busani Ngcaweni

Often times historical events occur which prod us to pause and reflect; contemplating questions such as what could have been, how did we get here, how do we proceed from here. With the world observing the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now transformed into the African Union (AU), the historical necessity of reflecting on the past, the present and the future comes into play.

In the limited scope of this article<sup>1</sup>, I hope to problematise the notion of Africa being a lion on the move as suggested by the McKinsey Global Institute in *Lions on the Move: the Progress and the Potential of African Economies* (2010)<sup>2</sup>.

It is compelling for us in the continent to reflect on such assertions since some reports still sustain a perception that Africa is a sleeping giant, a suggestion dominant even as the post-2008 global economic

crisis evidence points differently – it has been widely reported that Africa experienced positive growth when most of the world economies were declining.

Worse still, some prejudicially view Africans as a people without history. For example, few years ago, the then French president, Nicolas Sarkozy,<sup>3</sup> cynically observed that:

*Africans have never really entered history... They have never really launched themselves into the*

future... *The African peasant only knew the eternal renewal of time, marked by the endless repetition of the same gestures and the same words. In this realm of fancy ... there is neither room for human endeavour nor the idea of progress.*

Our duty is to continue to challenge and dispel such misconceptions, not least by adopting progressive measures that propel our continent to higher levels of development. Doing so is now even more compelling given that the ten-year old African Union counts among its principal achievements the adoption and implementation of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

I therefore re-cast my eyes to the conclusions of the McKinsey report *Lions on the Move*, which noted that:

*Africa's economic pulse has quickened, infusing the continent with a new commercial vibrancy. Real GDP rose 4.9% per year from 2000 through 2008, more than twice its pace in the 1980s and 90s. Telecom, banking, and retail are flourishing. Construction is booming. Foreign investment is surging... the continent is among the world's most rapidly growing economic regions. This acceleration is a sign of hard-earned progress and promise.*

### The Context

Compare this with sentiments expressed in "Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?" written in 2000<sup>4</sup> and a different picture emerges. In that study the World Bank wrote:

*Making matters worse, Africa's place in the global economy has been eroded, with declining export shares in traditional primary products, little diversification into new lines of business, and massive capital flight and loss of skills to other regions. Now the region [Africa] stands in danger of being excluded from the information revolution.*

Or even more, *The Economist* magazine in its May 2000 issue had declared Africa as a 'hopeless continent'<sup>(5)</sup>. Yet eleven years later in its December 2011 issue, it carried the title "Africa Rising"<sup>6</sup>.

The outcome of this benchmarking reflects changing performance and

perception of Africa where:

- Africa's collective GDP in 2008 reached \$1.6 trillion;
- Africa's combined consumer spending topped \$860 billion in 2008;
- cellular phone subscribers grew by 316 million in year 2000 to 500 million in 2010;
- at least 20 African companies now have revenues of \$3 billion; and
- foreign direct investment reached \$514 billion in 2009 up from \$154 billion in year 2000.

Be that as it may, the world is still emerging from a recession which has depressed Africa's GDP since 2009 and slowed progress towards achieving

**“Whilst it is now accepted that the dim picture that characterised Africa shortly after independence to the turn of the century has been replaced with optimism of an Africa determined to turn the corner and claim its place in history, we should warn against complacency.”**

some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The global economy has steadied now, but growth is slower than before the crisis, and many European countries remain deep in stormy waters of recession.

Africa got through the crisis relatively better than many other parts of the world although the effects in the real economy were devastating as millions of jobs were lost.

Indeed, signs point to a new commercial wind blowing across Africa as different sectors show signs of stabilisation or growth. Besides the renewed commodity demand largely driven by China's thirst for

raw materials, telecommunications, transport and retail sectors are also growing. These are driven from within as consumer spending grows.

In some parts of the continent, tourism is also blooming, and even manufacturing is growing for the first time in three decades.

Furthermore Africa is deep in the information technology revolution with unprecedented cellular phone penetration and high speed internet connectivity expanding in unimaginable ways.

### Regional Integration as Pre-condition for Growth

In the Business Report of 21 November 2010, Maria Ramos, CEO of ABSA Bank posed a question: 'Can Africa claim the 21st century as its own?' She argued Africa will need "far higher levels of regional and global integration" to achieve this goal.

Such growth is seen to lie in diversifying our economies so that we are not just exporters of raw materials, which are vulnerable to fluctuating global commodity prices.

Ramos and many other development economists emphasise the importance of sound investment in infrastructure development, particularly roads, rail, ports, and telecommunications, and the removal of regulatory barriers that have a negative impact on the movements of goods, services and capital.

The ability to mobilise capital is key in this regard. Already, it is reported that in 2009, "half of the world's FDI flows went to developing economies"<sup>7</sup>.

I would venture to say that improving economic performance can be attributed to the actions taken by governments to end conflicts, increase the accountability of governments, improve macroeconomic conditions and create better business climates, which in turn enable growth to accelerate broadly across countries and sectors. Sustained growth is dependent on political stability.

Because of the resource endowment of the central and east Africa region, especially since proven oil reserves have been found in Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and recently Kenya and there

are speculations for similar finds in Mozambique, Tanzania, Somalia and Ethiopia, the region faces potential threats as well as opportunities.

In the last few years, instability in the region eroded the possibility of realising the potential economic benefits of this endowment.

Conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan and Somalia masked the true potential of east Africa to create a viable, strong economic zone. Today political stability has been realised save for a few challenges in Somalia and the Sudan.

In the same light, the gift of oil, gas and minerals is starting to turn from a curse into a source of growth. Natural resources must drive growth, equity, prosperity and security for all our people. Africa cannot afford to miss another commodity boom.

For this to be achieved, countries like Nigeria in west Africa, Kenya in east Africa and Algeria in the north need to serve as axis of growth and development. Let us expand on Kenya and South Africa for illustration purposes – two cases randomly selected for the purpose of this article.<sup>8</sup>

### Kenya in East Africa

In 2009 the fastest growing African sub-region was east Africa, followed by north Africa, west Africa, central Africa and southern Africa was the last. There can be no doubt that the reduction of conflict in east Africa, combined with the region's relatively successful economic integration, help to explain why east Africa was, in 2010, leading sub-Saharan Africa's growth charge.

As conflicts abate, governments are steering economic transformation through macroeconomic and fiscal instruments. They are lowering inflation, trimming foreign debt and shrinking budget deficits. Also, they are relentlessly pursuing regional integration efforts.

Without a doubt, the peace dividend (especially growing stability in Sudan and Somalia) is now within reach in this region.

Kenya is widely regarded as the economic powerhouse of the East African Region and has the potential to drive economic development well into the next decade.

Because of its geopolitical location, its relatively developed infrastructure, educated working class and large consumer middle class, Kenya has the ability to serve as the locomotive for development and east Africa's gateway to the world.

Fundamentals such as political will, macroeconomic instruments and infrastructure are in place, or are at least being consolidated. Investor confidence is once again rising, hence a return to positive FDI inflows.

In 2010, more than 60% of all goods exported by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and to a lesser extent the DRC and Tanzania, to the global market, flew through Kenya.

The port city of Mombasa has undergone significant upgrades over the past few years to cater for the growing demands to export goods from the east African community.

Similarly, the Lamu Port South Sudan and Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET)<sup>9</sup> flagship project launched in February 2012, will be able to unlock cross border development and enable the shipment of the much expected flow of oil from Uganda and South Sudan, through Kenya. That project will cost about \$24.7 billion.

The strong geopolitical reliance on Kenya has seen the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE) grow to be the 4th largest on the continent (in terms of volume traded in year 2010), and 5th in terms of market capitalisation. Nairobi also houses the headquarters of several international companies and organisations that operate in east Africa.

Tourism is another pillar of the Kenyan economy. Sustained stability and growth in the region is expected to boost tourism in the neighbouring countries as well.

Most developing regions have leading countries that anchor growth and stability. In Latin America it is Brazil. In southern Africa it is South Africa. In east Africa it is Kenya. This position comes with heavy responsibilities and is often fraught with difficulties.

No country in the continent can make progress through bullying, or being insensitive to its neighbours' needs and concerns. In other words, no country can grow alone.

Our highways, railways and ports should be geared to benefit our neighbours too. Already, South Africa has factored this into a core of its national strategic planning hence the detailing of regional cooperation in its National Growth Path and the National Development Plan adopted by Parliament in 2012.

Similarly, regional economic anchors like Kenya and South Africa also need access to resources which neighbouring nations are often better placed to provide; for example Mozambique provides gas to South Africa and Lesotho contributes tons of fresh water to fuel South Africa's development.

In addition, countries like Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa have a duty to support conflict resolution efforts in their regions and in the whole continent. Oftentimes they also have to accommodate and support persons displaced by the crisis.

Kenya's role in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and concluding the recent national elections whilst simultaneously supporting stabilisation efforts in Sudan and Somalia is commendable.

### South Africa in Southern Africa

South Africa has advocated and actively supported regional integration in southern Africa as an essential component of our wider international economic relations.

The Government has promoted an approach to regional cooperation and integration that seeks to correct imbalances in inherited trade relations. Our own development and security are integrally entwined with the reconstruction and revitalisation of the southern African region. Indeed, it is an axiom that South Africa cannot hope to become an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty.

The principles guiding South Africa's foreign policy in the continent are: support for political stability and security; support for post-conflict reconstruction and development; coordination at multilateral economic level to adopt common positions; cooperation around macroeconomic stability; support for finance for development; and support for debt

forgiveness.

Thus South Africa seeks to make a constructive contribution to Africa's economic revival and socio-economic development by supporting continental efforts to diversify and strengthen economic capabilities. To this end it seeks to promote deeper economic integration to build stronger regional markets and foster intra-Africa trade; champion infrastructure development, including cross border infrastructure through the Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs); and offer technical assistance for human and institutional capacity building.

#### **At SADC level**

Within the SADC region, the FTA was successfully launched to promote deeper regional integration. While it has already achieved much in terms of trade liberalisation, there is still work to be done to achieve the full implementation and consolidation of the SADC Trade Protocol.

Notwithstanding the FTA, South Africa remains concerned that SADC runs the risk of increased economic polarisation. This is reflected in the fact that despite significant tariff liberalisation in the South African market under the SADC Protocol on Trade, the region has not been able to take advantage of the new opportunities.

Production and industrial development are lagging behind. In 2009 South Africa's exports to SADC amounted to about \$8 billion while imports were only about \$2 billion.

This trend cannot be allowed to continue if SADC is to grow as a whole region.

As alluded to earlier, there is a widening gap between market integration and the ability of many member states to make profitable use of that market opening, in the interest of their own economic development and the livelihoods of their people.

The reasons include limited production capacity and lack of infrastructure. In order to grow the economies of the region sustainably, market access alone is not sufficient. It should be supplemented by the development of new industries and regional value chains to address supply

side constraints and spur diversification, as well as cross-border infrastructural development.

This, arguably, should be the immediate focus of SADC.

South Africa is involved in a number of cross-border infrastructure development projects in the Southern Africa region utilising the Spatial Development Initiatives methodology. The Maputo Development Corridor still represents the best case study of the implementation of this methodology.

#### **Proposed COMESA-EAC-SADC FTA**

The importance of the initiative to establish a tripartite free trade area

**“Ramos and many other development economists emphasise the importance of sound investment in infrastructure development, particularly roads, rail, ports, and telecommunications, and the removal of regulatory barriers that have a negative impact on the movements of goods, services and capital.”**

encompassing COMESA, EAC and SADC and its potential to deepen this Africa growth story, cannot be overemphasised.

Market opening in facilitating economic development leads to: access to a bigger market which serves as a draw card for direct investment; and it also serves to transform the region and Africa from small fragmented markets to one large market where our companies can achieve economies of scale, lower production costs and ultimately global competitiveness.

If done properly this will foster economic growth, employment creation and improved standards of living for the people of the three

economic communities.

In the design though, Africa should be cautious not to inherit the bottlenecks that currently suffocate current FTA discussions.

#### **Multilateral level**

At the multilateral level in Africa, South Africa's policy posture demonstrates a continued commitment to work actively with other members of the African Union, and with Kenya as an anchor state in East Africa to strengthen continental integration processes that seek to build diversified production capacity in agriculture, industry and the tertiary sector.

This is consistent with the processes put in place by the African Union and the Abuja Treaty to establish the African Economic Community.

South Africa's plan for promoting an integrated trade and development approach in Africa will also be pursued by supporting global trade integration and market access for Africa, focusing as a priority on areas such as:

- Support for trade policy and institutional development in Africa;
- Addressing supply-side constraints in key sectors;
- Developing market access strategies for Africa and beyond;
- Improving the efficiency and competitiveness of Africa's services sectors, including services exports;
- Capacity and skills development for trade policy implementation and trade negotiations; and
- Reforming and mainstreaming development in multilateral trade institutions, such as the WTO.

#### **Looking Ahead**

Africa's long-term growth prospects look strong, propelled by both external trends in the global economy and internal changes in the continent's societies and economies.

The current demand for natural resources, spearheaded by the economic expansion of countries such as China and India, will continue to push higher profits back into the continent.

Africa has 10% of the world's oil reserves, 40% of its gold, and 80% of the chromium and platinum. In addition it also has quantifiable

reserves of the copper, nickel and palladium that form the backbone of the telecommunications industry.

Demand for raw material is growing faster every year and now accounts for half of Africa's total export earnings. In turn the growth in exports has necessitated the need for economic partnerships within and amongst African countries.

Economic transformation has also been fuelled by demographic changes such as the youth bulge, education as well as urbanisation. According to the United Nations, projections for increase in urban population in Africa stood at 0.9 billion in 2011.<sup>(10)</sup>

This pushed expendable income higher with the number of households with discretionary income projected to rise by 50% over the next 10 years. By 2030, the continent's top 18 cities could have a combined spending power of 1.3 trillion dollars.

If declarations are anything to go by, G20 outcomes suggest that the developed world now has positive views about Africa. Significantly, the G20 countries agreed that the political heads of the African Union and NEPAD would be regular participants in G20 events.

Secondly, the development agenda introduced into the work of the G20 is aimed at supporting initiatives that Africa had embarked upon even before the African Union was formed. G20 leaders believe that the continued growth of Africa has a significant contribution to make to the rebalancing of the world economy.

Thirdly, the G20 committed itself to support regional integration in Africa. They have already seen the benefits, even though the continent still has a long way to go.

Because of the progress the continent has made over the last 15 to 20 years, it has won the interest and the respect of the rest of the world. It is up to it to maintain this standing.

For Africa to claim the 21st century, it must overcome some of the structural constraints such as lower levels of intra- and inter-regional trade. The net effect is a serious trade imbalance between our economies.

For South Africa, this weakness cost up to a million jobs during the

recession as the global demand for our goods declined.

Whilst South Africa chases DFI, we should acknowledge investments made by African firms in the retail, telecommunications, oil and gas, hotel and tourism, and financial services beyond the borders of their origin. This is positive as it suggests that African grown companies and industrialists affirm their own belief in the growth prospects and economic future of Africa.

**“Because of its geopolitical location, its relatively developed infrastructure, educated working class and large consumer middle class, Kenya has the ability to serve as the locomotive for development and east Africa’s gateway to the world.”**

These investments have had a multiplier effect in secondary industries that they are linked to.

#### **What is to be done?**

The immediate task is to sustain and increase bold investments in social and economic infrastructure, i.e. education and training, healthcare, roads, ports, telecommunications, research and innovation, railways, regulatory institutions etc.

These will improve our competitiveness, drive down the costs of doing business, spur small enterprise development and improve the employability of our youthful population.

A stronger higher education, research and innovation sector has an important role to play in this regard. It must provide breakthroughs to many of the social and economic challenges Africa faces today.

Africa should also acknowledge

that its performance in the area of agriculture is discomfiting given that it accounts for 60% of the world's uncultivated but arable land. This partly explains the stubborn challenge of food insecurity and mediocre contribution of the sector toward the GDP.

A major part of China, India and Brazil's growth story has been the result of their capacity to mobilise and apply capital to stimulate agriculture and related industries for both internal needs and export markets.

As is already the case in Kenya and in South Africa, vistas of growth in our tourism markets are endless. This too requires security, network infrastructure and service excellence.

Like Kenya, South Africa is sustaining its peace-building, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. However, both countries continue to have the challenge of being prime destinations for political and economic refugees.

Therefore, supporting stabilisation efforts in Zimbabwe, the Sudan and the DRC is in essence an investment in growth and development since no country or region can grow sustainably in the context of violent conflict and wars, civil as well as cross-border. Wars squander resources meant for human capital development and economic activity.

Africa needs to coordinate programmes and projects lest it build railway lines that use different systems thus creating difficulties in borders. Africa needs to standardise systems e.g., most EU trains can move across borders without reconfiguration. The same should apply to ports and airports - navigation and air traffic control systems must be standardised.

On this score the responsibility of non-state actors is to monitor the implementation of national, regional and continental commitments and hold authorities to account. To paraphrase Franz Fanon,<sup>11</sup> they should side with the oppressed everywhere “if a humanism that can be considered valid is to be built to the dimensions of the universe”.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we recognise that South Africa and Kenya hold an

important leadership role within the EAC, COMESA and SADC, just as Nigeria and Algeria are leading growth in west and north Africa respectively.

Therefore, their quest for achieving greater regional integration places the responsibility on their shoulders to forge closer coordination and partnerships drawing on each other's strengths. This is even more urgent in the context of our efforts to build a Tripartite Free Trade Area with a roadmap agreed to at the Sandton Summit in 2011.

Necessarily, they should drive this free trade area initiative and the ultimate achievement of the African Union's envisioned African Economic Community which is designed to promote economic, social and cultural development as well as African economic integration.

It is important that we take note of the major conclusions of the McKinsey's *Lion on the Move* report which highlights the important correlation of peace, good governance, sound macro-economic policy and regional integration as critical elements for Africa to grow.

The report further emphasises the importance of the global interconnectedness of our economies, which will largely be shaped by economic partnerships forged with the global community and especially with the emerging powers from the global South.

The last major conclusion of the report was that the demographic dividend<sup>12</sup> i.e. youthfulness of Africa as compared to OECD and Asian countries, the internal social dynamics like human capital, urbanisation, and the rise of middle class consumers, will all contribute to this anticipated great leap forward.

We are compelled to leverage the growing positive sentiment as expressed by McKinsey<sup>13</sup> that the sub-Saharan "region has already made big strides below the radar".

It now stands to become the developing world's next great success story. This is demonstrated by statistics showing that in 2010, "the rate of return on foreign investment is higher in Africa than in any other developing region".

Consequently, projections are that

by 2020, Africa's collective GDP, consumer spending, and households with discretionary income will have skyrocketed.

For its part, the 2013 Global Economic Prospects report<sup>14</sup> makes the following conclusions about scenarios for growth in Africa south of the Sahara:

*Overall, the region is projected to grow at its pre-crisis average rate of 5 per cent over the 2013-15 period (4.9 per cent in 2013, gradually strengthening to 5.2 percent in 2015). Excluding South Africa, the region's growth will average 6% over the 2013-15 period.*

*Aggregate foreign direct investment inflows increased by 5.5 percent in 2012.*

*Consumer spending accounting for over 60 percent of GDP in the region and is, therefore, an important determinant of overall growth. Consumer demand has grown relatively rapidly in recent years, supported by solid real incomes growth. Indeed, over the past decade real per capita incomes rose by an average of 2.3 percent annually. As a result, as of 2012 some 21 sub-Saharan African countries (almost half) are classified as middle-income economies compared to only nine a decade ago.*

*Export growth in sub-Saharan Africa was relatively robust in 2012. Export volumes in the region increased by 4.5 percent between January and July 2012, versus a global average of 3.6 percent during that period.*

All this points to one conclusion – Africa is emerging and making strides towards leveraging the post-independence dividend.

Whilst it is now accepted that the dim picture that characterised Africa shortly after independence to the turn of the century has been replaced with optimism of an Africa determined to turn the corner and claim its place in history, we should warn against complacency.

The sustainability of all attempts to build an Africa that can claim its place and catch up with the rise and speed of development of other emerging powers will largely be informed by the sound institutions necessary to

provide support to commerce-driven development, under free, just and democratic political arrangements.

History enjoins Africa to make the aspirations of its people a reality! Instead of narrow national interests, Africa should use its economic and geo-political position to build a continent its people want and deserve to live in.

As Pixley ka Isaka Seme<sup>15</sup>, a great son of Africa, said in 1906:

*The African already recognizes his anomalous position and desires a change. The brighter day is rising upon Africa.*

*Already I seem to see her chains dissolved, her desert plains red with harvest, her Abyssinia and her Zululand the seats of science and religion, reflecting the glory of the rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities.*

*Her Congo and her Gambia whitened with commerce, her crowded cities sending forth the hum of business, and all her sons employed in advancing the victories of peace – greater and more abiding than the spoils of war. Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period! ■*

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# SAB Entrepreneurship programme drives job creation



Hepsy Mkhungo, SAB Head Enterprise Development and Community Partnerships.

South African Breweries

The South African Breweries is tackling the country's worryingly low levels of unemployment head-on with its youth entrepreneurship development programme, SAB KickStart.

Launched in 1995 with the strategic goal of supporting black South Africans, the 18-month programme is open to entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 35 years who manage and run their own existing small businesses. Successful entrants selected to participate in the programme stand the chance of winning a share of R6-million worth of business support.

Many young entrepreneurs have difficulty in taking their businesses from survivalist or micro-level, to high impact and sustainable, owing to a number of challenges, from lack of access to funding, training and experience.

Recently re-engineered to take challenges faced by small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa into account, the programme incorporates four key areas – business skills training and grant funding as short-term interventions; and Business Development Support (BDS), tailored mentorship and access to markets as long-term interventions.

Hepsy Mkhungo, SAB Head Enterprise Development and Community Partnerships, said the new programme would help the company “to develop sustainable and high impact youth-owned business that will drive strong job creation in South Africa”.

“Through its own experiences and through observations of the market, the company has learned that unless an Enterprise Development programme addresses all four areas, it is unlikely to be successful in the long term,” Mkhungo said. “SAB KickStart addresses all of these aspects. The funding and additional support will go towards growing their business into a sustainable and successful entity, a barrier many SMEs in South Africa come up against. In turn, SAB believes these businesses will have the ability to drive much needed job creation in the country.”

Through a detailed process, the SAB KickStart programme leaves very little to chance. It starts with careful planning and preparation, which

includes identification of the target market; it moves to recruitment and selection where, again, meritocracy is the defining criterion.

Today's SAB KickStart has a far greater focus on fostering an entrepreneurship culture. “One constant with the programme is that we will retain its positioning as a benchmark for private sector Enterprise Development.”

The comprehensive support package is designed to help drive SAB's response to the challenges of poverty,

**“Entrepreneurs have difficulty taking their businesses from survivalist or micro-level, to high impact and sustainable, owing to lack of access to funding, training and experience. SAB KickStart takes these challenges faced by small to medium enterprises (SMEs) into account, and incorporates four key areas – business skills training and grant funding; Business Development Support; and tailored mentorship and access to markets.”**

inequality and job creation in South Africa, which can have a considerable impact on the country's success as a nation.

Training is provided, with a focus on relevance and maximum impact, with 10 SAB KickStarters trained per SAB region per year. A regional adjudication takes place where the top 18 candidates are selected; mentorship and business development support are provided. Each of these businesses is individually evaluated and a growth strategy and

6-month mentorship programme is developed for each. They also receive grant funding of between R100 000 and R200 000 for assets after a thorough needs analysis of their business is conducted. Finally, the top three national winners are selected by the adjudicators, each receiving additional grant funding for their business - R500 000 (1st place winner), R250 000 (2nd place) and R150 000 (3rd place). Each will also receive a week-long all expenses paid trip to an international country to learn about their products, services and industry.

This takes place over a period of twelve months, of which six months encompasses mentorship. The BDS is another new element that has been introduced to ensure that an individualised needs analysis and growth strategy is devised for each SAB KickStarter very specific to their business needs. The top 3 winners also receive a further six months of mentorship. “Across the entire process, performance management and continuous improvement are applied to ensure that SAB KickStart achieves its goals of initiating and supporting a culture of market-driven entrepreneurship,” Mkhungo said.

The re-engineered SAB KickStart is aligned to SAB's goals which are ultimately aimed at contributing towards its holistic Enterprise Development Programme. “Our goals revolve around accelerated development, sustainability, financial and operational independence,” says Mkhungo. “SAB KickStart's re-engineering sets out to give existing businesses the growth boost they need to achieve these goals – and then continue to flourish independently of SAB's assistance.”

Entries into the competition close on Friday, June 14 2013, and SAB will invite successful candidates to a selection interview. Go to [www.sabkickstart.co.za](http://www.sabkickstart.co.za) ■





# Today's youth holds the key to Afrika's total emancipation

By Malaika Wa Azania

**T**he hardest lesson of my life has come to me late. It is that a nation can win freedom without its people becoming free..." – Joshua Nkomo

I have quoted these words from *The Story of My Life*, by the founder and leader of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), Joshua Nkomo, to capture and illustrate that true freedom as envisaged by the warrior men and women of this beloved continent is yet to be fully accomplished.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). By the late 19th century, all countries on the Afrikan continent, with the exception of Abyssinia (as Ethiopia was then known) had been colonised by European superpowers. These colonial governments imposed their own systems of law on Afrikan societies, annihilating indigenous systems that had been working effectively for Afrikan people for many centuries. These colonial systems of law were diabolical in nature and they denied Afrikans their basic human rights. The colonial economy existed for exploitation and benefited the colonial powers at the expense of the toiling masses of our continent.

However, at the end of the Second World War, colonised countries all across the continent began to heighten their resistance struggle, demanding independence from colonial rule. This fighting spirit was amplified and greatly assisted by the influence of the spread of Socialism, which led to Cold War rivalry between the then existing spheres of power: the Capitalist west and the Socialist east. Many Afrikan leaders at that time identified more with the latter ideology, for it presented a more human face to all oppressed peoples of the world. As a result of this, there was a rapid political decolonisation of Afrika. With the liberation call engulfing the continent that had been stripped of its own sovereignty during a period known as the "Scramble for Afrika", many Afrikan countries won their political independence and began the gruelling process of restructuring their paralysed economies. Economies

were paralysed because the colonial economic system had been designed in such a way that the majority of the people survived through the selling of labour to an elite settler minority that had complete access to and ownership of the means of production and distribution. This particular task was all the more difficult because many of the newly independent countries were heavily indebted to western entities such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The leaders of the then independent Afrikan countries (by then, there were 37 states that had gained independence) established the Organisation of African Unity on the 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The organisation aimed to promote unity and cohesion among the newly independent Afrikan states, to advance their economic

**“ We must equally necessarily locate ourselves in the current struggle facing the continent: the struggle for economic emancipation and political stability, which the OAU was not able to fully realise. ”**

development and to accelerate the liberation of the Afrikan nations that still remained under colonial and White rule. The OAU played a pivotal role in the liberation struggle of the Afrikan continent. It was able to eradicate colonial rule by providing support to colonised and oppressed nations and enabling them to usher in democratic governments. National liberation movements all across the continent, like the PAC, ANC, ZAPU, ZANU, FRELIMO, MPLA, PAIGC and SWAPO, were aided by the OAU through the provision of arms, training, military bases and refuge. It was partly through the revolutionary efforts of the OAU that our own country, the last to become a member state of the OAU in

1994, was liberated. The OAU ensured that South Afrika, which was under an apartheid regime, was expelled from international bodies such as the World Health Organisation so as to put pressure on its repressive government to end the tyranny and heinous dehumanisation of the Black majority. The OAU was disbanded in 2002 by its then Chairperson, the President of the Republic of South Afrika, Mr Thabo Mbeki, and was replaced with the Afrikan Union.

There are two points that I want to highlight about the OAU. The first is that it remains one of the most important products of Afrika's resistance struggle against imperial devastation. The OAU was established by visionaries who understood not only the importance of ending colonialism, but also the importance of ensuring that neo-colonialism is combated. By setting up the African Development Bank that was intended to fund projects aimed at the strengthening of the continent's economy, the OAU was making sure that post-independence Afrikan states would not find themselves at the mercy of their former colonisers. The reality of the situation was that while countries could be politically emancipated, they continued to rely heavily on the former colonial powers for economic aid. This aid could only be obtained through entering into an arrangement that would always place the donor countries at an advantage, such as the selling of raw materials from the former colonies at very low prices to the donor country, the former coloniser. The setting up of this bank thus empowered the continent to fund its own programmes and sustain its own economic restructuring initiatives.

The second and most critical point that I want to highlight, one that is often omitted in history books, is that young people played a critical role in the formation of the OAU. In 1962, a year before the OAU was established, the Pan African Youth Movement (PYM) was founded in Guinea Conakry, in the west of the Afrika. The organisation's primary objective was to rally the youth of the continent behind the cause of Afrikan liberation. The militancy of this generation of young people influenced

the radical posture that the OAU would take a year later.

Young people throughout history have played a vital role in the shaping of revolutionary discourse. Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, was a youth in the 1960s when he rose to prominence as the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) at the height of the Second Chimurenga, a liberation war which ultimately led to the overthrow of the White minority rule government of Ian Smith. Patrice Lumumba was 35 years old in 1960 when he helped the Congo to win independence from Belgium, and a year later he would become the first Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The founder of the Black Consciousness Movement and honorary president of the Black People's Convention, Steve Bantu Biko, who inspired the student uprisings of 1976 in South Afrika through the championing of BC ideology, was only 30 years old when he was killed in police custody in 1977. History has documented many revolutionary feats that were achieved by young people and if history is a good teacher (and I firmly believe that it is) then it is today's youth that is going to continue with the work of the youth of 50 years ago, the work of ensuring the total emancipation of the mother continent.

The OAU played its part; it ensured the obliteration of colonialism on the Afrikan continent. Through the invaluable assistance of the OAU, many countries were able to free themselves from the clutches of colonial rule and assert their sovereignty. We must necessarily applaud the work of the founders of this gallant organisation. However, we must equally necessarily locate ourselves in the current struggle facing the continent: the struggle for economic emancipation and political stability, which the OAU was not able to fully realise.

The reality of the situation is that the Afrikan continent is under threat from foreign powers who continue to milk her of her natural resources. Five decades since the formation of the OAU, we witnessed the nefarious invasion of Libya by the North Atlantic Treaty

**“The youth of today, we who will inherit Afrika from those currently leading it, have a huge responsibility before us. That responsibility is to strive towards economic freedom, moral generation and social cohesion in a continent that is currently characterised by fragmentation and class inequalities.”**

Organisation (NATO), the diabolical invasion of Cote d'Ivoire by the French government, imposing of sanctions on Zimbabwe by the European Union and the AmeriKKkan government and the domination of Afrikan economies by foreign multinational companies as is the case in Zambia. In South Afrika, a settler minority controls more than 70%

**“The founder of the Black Consciousness Movement and honorary president of the Black People's Convention, Steve Bantu Biko, who inspired the student uprisings of 1976 in South Afrika through the championing of BC ideology, was only 30 years old when he was killed in police custody in 1977.”**

of the land while the Black majority remains landless and destitute in their own land. All this has resulted in political instability and the destruction of infrastructure in various parts of the continent where armed conflict has ensued. It has also led to rising levels of inequalities inter alia, high levels of poverty, starvation and malnutrition. This reality undermines and threatens to reverse the progressive gains of the Afrikan revolution, for a nation cannot be free when the majority of its inhabitants live in debilitating poverty, fear and repression.

The youth of today, we who will inherit Afrika from those currently leading it, have a huge responsibility before us. That responsibility is to strive towards economic freedom, moral regeneration and social cohesion in a continent that is currently characterised by fragmentation and class inequalities.

We must necessarily begin by locating and employing our full energies in sites of struggle such as education. This we can do through participating in initiatives geared towards an Afrikan developmental agenda, such as student and youth organisations or the civil society movement. Personally, I have found the African Youth Coalition, an umbrella body of youth orientated civil society organisations in the continent, established in September 2012 at a youth retreat organised by the Thabo Mbeki Foundation, to be a space where young people can truly make a difference. A prospective affiliate with the Pan Afrikan Youth Union (PYU), the AU's recognised youth representative body, AYC has already made inroads in various parts of Afrika and taken a stand against atrocities that have been happening on the continent. This is what Afrika needs moving forward: young people with the sole objective of contributing to the revival of Afrika; young people who fully believe in and are prepared to gear all their energies and ideas towards the realisation of an Afrikan Renaissance. ■

Another Afrika is possible!

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# Cuba and the African Revolution



Over twenty-five thousand students from third world countries are currently studying medicine in Cuba. These include one thousand and two hundred students from our country who are in danger of being persuaded to abandon their studies.

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By Justice Piitso

A few months ago 187 out of a total of 1200 South African medical students studying in Cuba embarked on a protest action complaining about the food provided and the amount of the monthly stipend they receive from our democratic government. The Cuban government removed the students who were demonstrating outside the South African embassy. Both the Cuban and South African governments are anxious to continue to implement the existing bilateral agreement our government has entered into with the Republic of Cuba.

The students, who receive three meals a day free of charge, demanded provision of better quality food and also demanded an increase of their monthly stipend from two hundred to seven hundred dollars. They even went to the extent of giving our own government an ultimatum of their impending return home if their demands were not adhered to.

Even though some of the grievances advanced by the students may be genuine, we must try to find out exactly why they suddenly object to a stipend they had previously accepted. If my memory serves me well, there

have been, in the past, a number of responsible students from our country who have even been able to save a little from the very same amount of a monthly stipend, to provide support for their poor families.

The South African Departments of Health and Higher Education and Training are not sympathetic to the students' demands. Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande - who is also leader of the South African Communist Party - condemned their action in the strongest terms.

"If they are demanding something that is a privilege, as if it is a right,

and threatening to come home, then maybe they should do just that and open up that opportunity for other equally deserving young people who are thirsty for such opportunities," he said. He added that the sense of entitlement and lack of gratitude was totally unacceptable, and that their action threatened opportunities for other deserving, particularly poor, South Africans to receive medical training in Cuba.

We all know that as a result of the Apartheid education system and many years of perpetual neglect of black people by imperialism and colonialism, our country has a devastating shortage of human capital especially with respect to the health sector. Many of our qualified doctors are reluctant to work in the vast rural outskirts of our country. We need far more health professionals to meet the demands of our society.

The major challenges our democratic government has to confront are the socio-economic contradictions of poverty, disease and underdevelopment. More specifically our country is confronted by a quadruple burden of diseases such as HIV and TB, diabetes, high maternal and child mortality rates, non-communicable diseases and increasing statistics of violence and injuries. Our population is only 0.7% of the world population, but we have 17% of the world HIV population and nearly two million of our people are on anti-retroviral treatment.

Support and solidarity from Cuba to South Africa and other African countries has a long history. The Commander in Chief of the Cuban revolution said this about the heroic battle of Cuito Cuanavale "the decisive battles should not be waged on the terrain chosen by the enemy, the decisive battles must be waged on the terrain chosen by one's own forces, and the enemy must be hit in sensitive, truly strategic places." We owe our freedom to the heroic men and women who occupied the trenches and sacrificed their lives in rebuffing the Apartheid machine.

Our struggle icon and the former President of the ANC and the first President of our democratically elected government, former President

Mandela, expressed the following profound revolutionary words during his first visit to the Republic of Cuba, just after his release from the Apartheid jail: "Cuito Cuanavale was the turning point in the struggles for the liberation of the continent and our people from... Apartheid". We are therefore not amazed by the everlasting shockwaves of the defeat of the Apartheid military machine at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

Forty thousand Cuban combatants, nine hundred and ninety eight tanks, six hundred armoured transport vehicles, one thousand and six hundred artillery pieces, mortars and anti-aircraft defence deployed by the Cuban revolutionary government at the battle side of Cuito Cuanavale,

**“ That precious cargo of hundred wounded Algerian freedom fighters and war orphans, who would as a result of this historic link between Cuba and the African continent, became the first patients and students from our continent to be received by the generous hands of solidarity. ”**

was an extraordinary act of selfless international solidarity. Today there are still unrepentant apartheid military officers, politicians and apologists as well as powerful elements within the Democratic Alliance who refuse to recognise the significance of Cuito Cuanavale and international solidarity of Cuba.

The heroic victory of the people of Cuba during the historic battle of Playa Giron was the battle that heralded the first military defeat of the most powerful imperialist state on the planet earth, the USA. The

declaration of the first socialist state in the American Hemisphere was an epic event of historic proportions that nourished the brotherhood between the Republic of Cuba and the people of the African continent. During the battle, the revolutionary expressions of the national hero of the Cuban war of independence Jose Marti that "our Motherland is Humanity" echoed through the crossing waves of the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of our motherland, Africa.

Immediately after the historic battle of Playa Giron, the Commander in Chief, Fidel Castro, dispatched a warship that undertook a long courageous journey of humane solidarity to Algeria. The warship the *Bay of the Nipel* carried weapons to the (FLN) National Liberation Front, to assist the newly born revolutionary Republic of Algeria against the looming expansionist invasion by the Moroccan monarchy.

On its voyage back to the revolutionary Island of Cuba, the Island of the heroic woman of African descent Mariana Grajales, the mother of the Cuban revolution, the mother of the outstanding revolutionary Antonio Maceo, the warship the *Bay of Nipel* carried back home a precious cargo from the African soil. That precious cargo of a hundred wounded Algerian freedom fighters and war orphans, would as a result of this historic link between Cuba and the African continent, become the first patients and students from our continent to be received by the generous hands of solidarity.

This precious cargo of wounded combatants of the FLN of Algeria, was following the great footsteps of millions of African men and women who were forcefully dragged, chained, from their own homes to be sold as slaves in the Americas. Of the hundred million slaves displaced and forcefully shipped into the region, forty million arrived on American shores whilst sixty million died on the long crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. This was a monstrous act of genocide which sacrificed the lives of millions of human beings. African people were the victims of the most bestial, merciless, and the most prolonged genocide recorded in the history of humanity. These are

some of the untold horrific stories and concealed acts of genocide committed by the participants of the Berlin Conference which took unilateral decisions to partition the African continent without the consent of its own inhabitants.

The arrival of the warship the *Bay of the Nipel* on African shores reverberated with the graveside of the heroic woman Carlotta. This great freedom fighter and the martyr of the liberation struggles against imperialism and colonialism was the first slave woman to lead the first slave insurrection against Spanish imperialism and colonialism in Cuba. She was brought in chains to this glorious Caribbean Island as a child and forced into slavery to work in the sugar plantations of the Triumvarato in the Matanzas province. This same province hosted the historic and last underground congress of our own Communist Party in 1989.

The heroic woman of the African continent Carlotta was captured and brutally executed by the Spanish Imperialists, for having demanded the freedom and equality of our brothers and sisters, forcefully exploited and oppressed as slaves.

She was tied to several horses that were forced to run in opposing directions, badly tortured, broken and disfigured, and without mercy shot to death. As a gesture of appreciation for the contributions of this extraordinary slave woman from the African continent, the Commander in Chief coded the massive military operation by the revolutionary forces of Cuba in Angola as Operation Carlotta.

This episode illustrates the most profound historical link between the African continent and the people of Cuba. Over one million African slaves arrived on the Island to work in the sugar plantations under horrible working conditions. The objective conditions they found themselves in necessitated their combined effort with the indigenous people of Cuba to end the centuries of slavery and ignominy. The national hero of the Cuban war of independence Jose Marti described this brutal form of barbarity as "the slavery of men is the world's greatest sorrow".

In December 1977 during the first

congress of the MPLA, the leader of the Cuban revolution Raul Castro in his address to the plenary had to say the following profound words:

*"...the day our presence here is no longer necessary, only the people of Angola will be able to issue that order. And when the Cubans here for that purpose withdraw from Angola, we will take with us neither oil, nor diamonds, nor coffee, nor anything else. All that we will take with us is the indestructible friendship of this great people, and the remains of our dead".*

**“Two thousand of these heroes from the beautiful revolutionary island perished and shed their blood to fertilise our soil for the noble cause of our future. Cuban blood was shed on our soil alongside our own in the Congo, Guinea Bissau, Angola, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.”**

Consistent with this rare and extraordinary tradition of international solidarity and commitment to the noble cause of international working class struggle, as a symbolic gesture, during a solemn welcome ceremony to the first Cuban international contingents to return back from Angola after the victorious battle of Cuito Cuanavale, President Raul Castro said: "We placed our trust in you. Welcome back, comrades. The homeland receives you gratefully and we are proud of you".

Since the great historic rare moment of the triumph of the Cuban revolution and the subsequent declaration of the socialist character of the revolution at the battle of Playa Giron, over three hundred and sixty thousand Cuban internationalists fought side by side with the people of the African continent in

the wars of liberation and struggles for independence. Two thousand of these heroes from the beautiful revolutionary island perished and shed their blood to fertilise our soil for the noble cause of our future. Cuban blood was shed on our soil alongside our own in the Congo, Guinea Bissau, Angola, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

Over thirty-three thousand students from our continent have graduated in Cuba in a variety of disciplines since the revolution led by Fidel. The revolution has contributed immensely to building the capacity of our human capital especially in the fields of health, education, agriculture, sports and construction. The number of Cuban internationalists has grown tremendously from the first fifty-five volunteers sent to Algeria in 1963.

Currently over fifty-five thousand students from a hundred and six countries of the world are receiving training from Cuban professors either in Cuba or in their respective countries. Over twenty-five thousand students from third world countries are currently studying medicine in Cuba. These include one thousand and two hundred students from our country who are in danger of being persuaded to abandon their studies.

The revolution has already trained three hundred and sixty seven qualified student doctors who are presently working in far-flung rural villages across the country. What has distinguishes these graduates of our revolution from the rest is that they are the first to volunteer to work in the most remote parts of our country to serve our people. The project to train the South African students in Cuba and the Cuban doctors to assist our people in our country is the blessing of the two most renowned revolutionaries of our century, our struggle icon and former President Nelson Mandela and the Commander in Chief Fidel Castro.

Our two most revered revolutionaries have taught the world that solidarity is the most generous gesture to advance the noble cause of humanity. The Cuban revolution remains an exemplary school and an inexhaustible source of inspiration to progressive forces world-wide. ■



# SITA – A leading ICT Agency

Using technology to help state agencies fight crime, corruption, protect children's rights, improve national security and ensure easily accessible service is delivered at lower costs: these are some of the quick-wins in the progressive turnaround journey of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA).

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By Musa Ndlangandla

**B**uoyed by the National Development Plan's central vision of eliminating poverty and reducing inequality, SITA is forging ahead towards realising its goal of becoming a leading ICT agency to enable efficient, effective public sector service delivery. It has also proved a capable driver of South Africa's migration to e-government, and the recently accepted pilot electronic Cabinet initiative. *The Thinker* interviewed CEO, Blake Mosley-Lefatola on SITA's new business model that is breaking new ground.

**The Thinker: What is SITA, its vision and mandate and please unpack aspects of the organisation's restructuring process which started in 2010.**

**CEO:** SITA is being repositioned to be lead ICT agency for government so that the public sector delivers services in a secure, cost-effective and integrated manner, contributing to citizen convenience. SITA is South Africa's answer to the growing need to shift from traditional and cumbersome ways of doing business to utilising ICT for development. SITA will in the realm of ICTs lead the modernisation of government to shift from bureaucracy to performance.

We've invested in promoting the efficient use of ICT as a strategic resource for government, developing amongst others a new supply chain management approach that ensures value for money whilst continuously improving service delivery levels in government departments with the goal of ushering in e-government for easy access by all citizens. We also prioritise the previously disadvantaged through black economic empowerment (BEE). We are in the twilight of our three-year turnaround strategy, and our strategic approach and values are driven by the pursuit of excellence. Our attitude is zero-compromise about quality. We attract, retain and build the capacity of our teams to meet our operational and strategic objectives.

**TT: What is e-government and what progress has been made in this regard?**

**CEO:** Put plainly, e-government

or digital government is the utilisation of IT, ICT and other web-based telecommunication technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. It offers citizens a single window of access to information. This is being done in phases G2G (government to government) G2C (government to customer) and G2B (government to business). SITA's vision is to reach a stage where all citizens can access direct interaction and transaction with the State through e-government initiatives.

SITA has influenced and changed the service delivery landscape in government in a meaningful way. It supports government in its endeavours to realise its national priorities. Critical e-government projects include Mobizen (Mobile Citizen), Telemedicine, e-Learning and the connectivity at Thusong Service Centres.

**TT: Fighting crime is a national priority; tell us more about SITA's inroads in the use of technology to fight crime.**

**CEO:** SITA has completed the second phase of the e-Docket system for the South African Police Service. The system enables police to work on cases online thus eliminating theft, backlog or interception and will lead to the effective prosecution of criminals, as it also allows for greater collaboration in the investigation of cases. The e-Docket was rolled out to 20 police stations with 40 additional police stations to be completed by end of March 2013.

We've also completed the Child Justice System to enable officials in the department to manage and prioritise the scheduling of cases concerning children.

Over and above that SITA has come up with a system to help Home Affairs curb theft of identities of South Africans which are used in fraudulent activities by criminals. We have provided the network connectivity that allows banks and other businesses to verify the authenticity of the South African ID documents in the National Population Register. Over the last two years, SITA has been working with the SA Social Security Agency (SASSA) to improve the integrity of the SASSA systems to curb abuse and corruption in the dispensing

of social benefits to beneficiaries by automating the social services business processes and integrating the social pension system into other Government systems.

**TT: Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, as the SITA shareholder has spoken strongly against corruption, particularly by public servants in the tendering and procurement circles. How can SITA assist in this noble venture?**

**CEO:** SITA has completed e-Disclosure systems to allow members of the senior management service and any public servant to declare their interests online to start on April 1, 2013. This system also provides the Lifestyle-Means Test for public servants. The system is able to verify information about companies, motor vehicles and properties owned by public servants thus enabling government to minimise conflict of interests in the decision making processes of public servants.

**TT: Give us an example of your involvement with the community.**

**CEO:** Our approach is and always will be to enhance development and to be customer satisfaction driven. One way in which we support communities is through Thusong Service Centres managed by the Government Communication and Information Service, where we provide connectivity. Currently there are 171 Thusong centres throughout the country providing infrastructure for access to information and services to about 5 million people.

We also have a school connectivity project covering data, voice and video. This is an end-to-end solution to connect 27 000 schools. Expanding SITA's footprint into areas where it is critically needed is key to SITA's strategy. The organisation has also over the past three years partnered with government and the private sector to deliver holistic e-learning solutions to disadvantaged schools that include providing computers, internet connections, printers, software and training programmes to learners and teachers. ■





## The Minister of Science and Technology at the SA - German Year of Science in Berlin

By Tommy Makhode

On 16 April 2013, South African Minister of Science and Technology Derek Hanekom addressed the closing session of the SA - German Year of Science in Berlin. It had been opened a year ago in Cape Town by the then Minister, Naledi Pandor, and been marked by numerous activities in between.

In his address, the Minister pointed out that “the connectedness of the global economy came sharply into focus with the 2008 economic meltdown that in one way or another affected virtually all the economies of the world. Five years later, the global economy is still carrying the scars of that meltdown; and has yet to emerge stronger from such a negative impact. There is a general acknowledgment that this multitude of global challenges requires focussed collaborative initiatives that provide solutions.

“Our respective countries are both acutely aware of the important role that R&D and innovation play in economic development. A strong S&T network, which includes higher education institutions, research associations and

industry, is a key success factor for the research and innovation output of any country that aspires to be counted among the leading economies of the world. It is in this context that our science diplomacy finds resonance in forging links internationally.”

He explained why South Africa values the SA - German science cooperation. Germany is a leader in cutting-edge science and technology, and in 2008 the South African Government adopted a Ten Year Innovation Plan, setting the country on an economic development trajectory that seeks to migrate from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.

“The recently released South African National Development Plan expands on our strategies to turn our economy around. Our point of departure is the acknowledgement that higher education is the major driver of the information/knowledge system. We are therefore aiming to increase the science participation rate in higher education to more than 30%. We also aim to double the number of scientists, and increase the numbers

of African and female postgraduates, especially PhDs, to improve capacity in research and innovation.” SA - German collaboration has already supported these goals, through the strategic opportunities provided by, for example, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) scholarship programme.

The Minister said that both countries had benefitted enormously from the collaboration. He mentioned numerous joint initiatives including an annual call for research launched between the two countries, flagship projects, human capital development exchanges as well as institutional collaboration.

“Furthermore” he explained, “we are collaborating with Germany and other regional partners including Angola, Botswana, Zambia, and Namibia in terms of responding to the challenges of global change through the Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management (SASSCAL) project. The establishment of this Centre will create added value not only for the two countries but for the Southern African region as a whole. It will be a fitting tribute to the success of this bilateral cooperation which is now extending its cooperative capacity to other African partner countries.

“Also, South Africa has collaborated with Germany in the Inkaba YeAfrica project. This collaborative Earth Science initiative is both multidisciplinary and intercultural, dovetailing next-generation science and technology with a strong training and capacity-building component that is aligned with the R&D strategies of both nations. Three teams of earth scientists from leading institutes in both countries are tackling the global challenges of climate change, sustainable resources, clean water and energy in this research. ...

“Some of the objectives we had set ourselves for the Year of Science included to promote and showcase existing co-operation; initiate new partnerships between South African and German research institutions, universities and companies; stimulate in both countries the interest of young scientists in co-operating with their

counterparts; and to continue to promote South Africa and Germany as key locations of innovation among strong research-based companies in both countries.

"The Year of Science has seen 41 initiatives jointly funded by both countries. Engagements have ranged from technical workshops and conferences, such as the Young Academies Symposium on Sustainability, serving as a platform for engaging the youth in science, the global academy, etc. Giving young scientists a voice and providing them with a platform to influence policy decisions, is a key objective of my department."

The Minister highlighted certain specific issues:

"Firstly, the student involvement in this event is a major contribution in developing and attracting the youth into science careers. Secondly, the involvement of women in science was significant because I believe that women play a crucial role in our societies and in the world of research. Lastly, the deliberations at the opening session during the Astronomy Symposium highlighted the importance of Astronomy, and that bodes well for our position as a major shareholder in the SKA project." He continued by pointing out the importance of the Antarctic expedition: "Considering South Africa's proximity to the Antarctic, the Southern Ocean, the Agulhas and the Benguela currents, our country is geographically well placed to serve as a unique laboratory for understanding climate change. Together with 11 other countries, South Africa is a founder member of the Antarctic Treaty that was signed in 1959.

"We appreciate the initiative by Germany last year proposing that our respective countries should conduct a joint inspection of the Antarctic bases under the banner of the Germany – South Africa Year of Science... The following stations were inspected: Troll (Norway); Halley VI (United Kingdom); Princess Elisabeth (Belgium); and Maitri (India). A draft inspection report... will be presented to the 36th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) in Brussels in next month as part of

the working papers for environment, logistics and science sessions.

"To promote science amongst the youth, an Essay Competition was planned as one of the activities for the celebration of the YoS. The seven themes of the YoS were identified as seven topics from which learners could choose. I am glad to inform you that today we have in our midst the winners of the South African leg of the Competition – they are Zandile Mashabane, Mukundi Mushiana and Thandeka Maimane," he announced.

The Minister stressed the importance of the new research infrastructure framework developed by his department as one of the pillars for building a competitive knowledge economy, which will attract the best human capital resources.

Minister Hanekom thanked his German counterpart, Minister Wanka, for the support of Germany in the SKA project. He acknowledged that Germany's involvement in the SKA is strategic, as it has an excellent track record not only in radio astronomy, but also in the management and delivery of science megaprojects and associated engineering capacity. This expertise will be of great benefit to the SKA project as South Africa moves towards the construction phase of the telescope.

"One active German company in the SKA project is Nokia Siemens Network (NSN) which signed a Memorandum of Understanding with my Department last year to work with the SKA Project Office on large-scale computing, data transport and storage. This development showcases how critical public and private sector partnerships in science and technology are," he continued.

"No doubt, the seeding initiatives under the SA - German Year of Science call will yield new joint research areas which will have not only an impact bilaterally but will open up opportunities to enter the multilateral research space of EU framework joint research programmes.

"The experience we have gained from our international partners has put our country in a position to advance in other strategic areas as well. Three days ago I launched a Centre of Excellence

(CoE) in Palaeosciences to enhance South Africa's position and capacity in the field. The five key performance areas of Centres of Excellence project are research/knowledge production; education and training; information brokerage; networking and service rendering. By the end of the 2011/12 financial year, CoE members had contributed a total of 786 publications consisting of 584 peer-reviewed journal articles, 168 conference publications and 34 book chapters.

"A total of 488 post-graduate students benefited from the CoE programme during 2011. The Centres continued to make steady progress in increasing the number of black students and women in particular. A total of eight Centres of Excellence were given financial support amounting to R 79 487 180 in 2011.

"The CoEs are funded at a rate of between R7 million and R9 million per annum, depending on their capacity, increasing at the rate of inflation during a 10-year period. One of the important terms of reference for the CoE is that it will focus on existing institutional excellence and strengthen fields which are rapidly diminishing such as micropalaeontology and fossil palynology."

The Minister of Science and Technology announced that he and Minister Wanka would be signing a statement of Intent on the setting-up of a bilateral research chair, to engage within the human capital development platform.

Concluding the session, he thanked the audience and quoted the great scientist Albert Einstein, who said that there were three rules of work: "Out of clutter find simplicity, from discord find harmony, in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity". The Minister suggested adding a fourth rule: "Out of co-operation find progress." ■

*Tommy Makhode is Head of Communications at the Department of Science and Technology*



science  
& technology

Department:  
Science and Technology  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# THROUGH A CREATIVE LENS

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

Mongane Serote and Don Mattera are two of South Africa's greatest living poets. We are honoured to have their permission to reproduce these works as part of this commemorative edition of *The Thinker*.

## Mongane Wally Serote

### AFRICA

here we are  
we who people you  
in shades which from blue to black to ginger to honey  
dance with the light of the sun and the shades of the moon  
and stars  
or in the pitch dark of the night  
in all seasons  
out in your vast space  
under your clear and blue skies which hover and watch  
inside time which we carried and waded through  
generation after generation after generation  
we emerged without fail  
like the day like night like the seasons like time  
are tempered and were tempered  
in the long long moments of struggle  
six centuries sixty decades of being doormats  
six hundred years of Africa fighting  
should and must and shall open doors  
crack as they do and dropping rust as if scraps  
they shall beam the moonlight and the starlight and the  
sunlight  
as we offer us to share the rewards of the struggle  
and offer to be part of the human race  
so all of us

black and white can be a gift to life  
perhaps the human need  
and the human interest may drive us all differently  
to share  
to divide all among us  
is to threaten all life  
perhaps we can set the tribe free  
even the white ones  
and the women of the land will enter  
to bestow power over the land  
as all barriers fall  
and the democratic ones rise  
to release the multitudes to bear their rights  
as they would their obligations  
the land must and shall be free  
so if we go  
all of us will remember our home address  
to let the plenty of the earth  
from its belly bring centuries of peace  
to this earth  
which spins and spins and spins on its pin  
need cannot be greed

From *History is the Home Address* Kwela Books/ Snail Press, 2004

**Don Mattera**

**THE AFRIKAN UNION, CELEBRATING UNITY**

*For the Afrikan Union Concert, Freedom Charter Day, 26 June 2002*

Afrika, Afrique,  
beautiful mother, beloved Continent,  
this is your time, your moment, your century  
etched on the golden scroll of history

Arise, take your place, claim your space  
let there spring forth fountains  
the essence and vitality  
of new thoughts  
new people  
legends and visionaries forged in foundries  
of compassion and human service

Afrika, this is your time,  
your century, your right  
Afrikans arise, unite!

You are the architects of your fate  
the victims of self-hate;  
bring enlightenment, renewal and dignity  
no more 'sorrow songs' but anthems of victory  
astound, confound with unconquerable might,

Arise Afrika, unite!  
Afrika, unite!

If, somewhere, in some distant desert sand  
living hope must flourish, burst and cleanse the septic  
heal the wounded silence the doomsayer, the sceptic

then now, now be the time to lift the fallen land,  
now the day, now this century in sight

Afrikans arise, unite!  
Arise, unite!

Here, before the long slave ships came,  
with salt and fire, drums and reed-songs  
we worshipped That which was before us,  
yet lived and breathed within us;  
the tangible faith and rituals of our ancestors  
oh Afrika, beautiful, beautiful Afrika  
how eloquently our dreams spoke  
of a time and a place to see  
when we, too, will rise and be free  
displaced, enslaved no more to hide  
nor abide within the mad throes of fratricide

Afrika, oh Afrika, arise, unite!  
tall and unwavering our flags  
herald the Afrikan union,  
celebrating unity  
forging the new beginning  
no more 'sorrow songs'  
but anthems of victory

Afrikans arise, unite!  
Unite and be free. . .

*From They passed this way and touched our lives African Morning Star, 2008*

# Hugo Chavez Frias and the challenge of leadership in post-colonial Africa



Chavez and Fidel were pointing the way and demonstrating that it is indeed possible to undertake an alternative trajectory to neoliberalism and its antecedent policies as prescribed by the World Bank and IMF, unequal trade in favour of powerful nations and imperialism's militaristic hegemonism.

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By Chris Mathlako

"The people of Africa must therefore look beyond the proclamation of independence to discover whether or not *real* freedom has been achieved. Freedom can only be real when national independence is coupled with social and economic revolution carried out in the interests of the masses of the people." (George Maxwell, *African Communist*, 1959)

The recent untimely, but long prognosticated death of Hugo Chavez Frias, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, is a huge blow for progressives and left forces the world over. His passing on will be particularly felt on the African continent, which marks five decades of the founding of the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the African Union (AU). The Africa continent is still engulfed by the huge socio-economic challenges and unfulfilled aspirations that underpinned the struggles for independence.

The contribution of progressive leaders, who are people-centred, and the dialectical link with pro-people policies that utilise the huge resource-wealth endowments of their countries to genuinely address the aspirations of the majority of the people, is much needed in the post-colonial African development agenda. It can be argued that the 'African Agenda' in the post-colonial period has sadly been sidestepped and/or subverted in favour of a distorted confirmist (neoliberal) project. This has helped to maintain inherited unequal colonial relations, thus postponing the agenda items which tackle the aspirations of the people for independence, sovereignty, freedom, dignity, nationhood, equality and socio-economic development.

It is in this context that the exemplary leadership of statesmen and women in Latin America, such as Hugo Chavez, Evo Morales, Cristina Kirchner, Michelle Bachelet, Rafael Correa, Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, has important lessons for our continent. Despite the huge challenges of backwardness and imperialist belligerence, these leaders have led the struggle on behalf of their populations against the overbearing hegemony of multinational

corporations, economic stabilisation driven by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the war-mongering of US imperialism. Hugo Chavez and the Bolivarian Revolution are important examples that are instructive for leaders and progressive political forces in the developing world in general and the African continent in particular.

### **Hugo Chavez and the Third World - the struggle for alternatives**

It is in the Third World and the majority of the world's struggling underclass where his absence will be severely felt. This is true because over the years Chavez, together with Fidel Castro, became the voices of the oppressed and icons of ordinary

“Africa's poor ask themselves why African leaders cannot copy at least some of the elements of the work of those leaders in Latin America, who are deploying the mineral wealth of their countries for the benefit of the majority and not the elites?”

people's struggles for freedom from hunger, misery, marginalisation and exclusion. For them, Chavez and Fidel were pointing the way and demonstrating that it is indeed possible to undertake an alternative trajectory to neoliberalism and its antecedent policies as prescribed by the World Bank and IMF, unequal trade in favour of powerful nations and imperialism's militaristic hegemonism. The underclass of the African continent have had to witness the denuding of their independence aspirations over the years, as the scramble for political power became a dog fight. They experienced the devastating ramifications of coups, suffered from imperialist military interventions and

the supplanting of the actual voice of the toiling masses with that of some western NGOs and their ilk.

Africa's poor ask themselves why African leaders cannot copy at least some of the elements of the work of those leaders in Latin America, who are deploying the mineral wealth of their countries for the benefit of the majority and not the elites? This is a fundamental question, for almost 50 odd years after decolonisation, the continent continues to lag behind in efforts to addressing the plight of the majority - the poor, rural peasantry, women, youth, and the growing proletariat. The continent is said to be endowed with large resource-wealth with long life-spans. Instead of this being a blessing for purposes of advancing the material, cultural and other aspects of the African people it has become an albatross, as almost every coup and/or intervention is a scramble for these resources.

### **The Bolivarian Revolution**

What Chavez did to do is of enormous importance. He sought to improve the conditions of the underclass and confront ideologues of capitalism, both in his country and elsewhere. In particular, he channelled resource revenues from oil into education and health – something so critically needed by the poor, who are the overwhelming majority of the population. These are measures that are characterised as populist, but they meet the real needs of the people and help them to develop their capacities. Yet, it is not only the direction of oil wealth to the people that is characteristic and unique in Venezuela. There has also been a very significant process of empowering people - of creating institutions that permit people to function democratically and to make decisions that affect their lives. In this regard, in particular through the development of the communal councils - institutions at the local neighbourhood level - people have the power to deal with problems that affect their own communities. These communal councils come together to form communes to deal with larger problems.

“This is a process that has been described by Chavez as one of

'creating the cells of a new socialist state'. In addition there is a process of development of workers' councils. Here again it is a process of transforming people, of creating the conditions in which they are able to develop all their capacities", argues Michael Lebowitz (2012). In particular, the Bolivarian Revolution has been creating people with a sense of dignity, patriotism, social consciousness and internationalist pride. "These are very important achievements. But they don't happen smoothly, and it is important to recognise there are many contradictions within Chavism", observes Lebowitz. However, Chavismo is in better shape than a few years ago and the Bolivarian Revolution looks set to further entrench itself and contribute towards humanity's efforts towards making possible a better world for all!

That Chavez represents hope and was in many ways the embodiment of the aspirations of ordinary people and the underclass in his country, region and the world, is indisputable. A quintessential outsider, he was a man who had tried to overthrow the system in a coup and subsequently embraced elections as he struck a chord with the millions of shantytown dwellers, who were seething over the vast gap wealth between the rich and poor. And not surprisingly, he was supported by the poor, who are the majority in Venezuela. Importantly, he started his presidency by trying to take control of the state oil giant PDVSA, which he concluded was serving the country's wealthy elites rather than its majority poor. As would be expected his policies set off a maelstrom of anger, both in Venezuela and abroad. This was followed by the April 2002 coup attempt and the devastating oil strikes - when opponents shut down PDVSA for two months.

His death has robbed the left wing and progressive forces the world over of a symbol of unwavering leadership to articulate an alternative trajectory for socio-economic development, addressing the most pertinent issues of the people - food, water, education and health - at a time of the worst systemic crisis of the system of capitalism. Scorned by his

opponents as a populist and reckless, the Bolivarian Venezuelan President Chavez resonates with the poor and the underclass the world-over, in a manner not seen in a long time, some would argue, like Ernesto Guevara in the '60s and '70s.

Not surprisingly the ruling elites and mainstream media in Venezuela, the United States of America, Britain and Canada in particular, have over the years castigated and abused Chavez.

Others are at pains to undermine his and the Bolivarian Revolution's achievements and seek to paint these as populist vote-buying measures which are 'bad' because they don't meet the set criteria of capitalist's logic of profit-making and rent-seeking. It is also an indisputable fact that Chavez's opposition has been backed by the huge capitalist class via direct funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) Fund (US State Department platform for the so-called

“Chavez was an inspired improviser, a Bolivarian nationalist and an unashamed socialist, who coined the term ‘Socialism for the 21st Century’.”

promotion of democracy) as well as other US official bodies during elections, to sway voters to ditch Chavez and Chavismo because the privileges enjoyed in an earlier period were dissipating in front them.

Chavez was neither a tyrant nor a saint. However, the international media is presenting day after day grotesque distortions of what is really happening in Venezuela, viewing it through the lenses of the light-skinned elites of Venezuela, whose privileges and power are threatened by the social, political, constitutional and economic transformations occurring there. His has been a very creative interpretation of the role of the military in the revolution. Through Plan Bolivar 2000 (a civilian-military plan) the military has been deployed in social

programmes, which meant many good things for the people, such as roads, schools, houses. These very tangible solutions have been undertaken with the active participation of the people and not imposed by decree.

#### **A democratically elected President**

In the first instance, Chavez was a democratically elected president. He won six presidential elections – the last in October 2012. Chavez was an inspired improviser, a Bolivarian nationalist and an unashamed socialist, who coined the term 'Socialism for the 21st Century'. Bart recounts that Chavez shocked Venezuelans at the start of his presidency when he promptly broke with the traditional pledge repeated by every president before him. "I swear in front of my people that over this moribund constitution I will push forward the democratic transformations that are necessary so that the new republic will have an adequate magna carta for the times", said Hugo Chavez. And he kept his word. Evidence of this abounds. UNESCO declared that Bolivarian Venezuela eradicated illiteracy in December 2005, infant mortality rate fell from 19.1 per thousand in 1999 to 10 per thousand in 2012 – a reduction of 49% and average life expectancy increased from 72.2 years in 1999 to 74.3 years in 2011.

However his policies have brought him into conflict with the oligarchy, ruling elites and their proxies the world over, the IMF and the World Bank, major oil companies and successive US White House administrations. And when he addressed the United Nations General Assembly in September 2006, he had already made his mark on the world stage. Therefore, when he declared; "...the devil came here yesterday ... the president of the United States"; he endeared himself to the majority - that he was a man (a State President) who was willing to take on the most powerful nation on earth, in a conscious emulation of the Liberator, Simon Bolivar – his torch!

In the poor neighbourhoods of Harlem in the US, where he supplied cheap discounted gas, Chavez is celebrated, though he is seen by some as the biggest problem to emerge in Latin America since his hero, Fidel



Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela, greets a crowd at the celebration ahead of the launching of Venezuela's second satellite (named Miranda) celebrations, on 28 September 2012 in Caracas, Venezuela

Castro, seized power nearly a half century ago.

And must we repeat it - it all has to do with oil and Chavez's repeated threats to cut off the US from Venezuela's oil supply. The US gets more than 1 million barrels of oil a day from Venezuela. Venezuela has the largest petroleum reserves in the world, fifth largest reserves of gas, gold and the immense richness of the Caribbean Sea.

### **President of the poor and marginalised**

Chavez is admired and admonished by friend and foe, but one thing is certain, he set in motion a revolutionary process in Venezuela and Latin America, thus assuming a leading role in the struggle for alternatives to the rapacious system of capitalism in the 21st century. He has over the years experienced political zig-zags and treachery. His impoverished childhood, military career, and the decade of clandestine political activity that ended in a failed attempt to seize power in 1992, the elections campaign against former Miss Universe that finally won Chavez the presidency, and the dramatic reversals of fortune that have marked it: the struggle to

reform the Venezuelan economy, the coup attempt of 2002 in which he was kidnapped and faced summary execution, and the oil industry strike that followed. It is his leadership role and function which is an important contribution for many, in particular in Africa, where political leadership and single-minded commitment to make a difference in the quality of life of ordinary people, the rural peasantry, women and youth is so visibly lacking. Many Latin American Presidents count amongst the poorest presidents of the world in comparison to their counterparts elsewhere, particularly in Africa.

Almost 50-odd years of decolonisation of the continent has not yielded and/or begun the process of extricating the people of the continent from under-development, poverty and misery. Africa has recently sorely lacked in leadership what Fidel Castro, Salvador Allende, Jacobo Arbenz, Rafeal Correa, Evo Morales, Cristina Kirchner, Lula da Silva and Hugo Chavez have provided to the poor majorities of their countries – however uneven the processes might have been.

Hugo Chavez inspires ordinary people. It is his postulation of 21st

Century Socialism that has cajoled many left wing forces, and those aspiring to radical social transformation, away from the ravaging features of capitalism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. It may be a long time before we see another personality of comparable charisma on the political stage. Such people cannot be replaced: we know that from the tragic murder of Chis Hani in South Africa 20 years ago.

### **Socialism of the 21st Century – the struggle against imperialism, hegemony and domination**

In November 2005, other presidents of Latin America and George W. Bush gathered for the Fourth Summit of the Americas – aimed at cementing ties for the agreement on Free Trade Areas of the Americas (FTAA), stretching from Alaska to Argentina. At this same moment, standing before a huge crowd in a football stadium in Mar del Plata, Argentina, together with legendary football player Diego Maradona, in a 'counter-summit', Chavez upstaged Bush and declared that; '... Mar del Plata is going to be the tomb of the FTAA'.

This marked an important chapter in the anti-imperialist terrain of struggle. The anti-imperialist agenda burgeoned

and allowed other nations and peoples to redirect their oil requirements towards Caracas. Certainly the oil agreements with the Peoples' Republic of China raised the ire of the imperialist axis and they abused Venezuela and Chavez as enemies of peace and labelled them as totalitarian regimes with dictators at the helm.

"Chavez's idea of a new economy did not rely on traditional notions of trade among nations based simply on extracting the most profit for oneself. He introduced the idea of solidarity. Instead of competition, he fostered cooperation", argues Bart Jones (*The Hugo Chavez Story: From Mud Hut to Perpetual Revolution*. 2007). The most obvious example was the oil pacts he signed with countries throughout Latin America. Some agreements offered discounted financing that allowed countries to pay up to 40% of the bill over periods as long as twenty-five years. Interest rates were as low as 1%. In return, Chavez received everything from Cuban doctors to Argentine cows to Caribbean rice. He was not simply giving oil away. As he said; "How much would 20 000 Cuban doctors cost?" he among others used oil to foster his vision of a united Latin America as his hero Simon Bolivar had proposed nearly two centuries earlier.

He created regional alliances through pacts including the PetroCaribe, which offered fourteen Caribbean nations a total of 198 000 barrels of oil a day with 'soft financing'. PetroSur united Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina with Venezuela. He also created TeleSur – a television station aimed at engaging in the battle of ideas and presenting Latin America through the 'eyes and ears' of Latinos and not via CCN, BBC, France24 or other imperialist private media platforms.

These and other measures of regional integration and closer cooperation, he dubbed the end of the 'Washington Consensus' and the beginning of the 'South American Consensus'. Chavez's foreign policy was based on a vision of what he called 'Our commitment to peace and justice in the world'. He took up the cudgels for various causes such as the Palestinians' right to self-determination along the 1964 proposals, Libya, Cuba, Syria and the problems of

the Horn of Africa. The Latin American regional alliances that emerged are seeking to shape the democratic space and shift the balance of power in favour of the weaker nations. Blocks such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), which advances an avant-garde experiment of progressive and anti-imperialist government, seeking ways to breaking the prevailing international unipolar world order and strengthening the capacity of the people to face, together, the reigning powers. The Union of South American Nations

“He also created TeleSur – a television station aimed at engaging in the battle of ideas and presenting Latin America through the ‘eyes and ears’ of Latinos and not via CCN, BBC, France24 or other imperialist private media platforms.”

(UNASUR) is a political bloc that federates the 12 nations sovereign states of South America with the purpose of grouping them under what Simon Bolivar called, 'a Nation of Republics'. Furthermore, there are the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

#### **Democratisation process in Bolivarian Venezuela**

The October 2012 presidential election victory of Chavez was not only important for Venezuela, but for many countries in Latin America – not only those governments closely associated with Venezuela, such as Cuba, Bolivia and Ecuador but also governments strengthened by Venezuela's insistence under Chavez upon a sovereign Latin America. And certainly, too for social movements elsewhere in Latin

America (and not only Latin America), for which the Bolivarian revolution has provided hope. Lebowitz says: "I think it is essential to recognise the extent of change that has occurred in Venezuela under Chavez. Venezuela has been a rentist economy, relying upon oil revenues; and the culture that grew up around oil rents (prior to Chavez's coming to power) has been one overwhelmingly of corruption and clientalism. Venezuela suffered very significantly as a result of neoliberal policies which involved cutbacks in social services, the ending of the subsidisation of necessities and the general process of privatisation. The situation in the 1990s was one of disaster – something not uncommon in Latin America in that decade (and certainly very familiar now in Europe in the face of the austerity measures imposed as a direct result of the crisis of capitalism)".

Foremost, Hugo Chavez was a role model to millions of the oppressed people across the world. He was a teetotal, history-loving, book-addicted, fire-spewing workaholic from the underclass and indigenous population who died fighting to overturn decades of injustice in his homeland, region, continent and the world.

Six weeks after the tragic death of Hugo Chavez his successor Nicolás Maduro won Venezuela's presidential elections. Maduro won 50.7% of the votes cast, as opposed to the 49.1% garnered by his opponent, Henrique Capriles.

Capriles, who continues to receive the overwhelming support of the rich and powerful in Venezuela as well as the major imperialist powers, is disputing the results. In contrast, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Ecuador and Russia and South Africa amongst other countries immediately congratulated Maduro on his victory. Maduro has been inaugurated as President.

With the support of millions of Venezuelans as well as progressive and revolutionary forces world-wide, the leaders, cadres and members of the PSUV are determined to pursue the policies, programmes and solidarity projects of Hugo Chavez Frias. ■

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