

## Editorial

# Africa and the Challenges of the Second Decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Constraints and Opportunities

The year 2011 is the year of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of CODESRIA. The General Assembly is the highest governing organ of CODESRIA. It is the body that makes the most important policy decisions of the Council, elects the Executive Committee, and elects the President and the Vice President of CODESRIA. In the 38 years of its existence, CODESRIA has had 12 Presidents and the succession from Executive Committee to the other, and from one president to the next have been very smooth.

The General Assembly is coupled with a scientific conference which provides the African social science research community with a great opportunity to reflect on the challenges facing our continent and on the ways in which the social sciences are addressing those challenges, paying particular attention to CODESRIA's own role. CODESRIA General Assemblies are also extraordinary occasions for scholars coming from various parts of the world to meet and share discussion platforms, and as well as moments of conviviality.

The 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of CODESRIA is being organised at a time when the world as a whole is facing formidable challenges that include global environmental change; a highly unstable global financial system; extreme pressures on land, mineral, water and other natural resources; the formidable development of new technologies that are impacting on almost everything, from the way we communicate to the way we do research, trade, grow crops, and organise and engage in civic, humanitarian or political action; and the governance of the behaviour of increasingly complex private entrepreneurs whose everyday actions often pose threats to the public good. Africa is faced with additional challenges of being handicapped by centuries of externally induced oppression and pillage whose effects on the freedom and welfare of our people have been very negative, extremely fragmented regional political, economic and scientific spaces, and many flaws in the governance systems, and in the economic and social policies framed at various levels.

The 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will be held in a North African country, after having been held in West Africa for many years, and then in East, Southern and Central Africa. When the Executive Committee was making the decision during its 75<sup>th</sup> meeting in Harare, in December last year, to hold the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in North Africa, nobody could imagine that North Africa would be the site for some of new social and political revolutions, the birth place of an "Arab Spring", twenty years after the "Africa Spring" of national conferences and other forms of democratic transition. The CODESRIA community and its many friends from Asia, the Middle East, the Americas, and Europe could not have come to North Africa at a better time. In this issue of the Bulletin, we publish articles by Samir Amin, Hakim Ben Hammouda, and *Boaventura de Sousa Santos* on the "Arab Spring" that show the complexity of the process, and emphasise the need for some caution in the appreciation of what actually happened and the likely long term consequences. We will return to this issue later.

CODESRIA spent the last five years designing and implementing research, training and policy dialogue programmes aimed at 'rethinking development and reviving development thinking

in Africa' – the umbrella theme of the 2007-2011 CODESRIA Strategic Plan. The theme that the Executive Committee has chosen for the scientific conference of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, which is "*Africa and the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*", paying particular attention to the constraints facing, and opportunities available to our continent, should enable us to harness and bring the precious insights and achievements of the last five years and, indeed, the formidable progress made by the social sciences over the years to address old and new challenges facing Africa and the world.

The holding of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the pan African conference held in Casablanca in 1961 that was attended by Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Ferhat Abbas, Modibo Keita, Ahmed Sekou Toure and many other great leaders of Africa. The conference was an important milestone in the history of the Organisation of African Unity and the African Union. We therefore plan to take the opportunity of the convening of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of CODESRIA to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Casablanca Conference.

The year 2011 will also go down in history as the year when an African country was split into two, following many decades of civil war, the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the holding of self-determination referendum. In this issue of CODESRIA Bulletin, Mahmood Mamdani raises some questions regarding the independence of South Sudan. We consider the birth of this new state as one of the major events in Africa since the end of apartheid in South Africa because it marks the end of a protracted struggle that started with the Anyanya rebellion in 1955 and also because of South Sudan's geopolitical importance. Mamdani examines the process of self determination especially under the leadership of John Garang. He notes that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was a result of a power sharing deal between the political elite of the north and south, in the context of post-Cold War global politics largely dominated by the United States of America. He concludes his reflections by highlighting possible sources of new conflict between Sudan and its new southern neighbour, South Sudan.

In "Grappling with the Reality of a New State in southern Sudan" Peter Adwok Nyaba, then Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the National Government of Sudan, and now Higher Education Minister in the Government of South Sudan, tackles the thorny issue as to why the south found the idea secession very attractive. He attributes the success of the secession movement largely to the failure of the political elite to construct a viable, united Sudan over the years, leading to a marginalized south that had nothing to lose by leaving the union. He also reflects on new challenges and advises on how the new state of South Sudan should establish itself in the comity of nations.

We also publish a report by Tesfaye Tafesse and Christopher Zambakari on an international conference South Sudan that was co-organised by CODESRIA, the UNECA, and the Africa Research and Resource Centre on the "Consequences of the Birth of Africa's Newest State for East and Horn of Africa Regions." The conference was intended to encourage open dia-

logue on the intricate political situation in Sudan and in the region, and to underscore the value of learning from the experience of the acquired by the rest of Africa during the last fifty or so years of post-independence development, and in the management of the various diversities on the continent. The speakers are reported to have been of the view that, although not always palatable, dismemberment may be an unavoidable stage in the search for lasting peace, especially in situations of extreme diversities, and regional integration.

Samir Amin reflects on Africa's challenges in light of what has been happening in North Africa since the end of 2010. His article is characteristically entitled "An Arab Springtime?" He looks at various developments in the Arab world and wonders whether all these happenings are a sign of 're-awakening of the Arab world'. He examines Egypt's struggle to extricate itself from domination, oppression and imperialist control. He concludes on an optimistic position, to the effect that the 'Egyptian revolution' points to a possible end of neoliberalism.

In the same vein, Hakim Ben Hammouda, in his article "The Political Economy of the Jasmine Revolution" is hopeful that the Tunisian uprising is revolution in which the people have triumphed over their tormentors. It is a new beginning that has ushered in a new era of freedom which will lead to a democratic dispensation.

In "Will the West ever Learn?" Boaventura de Sousa Santos, writing at the time the Eleventh World Social Forum (WSF) was held in Dakar, Senegal, observes that the symbolic significance of meeting in Africa was to do with the organisers' interest to call attention to "Africa's problems and the impact those problems will have on the world." He observes that no one could have predicted that "social protests against the economic crisis and the Western backed dictatorships could be so vigorous, so contagious and so assertive of one of the basic principles of the WSF: the radicalisation of democracy as an instrument for social transformation." He submits that the struggle in North Africa has roots in issues that have been ignored by Western media or that have been reported in ways that reveal double difficulty in the West of learning from experiences of the world and giving justice to the principles and values that it claims to guard. Santos gives a string of examples from which the West should have learnt a thing or two but has chosen not to; so he concludes by asking: "Is the West going to learn only when it becomes post-Western?" If the West had learnt its lessons, Africa and the rest of the world would have been a little happier.

The article "The market colonization of Intellectuals" by Lewis R. Gordon confronts a growing trend over the past decade which started when some academics became public figures and public figures became academics. This fluidity led to a situation where some intellectuals started presenting their work as the basis for rewards in the academy and the entertainment industry suggestive of influences tantamount to the colonisation of intellectuals by the ever-expanding market. He uses two examples of Sartre and Fanon, he concludes: "For many, it's impossible to imagine intellectuals like Fanon and Sartre as anything short of holier than thou, even though neither of them argued that academics should not have academic pursuits and seek academic rewards. They simply asked for the rest of us not to pretend that the world is somehow better off by our being rewarded..."

Lansana Keita in "Reconfiguring Eurocentric Discourse and African Knowledge" examines the expansion of Western European cultural dominance over the world based on technological advancement and the psychology of human superiority. In Africa, there has been a trans-generational psychological response

against that dominance through intellectual movements using epistemological facts and arguments to discredit the forms used to equate European knowledge to universal objective fact. He draws from different works and experiences to demonstrate that there is a need to consider alternative analyses, to understand how different forms of knowledge have been ideologically configured to serve those who generated them. This form of knowledge can never serve the interests of Africa because they were never created for that.

Issa Shivji in his "The struggle to convert nationalism to pan-Africanism" opens by quoting Pannikar's description of the history of the West as the story of the "West and the Rest".

Western domination over Africa, has all been about taking away from the continent. Starting from accumulation by appropriation as it was in colonial times; it moved on to capitalism by accumulation, and later it became accumulation by capitalism, others call it accumulation by dispossession ... Plunder transformed its face and inspired the SAP programmes characterized by liberalization, marketisation, privatization, commodification and financialisation. These programmes destroyed any progress made in the areas of basic social services after Africa's independence. He thus concludes that the study of pan-Africanism cannot be made outside the confines of imperialism. Neoliberal primitive accumulation is the latest manifestation of Western imperialistic tendencies over Africa in this case. It is therefore from this prism that African intellectuals should revisit and reconstruct the pan-Africanist project to confront imperialism. Otherwise the story of the West and Africa: "... is a story of plunder, privation and destruction; it is a story of permanent war and passing peace."

In "Africa must make its own images", Abdon Sofonnou, presents a report on the CODESRIA Workshop of 2011 FESPACO which examined new the creative visions and directions in contemporary African film. The main goal of the workshop was to draw attention to the new creative visions and directions in contemporary African film. Africans must create their own logic to bring about real change. Africa's development will depend on the production of its own images; by taking the initiative to tell our own story. We need to harness our social and cultural environment for this purpose.

Oloka-Onyango has some kind of confrontation with Uganda's President Museveni. In "Speaking truth to power" we have a set of three articles that demonstrate some of the challenges that some scholars have to endure in the struggle to uphold academic freedom by confronting the authorities when things are not going right. In this case Oloka is concerned about governance and democracy in Uganda at a time when its president has been in power for twenty five years. He observes that Museveni is now suffering from a disease he characterises as "stayism" that seems to be leading him to want to stay in power for life. This temptation has led him to depend more on the coercive machinery of the state rather than on the will of the people. He ends by cautioning that going by what has happened in North Africa, there is no military might that can prevent the people from overthrowing a dictator when they are angry enough.

Ebrima Sall  
**Executive Secretary**

Alex Bangirana  
**Head, Publications**

# 13<sup>th</sup> Codesria General Assembly Announcement

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Rabat, Morocco, 5-9 December 2011

## Africa and The Challenges of The Twenty First Century

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The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, CODESRIA, will hold its 13th General Assembly on 5-9 December 2011, in Rabat, Morocco. The triennial General Assembly is one of the most important scientific events of the African continent. It provides the African social science research community with a unique opportunity to reflect on some of the key issues facing the social sciences in particular, and Africa and the world at large. The theme of the scientific conference of the 13th CODESRIA General Assembly is: *Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*.

The 21st century, like the preceding one does not seem capable of breaking from the paradigm of the complex and the uncertain. Instead, it is confirming that hastily and carelessly proclaiming “the end of history”, as Fukuyama did, was not enough to legitimately dispose of issues and challenges such as those of how to understand the presence of Africa in a world where emerging powers (South Africa, Brazil, Russia, India and China) are increasingly upsetting traditional global geopolitics. The financial crisis and its social implications in some countries of the North and the increasingly global nature of many problems have raised awareness about the vital and imperious need for Africans to theoretically tackle the issue of Africa’s future in this new century. This underscores the legitimacy of an approach that is founded on a rupture: a clean break with Afro-pessimism from outside and from within to show that the new global political and economic order is not a fatality but one that calls for a breaking off with a theoretical construction of Africa which led to the posing of questions like that asked by the World Bank in 2000: “Can Africa claim its place in the 21st century?” It is about understanding why and how Africa is still at the heart of the new global political and economic strategies, and what opportunities there are for our continent to reposition itself in the world, and reposition the world with regard to its own objectives, perhaps the most important of which still remains that of bringing development (also to be understood as freedom, as Amartya Sen has argued) to its people. It is also a question of deconstructing what some have called “the confinement of Africa in a rent economy” in order to more critically understand the opportunities available to the continent but also the constraints facing it, because the basic question is how, in the course of this 21<sup>st</sup> century, to oppose to the “invention of Africa” an “invention of the world” by Africa.

### Global Issues, Global Challenges

Increasingly complex neoliberal globalisation, changes in intercultural relations at the global level, climate change, poverty, rapid urbanisation, the ICTs revolution, the emergence of knowledge

societies, the evolution of gender and intergenerational relations, the evolution of spirituality and of the status and the role of religion in modern societies, the emergence of a multi-polar world and the phenomenon of emerging powers of the South are some of the realities of our world that are widely and extensively discussed by both academics and policy-makers. Some of these challenges have been identified in the 2010 edition of the International Social Sciences Council’s *World Social Sciences Report*, as major challenges of the 21st century.

Discussions on climate change, like those on the so-called emerging powers, are much more important today than they were 30 to 40 years ago. If the Rio Summit on global environmental change was a key moment in the mobilisation of the international community to face the challenges arising from global warming, such summits were rare. However, in less than two years, two summits – the Copenhagen Summit and the Cancun Summit on Climate Change – have been organised, and another summit will be held soon on the same issues in Durban (South Africa). Major international programmes on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as REDD and REDD+, have also been launched. Furthermore, the creation of the Euro Zone as well as the rise of countries like China and India, have had repercussions worldwide.

The questions one must ask are: How does all this affect Africa? And how prepared is the continent to face these challenges as well as those that will arise in the future? It is nowadays rather difficult to keep pace with advances in science and technology, including among others, in the areas of biotechnology and nanotechnology, genetic engineering. The challenge that Africa is facing is not only that of understanding how new scientific discoveries may have an impact on our societies, but also that of how to become a “continent of science” itself.

The rapidity of the pace of change in virtually all spheres of social life at the local, national, continental, and global levels make it difficult to identify the challenges that Africa will be facing in the coming century beyond a few decades. Science itself is changing as a result of changes occurring in nature and in society. Moreover, science and technology, far from being neutral, have become key players in the evolutions that occur in production systems, trade, and intercultural relations, as well as in research and the formulation of responses to environmental change. The ability of science to anticipate, read and interpret the processes of change has increased over the years. The ability of humanity to follow developments taking place in nature, and to capture the major trends taking place within society, is likely to increase as science itself develops. Therefore, the list of questions that can be considered as major challenges for the 21st century is likely to change over time.

## Africa of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Africa has entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century with huge unresolved issues, such as poverty, rapid urbanisation, the national question, regional integration, gender inequality, food insecurity, violent conflict, political fragmentation, and the fact that it occupies a subaltern position in the global community, and in global governance. The weight of the past is a major handicap for Africa. The effects of the slave trade, colonisation and neo-colonialism that Africa has suffered from are still being felt, as they have each and together resulted in the suppression of freedoms, the violation of human rights and dignity of the peoples of the continent, as well as the looting of human, natural and intellectual resources and what the pan-Africanist historian Walter Rodney called the “underdevelopment” of Africa. Among the major disadvantages of the continent at the dawn of the twenty-first century are also the low level of education of many Africans, the lack of modern techniques of production, transport, etc., a fragmented political space and the extrovert structure of the economies. The institutions of higher education and cultures of the elites are strongly marked, not by a philosophy and development strategies guided by the interests of African peoples, but by influences coming from the North, influences that are more alienating than liberating.

Nevertheless, the Africa of the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not exactly the same as the Africa of the early sixties which had just got freedom from colonial rule. The challenges the continent faces today are not exactly the same as those of the sixties. Although there still are issues dating back to the early years of independence, these are of a different order, and are today discussed with a particular focus and a sense of urgency. This is particularly true of the issues of governance and development, most of which are yet to be resolved.

Yet by all indications, these issues have gained particular relevance and magnitude. The celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of many countries in 2010 has provided an opportunity for African researchers to review the continent’s performance in 50 years of independence, a mixed record after all. There have been many achievements in terms of social and economic development. Enormous progress has been made in education and health, and some countries have managed to establish democratic governance systems, especially after the wave of national conferences (in West and Central Africa) at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. The fall of authoritarian regimes, the end of apartheid, the change of ruling parties in countries like Senegal, and the recent profound changes in Tunisia (the Jasmine Revolution), Egypt and elsewhere in North Africa have made the promise of democratisation and development of Africa much more real. Yet even with the recent political transformations, governance issues are still part of the great challenges facing our continent. Africa is still beset by the paradox of poverty in plenty: most people of the continent are poor despite the fact that the countries they live in are rich in human and natural resources.

Poverty is still massive and deeply rooted, and the processes that lead to exclusion and marginalization of large segments of African societies are still ongoing. Exclusion and political marginalization of individuals, groups and entire social classes are, as we know, among the root causes of many of the violent conflicts that have ravaged several African countries, while aggravating underdevelopment and international dependence.

Some of the “remedies” to the economic crisis and, more generally, to the problems of underdevelopment and widespread poverty that have been proposed or imposed on Africa have, in some cases contributed to the worsening of problems that they were supposed to solve. Others, like the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as an antidote to food insecurity, or large scale land alienation in favour of multinational companies producing food crops or crops to obtain bio-fuels, raise significant political, ethical and health concerns, making the land question more complex. Commodification, and attempts to subject almost all spheres of nature and society, including human organs, forest resources, and the social sciences themselves, to a market logic pose enormous challenges for science and for society, even if in some respects, the process has directed the flow of precious financial and human resources to some key issues and led to major discoveries that could enhance social progress. However, by all indications, with the exception of a few, the countries of the South are still at the level of receivers / consumers in the overall relationship that is behind these processes, or at best in the role of “passengers” rather than “drivers” of the process of globalisation.

Reflections should also focus on issues such as the high mobility of African people, both within and outside of the continent, and its consequences in terms of citizenship rights, and its impacts on gender relations; the issues of climate change, natural resource management and food security; the recurrent problem of African integration with a focus on the issue of a common currency and common borders; or yet again the governance of African cities, since a number of prospective studies have identified urbanization as a major trend in the evolution of the continent. These issues are likely to continue to determine the evolution of the continent.

Special attention should be paid to higher education, given the importance, and the uniqueness of the role that knowledge plays in development, and its ability to influence the whole system. Isn’t the “vulnerability” of Africa the result of its marginal position in the world of knowledge? With the ongoing changes in higher education around the world and the weakening of many African universities as a result of both deep crises and twenty years of structural adjustment, brain drain and sheer negligence on the part of the State, African research has encountered considerable difficulties in its attempts to study and interpret these events and more.

New technologies, especially ICTs play one of the most crucial roles in social, economic and political developments of the continent. For instance, the mobile phone and FM radio stations played an important role in the political and social movements in Senegal at the turn of the Millennium. Faced with restrictions on political debates in many countries such as Tunisia, we saw the importance of the Internet, including social media and Internet-based sites such as Facebook and Twitter as spaces for democratic struggles involving thousands of highly educated but unemployed urban youth. Meanwhile, the governance of the Internet, a space managed mainly by private multinational companies of a new type (Facebook, Twitter, Google, YouTube, etc...), remains an unresolved issue.

Therefore the question is: Will this be Africa’s century, as it is sometimes claimed? A better way to put more or less the same question is to ask: How can Africa take charge of its future and make this century the one of its renaissance? But what does it mean to make the 21<sup>st</sup> century the century of Africa and what

does that imply? How could the social sciences and humanities address the challenges that we already know, and what types of improvements are required in the African higher education and research systems in order for them to better prepare Africa to face the challenges of the coming decades of this century?

What is the role of intellectuals in general and CODESRIA in particular in addressing these challenges? The theoretical issues are very important. The production of knowledge informed by and is relevant to the social realities in Africa has always been the ambition of CODESRIA and of all the great intellectuals of the continent. The intellectual struggles of Africa and the global South against the consequences of Western domination are far from having been won. The scientific division of labour in which Africa is still mainly seen as a purveyor of raw materials of little use to the transformation of African societies is still in force. The epistemological agenda of the continent must continue to include the transformation of the dominant epistemological order which favours the West and penalizes the South, and Africa in particular. The valorization of the intellectual heritage and contributions of great thinkers from Africa and its Diaspora, such as Ibn Khaldoun, Ibn Battuta, El-Bakri, Ali Idrissi, Ahmed Baba, Marcus Garvey, WEB Du Bois, Cheikh Anta Diop, Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ruth First, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, CLR James, Abdul Rahman Babu, Sembene Ousmane, Fela Kuti, Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, Archie Mafeje, Bernard Magubane, Samir Amin, Claude Ake, Ali El-Kenz, Fatima Mernisi, Mahmood Mamdani, Amina Mama, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Paulin Hountondji, Jean-Marc Ela, Thandika Mkandawire, Fatou Sow, Issa Shivji, Ifi Amadiume, Oyeronke Oyewumi and Omafume Onoge (the list is long), must continue to be a part of our priorities. So must be the South-South and South-North dialogue.

### The Casablanca Conference, 50 Years On

The 13<sup>th</sup> CODESRIA General Assembly takes place shortly after many African countries have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their independence. It is also being organised, 50 years after the holding of the 1961 Casablanca Conference that

brought together Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Ahmed Sekou Toure (Guinea), Modibo Keita (Mali), Ferhat Abbas (Algeria) and other leaders of newly independent African states and national liberation movements, to discuss the future of the Africa. The "Casablanca Group", as they were known, formed the progressive camp. The Casablanca Conference which was hosted by King Mohammed V of Morocco, was a very important milestone in the process that led to the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The holding of the 13<sup>th</sup> CODESRIA General Assembly in Morocco provides an opportunity for the African social science community to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this conference, and to pay tribute to the founding fathers and mothers of the OAU that later became the African Union (AU) a few decades later, and ask the question as to how to reinvigorate the African integration process, as well as that of how to renew our collective commitment to realise the continental integration project.

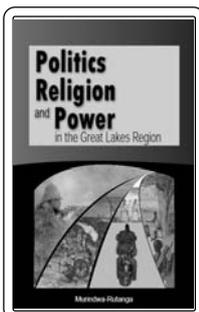
### The Organisation of the General Assembly

The General Assembly of CODESRIA will be organised in three parts: the first part is a scientific conference on the theme *Africa and the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. This part will be organised in plenary and parallel sessions. A number of leading scholars from Africa, the Diaspora and other parts of the global South, as well as representatives of partner institutions in the North will also be invited to participate in the conference. Provision will be made for autonomous initiatives of individuals and research institutions who are interested in organising panels to do so if they are able to mobilise the resources required for that. The second part is the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Casablanca Conference, and the third and last part is the business session devoted to discussions on the institutional life of CODESRIA: presentation and discussion of the reports of the President, the President of the Scientific Committee, and the Executive Secretary of CODESRIA; the new strategic plan and research priorities for the coming years; amendments to the CODESRIA Charter; and election of a new Executive Committee as well as a new President and Vice President of CODESRIA.

### Politics, Religion and Power in the Great Lakes Region

Murindwa Rutanga

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255 p.



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*Politics, Religion and Power in the Great Lakes Region* covers the political, religious and power relations in the contemporary Great Lakes States: Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Kenya and the Sudan. The work is important because of the nexus between these countries' shared present and past - their political, socio-economic, cultural and historical aspirations. In terms of regional cooperation, they are the countries, save for the DRC and the Sudan, which form the current East African Community (EAC). The book reflects on the complex dynamics and strategies of the ensuing power struggle, bringing forth a unique set of fascinating revelations of patterns of primitive capital accumulation, resistance, human rights violations and the political compromises between traditional enemies when confronted by a common (foreign) enemy. A critical analysis of the political distortion the region suffered brings to light the relevance of these divisive tools on the current trends in the African countries, drawing inferences from the African Great Lakes Region (GLR). The study highlights how the conflicts were finally resolved to avert a serious war, thus bringing about new reforms. This history is instructive to the contemporary reader because of the frequent skirmishes caused by ethnic and religious differences, political and territorial conflicts as well as resource and leadership disputes in the GLR.

## Debates & Think Pieces

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### Some Questions Regarding the Independence of South Sudan\*

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Whatever your point of view, it would be difficult to deny that the referendum on South Sudan – unity or independence – was a historic moment. Self-determination marks the founding of a new political order.

Nationalists may try to convince us that the outcome of the referendum, independence, is the natural destiny of the people of South Sudan. But there is nothing natural about any political outcome.

Let me ask one question to begin with: who is the self in what we know as self-determination? In 1956, when Sudan became independent, that self was the people of Sudan. Today, in 2011, when South Sudan will become independent, that self is the people of South Sudan.

That self, in both cases, is a political self. It is a historical self, not a metaphysical self as nationalists are prone to think. When nationalists write a history, they give the past a present. In doing so, they tend to make the present eternal. As the present changes, so does the past. This is why we are always rewriting the past.

To return to the referendum: the referendum is a moment of self-determination. Not every people has this opportunity. Not even every generation gets this opportunity. If the opportunity comes, it is once in several generations. It comes at a great price. That price is paid in blood, in political violence. It is fitting that we begin by recalling that many have died to make possible this moment of self-determination. Let us begin by acknowledging this sacrifice, which signifies this historical moment.

I do not intend this talk to be a celebration. My objective is more analytical. Rather than tread on firm ground, I intend to pose a set of questions – not so that we may answer them here and now, but as guidelines to how we may think of South

**Mahmood Mamdani**  
Makerere Institute of Social Research  
Kampala, Uganda

Sudan in the days and months and years ahead. I will begin with four questions:

One: How should those committed to Pan-African unity understand the emergence of a new state, an independent South Sudan? What does it teach us about the political process of creating unity?

Two: As we write the history of self-determination, how will we write the history of relations between the North and the South, as the history of one people colonizing another or as a history with different, even contradictory, possibilities?

Three: How did the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), historically a champion of the unity of Sudan, a New Sudan, come to demand an independent state?

Four: Now that the SPLA's political project has changed, to create a new state, this raises a different question: will the South establish a new political order, or will it reproduce a version of the old political order? The old state we know as Sudan? Will independence lead to peace or will peace be but an interlude awaiting a more appropriate antidote to ongoing political violence in Sudan?

#### **African Unity**

Like the self, unity too does not develop in linear fashion, in a straight line, from lower to higher levels, as if it were unfolding according to a formula. This is for one reason. Political unity is the outcome of political struggles, not of utopian blueprints. Anyone interested in creating unity must recognize the importance of politics and persuasion, and thus the inevitability of a non-linear process.

We often say that imperialism divided the continent. I suggest we rethink this platitude. Historically, empires have united peoples, by force. France created two great political units in Africa: French Equatorial Africa and French West Africa. Britain created two great federations – the Central African Federation and the East African Federation – and it created Sudan.

These great political units split up, but that division was not at the moment of colonialism, rather it occurred at the moment of independence. This was for one reason: the people in question saw these political arrangements as so many shackles, and struggled to break free of them.

Unity can be created by different, even contradictory, means. It can be created by force, and it can be created by choice. This is why we need to distinguish between different kinds of unities: unity through bondage and unity through freedom. This is why a democratic position on African unity is not necessarily incompatible with a democratic right to separation, just as the democratic right to union in marriage is not incompatible with a democratic right to divorce.

The OAU had two provisions in its Charter: the sovereignty of all states, and the right of all peoples to self-determination. Most observers saw these as contradictory. I suggest we revise this judgment in retrospect.

We need to rethink the relation between sovereignty and self-determination. Sovereignty is the relation of the state to other states, to external powers, whereas self-determination is an internal relation of the state to the people. In a democratic context, self-determination should be seen as the pre-requisite to sovereignty.

There are, in the post-colonial history of Africa, two great examples of self-determination, of the creation of a new state

from a previously independent African state: Eritrea was the first; South Sudan is the second. No state in history has agreed to secession of a part. Secession is always forced on a state. This is why we need to ask a question in both cases: how was secession possible?

Eritrean self-determination was the outcome of two important developments, internal and external. Internally, it was the outcome of a struggle lasting nearly four decades, culminating in a military victory over the Mengistu regime, the Derg. Externally, the relevant factor was the end of the Cold War.

The referendum that followed was notable for one reason. In spite of the close relation between Eritrean and Ethiopian armed movements, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and their joint victory over the Ethiopian empire state, the Eritrean people voted overwhelmingly to establish a separate and independent state.

In South Sudan, self-determination is the result of a different combination of developments. Internally, there was no military victory; instead, there was a military stalemate between the North and the South. Thus the question: How did South Sudan win its political objective – independence – in the absence of a military victory? Until now, this remains an unanswered question.

My answer is provisional. In the case of South Sudan, the external factor was more decisive. That external factor was 9/11 and, following it, US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In my view, it is only this factor, the real grip of post-9/11 fear, the fear that it will be the next target of US aggression that explains the agreement of the government in the North to include a provision for a referendum in the South in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The result of the referendum could not have been in doubt. It would have been clear to anyone with a historical understanding of the issues involved, and of the experience of the process leading to Eritrean independence, that the referendum would lead to an overwhelming popular vote for an independent state in the South.

Why then did the power in the North agree to a referendum? My answer is: the agreement to hold a referendum deferred a head-on confrontation with US power.

## The Meaning of Independence

Is independence the end of a colonial relationship? This is indeed how one tendency in South Sudan thinks of independence, just as some who called for Eritrean independence spoke of Ethiopia as a colonial master. The analogy is misleading for at least one reason. Whereas the colonial power left the region, North and South will always be neighbours.

You can leave your marriage partner, but you cannot leave your neighbour. Neighbours have a history, and that history overlaps geographical boundaries. Though North and South have distinct geographies, they have overlapping histories. I would like to highlight key developments in that history.

The first development was that of migrations, both voluntary and forced. Let us begin with voluntary migrations.

Here is one interesting example. In the period before western colonialism, even before the regional slave trade, the Shilluk migrated from the South. From amongst the Shilluk rose the royal house of the Funj, with a Sultanate that had its capital at Sinnar. As it expanded, the Sultanate raided the South for slaves, mainly for slave soldiers. For reasons that need to be explored further, colonial historians have termed these slave raids the Arab slave trade.

The Sultanate of the Funj was the first Muslim state in the history of Sudan. It brought to an end a thousand year history of Christian states in the North. Sinnar demolished Christian states in the North and inaugurated the political history of Islam in Sudan. Given the conventional understanding that equates Islam with the North and Christianity with the South, I would like us to remember that political power in the North, in Nubia and Beja, was Christian – and that the royal family of the first Muslim state in Sudan came from the South, not the North.

In contrast, Islam came to the North in the form of refugees and merchants, not royals or soldiers.

The migrations that we know of better were forced migrations, slavery. The South plundered for slaves from the seventeenth century onwards with the formation of the Sultanate of the Funj along the Nile and the Sultanate of Darfur in the west. But the slave trade became intense only in late eighteenth century

when the Caribbean plantation economy was transplanted to Indian Ocean islands.

The rise of a plantation slave economy has a number of consequences. Prior to it, the demand for slaves came mainly from the state; it was a demand for slave soldiers. As slave plantations were developed in the Indian Ocean islands, in Reunion and Mauritius and other places, the demand shifted from the state to the market. The scale of the demand also increased dramatically.

Nonetheless, most of those enslaved in the South stayed in Darfur and Sinnar as slave soldiers. Most of those in Darfur became Fur. Most of those in Sinnar became Arab. They were culturally assimilated, mostly by consent but the kind of consent that is manufactured through relations of force. For a parallel, think of how African slaves in North America became English-speaking Westerners – thereby taking on the cultural identity of their masters.

This little bit of history should disturb our simple moral world in a second way: some of the Arabs in the North are descendants of slaves from the South.

The second great historical development that has shaped relations between North and South in Sudan is that of anti-colonial nationalism. The event that marks the rise of anti-colonial nationalism is the *Mahdiyya*, the great Sudanese revolt against British-Ottoman rule, known as the *Turkiyya*. Led by Mohamed Abdulla, the Mahdi, this late nineteenth century movement was, after the 1857 Indian Uprising, the greatest revolt to shake the British empire. With its firm social base in Darfur and Kordofan, the *Mahdiyya* spread first to the rest of northern Sudan, and then to the Dinka of Abyei. The Dinka said the Spirit of Deng had caught the Mahdi.

Modern Sudanese nationalism began in the 1920s with what has come to be known as the White Flag revolt. It was spearheaded by Southern officers in the colonial army, and marks the turning point in colonial policy in Sudan, when British power decided to quarantine the South from the North. This is how North and South came to be artificially separated in the colonial period, with permission required to cross boundaries. This kind of separation is, however, not unusual in the history of colonialism: Karamoja too was a quarantined district in colonial Uganda.

The third point is key: an even worse fate met the people of South Sudan after independence. A state-enforced national project unfolded in Sudan, at first as enforced Arabization, later as enforced Islamization.

This – rather than the colonial period – is the real context of the armed liberation struggle in the South. The fact is that it did not take long for both the political class and the popular classes in the South to realize that the independence of Sudan had worsened their political and social situation, rather than improved it.

### **SPLA: From New Sudan to Independence**

The SPLA's political programme was not an independent South; it was a liberated Sudan. SPLA did not call for the creation of a new state, but for the reform of the existing state. The demand for a New Sudan was the basis of a political alliance between SPLA and the political opposition in Khartoum. It was the basis on which SPLA expanded the struggle from the South to border areas.

When Garang signed the CPA and returned to Khartoum, over a million turned out to receive him. They represented the entire diversity of Sudan – from North to South, and East to West. They included speakers of Arabic and of other Sudanese languages. Many drew comparisons with the return of Mugabe to Harare. Garang's return was a shock across the political spectrum, especially to the political class in the North.

The point of this historical survey of relations between North and South is to underline one single fact: this is not a one-dimensional history of Northern oppression of the South. True, Northern domination is the main story, especially after independence. But there was a subsidiary story: the story of joint North-South struggle against that domination.

If the SPLA had participated in the Sudanese elections in 2010, it would most likely have won – whether led by Garang, Salva Kir, or Yassir Arman. The irony is this: precisely when the SPLA was on the verge of realizing its historic goal, power in the whole of Sudan, it gave up the goal and called for an independent South.

### **Why?**

Part of the answer lies in the orientation of the political leadership, especially after the death of Garang. SPLA was a

movement with a strong leader, the weaker the organization, the more difference does the death of one individual make.

The history of liberation movements in this region testifies to this fact. It should also remind us that it has not been unusual for strong leaders to be eliminated towards the close of an armed struggle. Remember the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the killing of Tongogara on the eve of victory; the African National Congress (ANC) and the assassination of Chris Hani, also on the eve of victory; and SPLA and the death of Garang soon after return to Khartoum.

It is worth comparing SPLA with ANC. Both were successful in undermining the attempt of ruling regimes to turn the struggle into a racial or religious contest. The ANC succeeded in recruiting important individuals from the white population, such as Joe Slovo and Ronnie Kasrils. Similarly, SPLA included key cadres from the Arab population like Mansour Khaled and Yassir Arman. The difference between them is also important: whereas the line that called for unity, for a non-racial South Africa, won in the ANC, the line that called for a New Sudan was defeated in the SPLA.

In both cases, the lines representing unity and that representing separation were locked in an ongoing contest throughout the history of the struggle. This was indeed the difference between the ANC and the PAC in South Africa. In the case of South Sudan, the two lines were represented by SPLA and Anyanya II, the first calling for a New Sudan, the latter for an independent South Sudan.

The first letter, S, in SPLA does not stand for South Sudan, but for Sudan. The second letter, P, is spelt in the singular, as People, the people of Sudan and not peoples of Sudan, not in the plural, as many peoples inside one Sudan. SPLA was founded as a nationalist project, an alternative to other kinds of nationalisms, to Arabism, to Islamism, but also to a separate South Sudan nationalism. The SPLA was a project to reform the state, not to create a new state.

Garang's speech at Koka Dam was the most explicit statement of why the future of the South and the North lay together, why political salvation lay not in the formation of a new state but in the reform of the existing state.

Today, the line calling for independence has emerged triumphant. How did we get to this point?

I have suggested that part of the answer lies in the nature of political leadership. Another part of the answer lies in ongoing political developments. The key development was the experience of power-sharing.

The first power-sharing agreement in Sudan was forged in 1972, as a result of the Addis Ababa Agreement. It lasted ten years. It collapsed when no longer convenient for the regime in the North. But it also collapsed because the Agreement had little popular support in the North. Why? Because the 1972 Agreement reformed the state in the South but not in the North.

The CPA was built on the lessons of 1972. The key lesson was that power-sharing had been too narrow. As a result, CPA called for a broader sharing: ranging from political power to wealth, to arms. Still, it remained sharing of power, power-sharing, between elites, between two ruling groups, the National Congress Party (NCP) and SPLA. It left out the opposition in both the North and the South. It was power-sharing without democratization!

### **Democratization and Violence**

What would democratization mean in the present context? Is there a link between democratization and violence? If so, what is that link?

I want to begin with two observations, one on political order, and the other on political violence. The first has to do with the link between organization of the state and maintenance of civil peace in a post-civil war situation.

Think of Uganda, 1986. We had just come out of a civil war. The terrain was marked by multiple armed militias, the best known being the Ugandan Freedom Movement (UFM) and Fedemo. The Ugandan solution to this problem was known as the broad base. It was an invitation to rival militias to join the new political order, but on two conditions: first, whether monarchist or militarist, you can keep your political objectives provided you give up your arms; second, you can have a share in political power – a governmental position – provided you give up control over your militia.

South Sudan, too, is attempting to create a broad base. But in South Sudan, different members of the broad base have kept not only their arms but also command over their respective militias. Every important political leader in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has his own militia,

so much so that one has to ask: What happens if a leader loses his position within the SPLM? Or loses an election? The obvious answer is: that commander leaves with his militia.

Take the example of General George Athor who went into rebellion after losing last April's election to be governor of Jonglei state. He led his militia into rebellion, attacking Malakal in the oil-producing state of Upper Nile recently. It is a sign of the times. General Athor had contested the election as an independent candidate. But one is tempted to ask: what is to prevent a general who contests as SPLM and loses the election from withdrawing with his militia?

Most discussion on the question of violence in South Sudan today focuses on the spectre of North-South violence. There is hardly any discussion on violence within the South. Even when internal violence in the South is discussed, it is seen as a consequence of North-South tensions.

I suggest that we need to look at both internal and external violence, violence within state boundaries and violence between states. Let us begin with some general observations. Political violence in African states is not between states, but within states. The exception is where one state was created from within the womb of another – like Eritrea out of Ethiopia, or Pakistan out of India – or where one political class was nurtured in the womb of another, like the relationship between EPLF and Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Eritrean and Ethiopian armed movements, or the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) in Rwanda and the National Resistant Army (NRA) in Uganda.

The first kind of violence abounds in post-colonial Africa: the Rift Valley in Kenya, Darfur, Ivory Coast, Eastern Congo. It is common to refer to all types of internal violence as 'ethnic violence'. What is the common factor?

All these cases have one thing in common. All have reformed the central state by introducing elections and a multi-party system. But elections seem to lead to violence rather than stability. Why? For a clue, I suggest we look at another similarity between these cases of internal violence. None have managed to reform the local state, the local authority or the District Authority that the British used to call a Native Authority.

As a form of power, the Native Authority is of colonial origin. Colonialism spread

a fiction: that Africans have a herd mentality and that they tend to stay in one place, so Africans have always lived in tribal homelands. This was their justification for why every colony was administered as a patchwork of tribal homelands.

In actual fact, colonial administrations created homelands and Native Authorities. My research suggests that colonialism began with a programme of ethnic cleansing. Take the case of Buganda where all the Catholics were moved from the centre to Masaka, and Mengo was considered a Protestant homeland. Administrative counties were designated as Protestant or Catholic or, in a few cases, Muslim. The tribe or religion of the chief designated the nature of the homeland he administered. The ethnic cleansing in Buganda was religious, it was tribal elsewhere.

The Native Authority made an administrative distinction between those who were born or lived in the administrative area and those who were descended from its so-called original inhabitants. The distinction, in today's political language, was between natives and *Bafuruki*. The distinction systematically privileged natives over all others.

The colonial tribe not the same as a pre-colonial ethnic group. The pre-colonial ethnic group was not an administrative but a cultural group. You could become a Muganda or a Munyankole or a Langi or a Dinka in the pre-colonial period. But you could not change your tribe officially in the colonial administration. Colonialism transformed a tribe from a cultural identity to an administrative identity that claim to based on descent, not just culture. It became a blood identity. Tribe became a sub-set of race.

Wherever the colonial notion of Native Authority has remained, authorities define the population on the basis of descent, not residence.

Colonialism was based on two sets of discriminations: one based on race, the other on tribe. Race divided natives from non-natives in urban areas. Tribe divided natives from *Bafuruki* in the rural areas, inside each tribal homeland. The difference was that whereas natives in urban areas were discriminated against racially, natives in the tribal homelands were privileged.

This administrative structure inevitably generated inter-tribal conflicts. To begin with, every administrative area was multi-ethnic. Yet, in every multi-ethnic area,

official administration discriminated against ethnic minorities, especially when it comes to access to land, and the appointment of chiefs, that is, participation in local governance.

As the market system developed, more and more people migrated, either in search of jobs or land, and every administrative area became more and more multi-ethnic. In a situation where the population was multi-ethnic and power mono-ethnic, the result was that more and more people were disenfranchised as not being native to the area, even if they were born there. Ethnic conflict was the inevitable outcome.

Africa is littered with examples of this kind of conflict. It is the dynamic that drives ongoing civil wars around the continent: Darfur, Nigeria since the post-civil war constitution, eastern Congo, Ivory Coast, the Rift Valley in Kenya.

Will South Sudan be an exception? Will South Sudan create a new kind of state or will it reproduce a reformed colonial state?

To have some idea, we can look at the period before CPA was signed in 2005. At the time, there were liberated areas. Since CPA was signed in 2005, the whole of South Sudan became a liberated area. The fact is that South Sudan became independent six years ago, in 2005.

Make a comparison between liberated SPLA-held areas in Sudan with Sudan government-held areas, also in South Sudan before 2005. Early returns are not encouraging. Structures of power in both areas are the same. Both areas are ruled by administrative chiefs that implement customary law as defined in the colonial period, as a law that systematically privileges natives or *bafuruki*, men over women and old over young. From this point of view, there is no difference between how local power is organized in the North and in the South. Because the local power discriminates actively and legally between different kinds of citizens of South Sudan, it is bound to generate tensions and conflict over time.

The second type of violence, that between states, is specific to cases like Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Uganda and Rwanda. Will South and North Sudan be an exception?

For a start, we need to identify the sources of North-South tensions. First, there are the border states which lie within the North or the South but have populations

that historically came from both. This is the case in Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains, and Southern Kordofan. The border states were politically the most receptive to Garang's call for a New Sudan. The border states also felt betrayed by the decision to create an independent South Sudan. At the same time, the political class in the border states is exposed to retaliation from the Northern political elite, one reason why it may turn to SPLA for protection.

The second source of tension is the population of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the population of refugees from the southern war who lived in the North. How many still continue to live in the North? We do not know, but the count ranges from hundreds of thousands upwards. Are they citizens of where they live, Sudan, or of the new state from which they have historically moved, South Sudan? Like Eritreans in Ethiopia, they will be the most likely victims of a failure to think through the citizenship question.

The third source of tension is in Abyei, where the Misseriya of Darfur and the Ngok Dinka have shared livelihoods and political struggles for over a thousand years. Historically, African societies had

no fixed borders; the borders were porous, flexible and mobile. But the new borders are fixed and hard; you either belong or you do not. You cannot belong to both sides of the border. Will the new political arrangement with fixed borders pit the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka against one another?

The populations of border regions, pastoralists who criss-cross the North-South border annually in search of water in the dry season, the IDPs who have settled in their new homes, should they have dual citizenship?

In sum, then, there are two major sources of political violence after independence. Possible violence between North and South has three likely sources: border populations, IDPs, and peasants and pastoralists with shared livelihoods.

The second possible source of violence is within the South. It arises from the persistence of the Native Authority as the form of local power that turns cultural difference into a source of political and legal discrimination.

One solution for the first problem is dual nationality for border and migrant

populations in the near future, which could possibly lead to a confederation in the distant future.

The solution for the second problem is to reform the Native Authority. If South Sudan is organized as a federation, how will citizenship be defined in each state in the federation, as ethnic or territorial? A territorial federation gives equal rights to all citizens who live within a state, whereas an ethnic federation distinguishes legally and politically between different kinds of residents, depending on their ethnic origin.

The basic question that faces South Sudan is not very different from the one that faces most African countries. Will South Sudan learn from the African experience – of ongoing civil war and ethnic conflict – and rethink political citizenship and the political state in order to create a new political order?

The future of South Sudan and its people rides on the answer to this question.

\* This article was first presented as a public lecture at Makerere University, Kampala, in March 2011.

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## Grappling with the Reality of a New State in Southern Sudan<sup>1</sup>

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*The sight of so many Sudanese casting their votes in a peaceful and orderly fashion was an inspiration to the world and a tribute to the determination of the people and leaders of South Sudan to forge a better future.*

President Barack Obama (2011)

### Historical Synopsis

The political dust raised by the referendum on self-determination in southern Sudan has settled. The result of the referendum, expectedly, is secession, and the emergence of an independent state in South Sudan is inevitable. The Sudanese people, northerners and southerners alike, are witnessing a political reality they could never have envisaged on the independence of the country in 1956, a reality that plays out as a political boundary separating the successor state (South Sudan) from the predecessor state (Su-

**Peter Adwok Nyaba<sup>2</sup>**  
Minister of Higher Education and  
Scientific Research  
Government of Sudan

dan), which sends social and political shock waves into a society that lived through conflicts and civil wars but exhibits such civility, forgiveness, patience and social affinity to each other unknown elsewhere.

The secession of southern Sudan epitomizes a failure of the political class elite to construct a viable united Sudanese state encompassing all its racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversities. It may on the other hand represent the frustration of the southern political elite with their northern counterparts over too many agreements dishonoured, to paraphrase

Abel Alier (1990). This frustration was articulated as follows by Fr. Saturnino Lahore in the Second Parliament (1958) when the southern demand for federation was defeated:

The South has no intention of separating from the North, for had that been the case, nothing on earth would have prevented the demand for self-determination for it is the right of free people. The South will at any moment separate from the North if and when the North so decides, directly or indirectly, through political, social and economic subjugation of the South.

The contemporary history of the Sudan is replete with missed opportunities for unity in diversity. Had the Arab-dominated northern political elite accepted in 1956 to federate the country, the war in southern Sudan would not have escalated; and

the subsequent wars – in Darfur and Eastern Sudan – which now engulfed the whole country, would have been avoided. The arrogant rejection of federation pushed the southern political elite into demanding separation and the establishment of an independent state representing their social, cultural, economic and political interests. The rejection of federation – ‘no federation for one nation’ was the slogan – may in part be attributed to the negative attitude of the Arab-dominated northern political elite (*kayan al shamal*) towards their southern compatriots, an attitude tinted with a sense of racial and cultural superiority, which in part is informed by historical experience of slavery and slave trade in the nineteenth century.

This attitude invariably generated in southern Sudanese syndromes of inferiority, low self-esteem and a psychological attitude of being different, and hence created the basis for separation. The Arab-dominated northern political elite’s exclusion of their southern counterparts from equal participation in decision-making that affected the destiny of the Sudanese state exacerbated their alienation. It will be recalled that the demand for secession was for the first time put forward by the Sudan African National Union (SANU) in March 1965 during the ‘Round Table Conference on the Problem of the Southern Provinces’.

In the following lines, I want to demonstrate that southern Sudan secession was not the original demand of southerners; it appeared as a result of the northerners not being sensitive to southern concerns and worries and their continued treatment as second class citizens in their country of birth. Mark the following words of late Dr John Garang de Mabior, the SPLM leader in Rumbek in May 2005:

I and those who joined me in the bush and fought for more than twenty years, have brought to you CPA in a golden plate. Our mission is accomplished. It is now your turn, especially those who did not have a chance to experience bush life. When time comes to vote at referendum, it is your golden choice to determine your fate. Would you like to be second class citizens in your own country? It is absolutely your choice.

This speech of the SPLM leader who struggled to realise the vision of the ‘New Sudan’ based on social justice, equality, democracy and unity encapsulating the

concept of ‘unity in diversity’, contrasts radically but resonates with the statement of Fr. Saturnino in the Parliament nearly four decades earlier. Garang must have realised from his direct negotiations with Ustaz Ali Osman Mohamed Tah that it was impossible to attain the New Sudan and this explains its disappearance in the CPA literature.

I can vouch that lack of political will in the north pushed southerners to the position of secession. For instance, in the Juba Conference (1947), the northern political elite with the assistance of British colonial officials managed to extract from the southern representatives (tribal chiefs and low ranking officials not only less familiar with the workings of a modern state but who were also promised equal salaries with those of their northern compatriots) an agreement for south and north Sudan to become independent as one united country.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the 1947 breakthrough, the exclusion of southerners in the negotiations and hence the Cairo Agreement (1953) that affirmed Sudan’s exercise of self-determination and independence, which forms the basis of the claim by the people of Southern Sudan to exercise this right fifty five years later, was an act of political bad faith. The distrust cultivated in the independence process precipitated the mutiny of the Southern Corps of the Sudan Defence Forces in Torit on August 18th, 1955 and the beginning of the seventeen years war.

The Addis Ababa Agreement (1972) between the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement and the May Regime of Gaafar Nimeri stopped the civil conflict and was another opportunity in the process of state and nation building in the Sudan. While the southern political elite were building a subset of the May regime – practising elements of liberal democracy in the Southern Region<sup>4</sup> – nevertheless they were committed to the unity of the country.<sup>5</sup> It was Nimeri’s repeated interference in the democratic process in the Southern Region that triggered the rebellion and the emergence of the SPLM/A (1983) to wage the revolutionary armed struggle.

The formation of the National Democratic Alliance (1990) and the SPLM/A acquiescence and joining (1995) was an important opportunity for the political opposition to the Ingaz regime and building a broad national front. The NDA poised indeed as an alternative to the

Ingaz regime. But its internal political and ideological squabbles and power struggle reduced its political and military effectiveness. The ambivalence towards the armed struggle as a political means to bring down the Ingaz regime demonstrated by the northern political opposition conditioned their contribution to the New Sudan Brigade. In fact, each political party had its own separate contingent, which they did not want to subordinate to the SPLA command. This generated bitterness and strong political undercurrents which eventually precipitated the Umma Party’s desertion of the NDA (1999). It appeared as if the northern political opposition wanted to use the SPLA only as political ‘hunting dog’.

The SPLM bent to mediators’ pressure (2002) to exclude the NDA from its peace negotiations with the National Congress Party. This widened the fissures and divisions within the NDA, with the result that the NCP had to sign separate peace agreements<sup>6</sup> with all the political and armed opposition, leaving intact its hold on the state.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) 2005 remains the only viable legal, political and constitutional framework for resolving the country’s myriad social, economic and cultural disparities and concomitant problems manifested in conflicts, wars and the emergence of centrifugal regional political forces. The wholehearted and full implementation of the CPA protocols would have rendered more attractive the unity of the country. Many aspects of the CPA, for example the Abyei area, the north-south borders as they stood on January 1, 1956 and the question of the oil revenue, remain contentious, negatively affecting the relationship between the CPA partners. Moreover the NCP-dominated government of national unity effectively froze its social and economic development projects, leaving Southern Sudan to its SPLM-dominated government. The opportunity to make unity attractive through social and economic development was forfeited.

### **Could Southern Sudan Secession Have Been Avoided?**

An analysis of the referendum results shows that the vote for secession was not uniform throughout the ten states in southern Sudan. Northern Bahr el Ghazal state voted 40 per cent for unity while Warrap state voted 36 per cent for unity.

This undoubtedly must have been in response to NCP investments and development projects in the two states, suggesting that active participation of the GONU in social and economic development of southern Sudan in the interim period would have changed the tide in favour of unity. This in hindsight is the meaning of 'making unity attractive'. The NCP bears the onus of responsibility of letting slip the opportunity for making unity of the country attractive to southern secessionists through its intransigence. Its attitude of 'eating yet still having its cake' to maintain its political dominance and resistance to institute legal reforms in order to pave the way for democratic transformation meant that NCP must have long ago decided to let southern Sudan go. However, the SPLM may also, through its acquiescence to an asymmetrical power relationship with NCP in the Khartoum, carry some responsibility.

Secession was not the only viable option for the resolution of the Sudanese conflict. Indeed, the CPA gives priority to the unity of the country; the Machakos Protocol was crafted in such a manner as to affirm that unity. But reality always doesn't conform to wishes or expectations, and the NCP did not possess the political will to implement it to the letter. In view of this and the historical account above, the unity of the Sudan could have been assured had the Sudanese political leadership been strong enough to make concrete political decisions.

When the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced his political programme of Perestroika and Glasnost, little did he envisage that this would sweep him from power, lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the radical transformation of the international balance of power. In 1990, the former South African President de Klerk released Nelson Mandela from prison. This magnanimous act was necessary to break South Africa's international isolation although it marked the end of white rule and transformed the power relations in the country.

President al-Bashir had the mandate to implement the CPA protocols and perhaps walk an extra mile, even at the risk of alienating some of his strong supporters in the NCP, and to make unity an attractive option for the Southern separatists. But he chose to follow, instead of leading, the hawkish mob in the National Congress Party, who could not see beyond their fanatical ob-

session with power. It is worth mentioning that the NCP preferred to deal with known separatists rather than with the genuine unionists of the SPLM. Thus, after six years of flirting with the separatists, the dice was already cast for secession. It was therefore not surprising that when he visited Juba on 4 January the huge reception and huge crowds President al-Bashir drew were simply in response to his positive remarks about recognising the results of the referendum.

The basis and foundation of Sudan's unity had been sufficiently eroded by the short-sightedness of its political leadership due to its apparent lack of a home grown inclusive national agenda. Every regime that came and went in Khartoum was either an extension of political and ideological currents in the Middle East, or some out-dated archaic theocratic-feudal parties that tended to recreate conditions of enslavement and exploitation, taking advantage of people's simplicity and spirituality. In its initial days (1969-1971) the May regime could have succeeded in its national programme<sup>7</sup> but because this was externally driven, it quickly bankrupted and collapsed in the face of the ossified traditionalism and cultural reaction that dominate society in northern Sudan.

### **Post-Referendum Challenges and How to Manage Them**

It is obvious that a host of challenges will immediately face the new state, particularly in its relations with North Sudan. These include security issues such as the borders, citizenship, international agreements and conventions, currency, banking, debts and loans, natural resources (notably oil), the Nile waters and the status of Abyei. Negotiations between the CPA partners have been underway since July 2010 and agreement(s) in respect of the two scenarios of 'unity' and 'secession' should have been reached before the conduct of the referendum. However, the referendum was conducted without a single step having been made. The parties have yet to agree on the 'guiding principles' for the negotiations and the agreement.

However, assuming that the two parties, the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, amicably reach an agreement; that South Sudan will cede some of its oil to North Sudan to promote cooperation and good neighbourliness, or in the context of trade and

exchange for electric power and access to maritime ports; that the north-south borders are demarcated without a political hitch, and Abyei elects to return to the South; that both agree to a monetary union in which the Sudanese Pound is legal tender in both states, then the only remaining issue of importance will be the Nile Waters. By then they will assume an international character. Had the NCP/GOS and SPLM/GOSS teams agreed on the Nile Waters before the referendum, it would have been in the context of splitting the Sudan's share (18.5 BM<sup>3</sup>, vide the 1959 Nile Waters Treaty between Egypt and the Sudan). South Sudan will have the option of either joining the other riparian states (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and DR Congo) in their standoff with Egypt and Sudan over the reasonable and equitable usage of the trans-boundary water course – The River Nile Basin – or signing a Tripartite Agreement with Egypt and North Sudan.

The NCP and other political forces in North Sudan<sup>8</sup> and perhaps other states in Africa and the Middle East are giddy and apprehensive with the prospect of South Sudan establishing diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. This concern is not justifiable on the ground that South Sudan is not an Arab country and therefore can freely choose with whom it wants to establish relations on the basis of mutual interest. South Sudan cannot be more Arab than Egypt and other Arab countries on whose soil the 'Star of David' flies high.

It will be in the social, economic and diplomatic interest of the new state in South Sudan to build a foreign policy that promotes regional and world peace, fair trade and respect for the sovereignty of others. In this respect, one does not see any immediate problems between South Sudan and North Sudan or the Arab countries. While South Sudan may not join the League of Arab States, it is possible that she may use its status as a former part of the Arab World to promote good relations between the Arabs and the African countries. South Sudan will definitely apply to join the East African Community, for economic and cultural reasons. It will automatically become a member of IGAD and the African Union. The only hitches one perceives in South Sudan's external diplomatic relations will be in the context of relations it may want to develop with Somaliland and the Arab Saharawi Republic, whose people have

been denied the right to exercise self-determination in a referendum over whether to become independent or become part of the Kingdom of Morocco.

The challenge that will face the new state is how South Sudan will balance its relations with the People's Republic of China on the one hand, in view of its huge investment in the development of the oil fields in southern Sudan which at the same time has been the main driver of the Sudan's war efforts against the SPLA, and the United States of America, which on the other hand was the principal support to the Southern Sudan referendum and its secession from the north. It is clear, from the messages emanating from Washington, that the US Administration will exert pressure for diplomatic recognition and South Sudan's membership of the United Nations.

'No use crying over spilt milk' – so goes an old adage – and indeed the dismemberment of the Sudan has now become inevitable. In fact North Sudan should be the first to recognise the new state as an expression of goodwill. The peaceful and civilised manner with which southerners conducted themselves in the referendum process has already shattered the premonitions that the state in South Sudan will be a failed one. These premonitions of course did not appear out of the blue skies but from reality obtaining in South Sudan.

The new states of South Sudan and Sudan will have to evolve friendly relations based on mutual respect for each other's sovereignty to facilitate cooperation in the social, economic and cultural spheres and to maintain peaceful relations, particularly with regard to the transition areas and Abyei. In fact the two states should prevent Abyei from becoming another Kashmir. This means that the two should eschew the legacy and bitterness of war by promoting easy movement of people and goods. In fact the nomads (Messiriya and Rezeighat) spend more than seven months in South Sudan in search of water and pastures. This transhumance can endure only if there is peace and harmony in the transition zone between north and south, which means that the two states should promote good neighbourliness if only in the interests of these people.

The two states will have to manage the post-referendum challenges in a manner that will bring mutual benefits which in future could translate into some form of

federal or confederal arrangement. The Government of South Sudan should therefore engage the Government of North Sudan in order to resolve the conflict in Darfur,<sup>9</sup> and conflicts that may sprout in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile due to the poor conduct of the Popular Consultation. As confidence building measures, the two states should encourage and promote the building of the railway lines and highways which may have been halted by the referendum.

Sudan is heavily indebted to the tune of thirty six billion US dollars. South Sudan may argue that none of these debts has been used for its social and economic development. On the contrary, most of these debts were used to prosecute the war. However justifiable this argument may be, the secession of South Sudan could be used as a reason to cancel Sudan's debts in the context of relieving a highly indebted poor country (HIPC). This will assist in the evolution of cordial and friendly relationship between the two new states, which could facilitate a future reunion on new bases.

### Concluding Remarks

Separation is hard to swallow. It is bound to reverberate throughout the social fabric and networks which were built over the five or more decades of developing together. However, if secession can consolidate peace and harmony between the two states, then so much the better. The EPRDF's<sup>10</sup> slogan on shooting itself into power in Addis Ababa in 1991 was that 'peace is better than unity'. The Sudanese people, both in the south and north, can benefit from this wisdom and consider the secession of southern Sudan a way of building peace and harmony between the two parts in order to compensate for the opportunities for social and economic development lost in wars and conflicts over the last fifty five years. In this respect, secession will be a blessing in disguise.

The secession of South Sudan is likely to cause ripples in other parts of Africa where the Organisation of African Unity instituted the principle of the inviolability of colonial borders. This will have to be revised to conform to the present reality of increased social and political awareness. Therefore it should constitute an opportunity for those states in Africa and the Arab World with problems of national and religious minorities to review their policies to prevent them from be-

coming explosive political commodities in this globalized world.

### Notes

1. Paper presented at the international conference on the 'Consequences of the Referendum on Sudan, the East and Horn of Africa Regions', organized by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Africa Research and Resource Forum (ARRF), with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Trust Africa, held in Nairobi, from 28 February through 1 March 2011.
2. The author is a member of the SPLM, formerly representative of Upper Nile State in the Council of States in the National Legislature (2005-2008) and Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Government of National Unity in Khartoum (2008-2011).
3. Conscious of South Sudan's underdevelopment compared to northern Sudan, southerners had argued that they wanted southern Sudan to remain under British colonial administration or linked to British East Africa in order to allow northern Sudan to become independent. This argument was of course defeated, leading to the British reversal of its 1932 policy of separate development.
4. For the first time, the southern political elite managed their own affairs in a manner more democratic than in the centre. The Southern Region People's Assembly was a beacon of liberal democracy in which legislators grilled the members of the government. They even impeached the President of the High Executive Council, Mr Joseph Lagu (1980), forcing Nimeri to replace him.
5. The Southern Regional Government and Radio Juba were the only two forces that came out openly and courageously in support of Nimeri and the May regime in the three days that followed the invasion of the country by the National Front on 6 July 1976.
6. The agreement with the Umma Party (1999); Cairo Agreement with NDA (2005); the CPA with the SPLM/A (2005), DPA with Mini Arkoi Menawi (2006) and the ESPA with Eastern Sudan Front (2006).
7. The revolutionary regime first recognised the historical, racial, religious and linguistic differences between north and south and proceeded to define the problem of southern Sudan as that of underdevelopment. It embarked on building a social stratum that understood and could spearhead the

democratic transformation of society in Southern Sudan. The emergence of democratic and progressive forces in the south and their dovetailing with similar forces in north was the only possibility for preserving the unity of the Sudan. This could also be said of Yemen on independence, but not of the union between Egypt and Syria in the United Arab Republic.

8. A group of *Ulama* and Islamic intellectuals recently issued a fatwa against the conduct of the referendum of self-determination, fearing that it would result in separation and establishment of an independent state in south Sudan which could block the way of expansion of Islam and Arab culture to the countries of Southern Africa.
9. The Government of South Sudan should not encourage the Darfur rebels by giving them in any part of South Sudan.
10. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

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## An Arab Springtime?<sup>1</sup>

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*The year 2011 began with a series of shattering, wrathful explosions from the Arab peoples. Is this springtime the inception of a second 'awakening of the Arab world?', asks Samir Amin.*

**Samir Amin**  
Third World Forum  
Dakar, Senegal

The year 2011 began with a series of shattering, wrathful explosions from the Arab peoples. Is this springtime the inception of a second 'awakening of the Arab world?' Or will these revolts bog down and finally prove abortive – as was the case with the first episode of that awakening, which was evoked in my book *L'Eveil du Sud* (Paris: Le temps des cerises, 2008).<sup>2</sup> If the first hypothesis is confirmed, the forward movement of the Arab world will necessarily become part of the movement to go beyond imperialist capitalism on the world scale. Failure would keep the Arab world in its current status as a submissive periphery, prohibiting its elevation to the rank of an active participant in shaping the world.

It is always dangerous to generalize about the 'Arab world,' thus ignoring the diversity of objective conditions characterizing each country of that world. So I will concentrate the following reflections on Egypt, which is easily recognized as playing and having always played a major role in the general evolution of its region.

Egypt was the first country in the periphery of globalized capitalism that tried to 'emerge.' Even at the start of the 19th century, well before Japan and China, the Viceroy Mohammed Ali had conceived and undertaken a program of renovation for Egypt and its near neighbours in the Arab Mashreq [Mashreq means 'East,' i.e., eastern North Africa and the Levant, etc.]. That vigorous experiment took up

two-thirds of the 19th century and only belatedly ran out of breath in the 1870s, during the second half of the reign of the Khedive Ismail. The analysis of its failure cannot ignore the violence of the foreign aggression by Great Britain, the foremost power of industrial capitalism during that period. Twice, in [the naval campaign of] 1840 and then by taking control of the Khedive's finances during the 1870s, and then finally by military occupation in 1882, England fiercely pursued its objective: to make sure that a modern Egypt would fail to emerge. Certainly the Egyptian project was subject to the limitations of its time, since it manifestly envisaged emergence within and through capitalism, unlike Egypt's second attempt at emergence – which we will discuss further on. That project's own social contradictions, like its underlying political, cultural and ideological presuppositions, undoubtedly had their share of responsibility for its failure. The fact remains that, without imperialist aggression, those contradictions would probably have been overcome, as they were in Japan.

Beaten, emergent Egypt was forced to undergo nearly forty years (1880-1920) as a servile periphery, whose institutions were refashioned in service to that period's model of capitalist/imperialist accumulation. That imposed retrogression struck, over and beyond its productive system, the country's political and social institutions. It operated systematically to

reinforce all the reactionary and medievalist cultural and ideological conceptions that were useful for keeping the country in its subordinate position.

The Egyptian nation – its people, its elites – never accepted that position. This stubborn refusal in turn gave rise to a second wave of rising movements which unfolded during the next half-century (1919-1967). Indeed, I see that period as a continuous series of struggles and major forward movements. It had a triple objective: democracy, national independence, social progress. Three objectives – however limited and sometimes confused – were their formulations, inseparable one from the other. An inseparability identical to the expression of the effects of modern Egypt's integration into the globalized capitalist/imperialist system of that period. In this reading, the chapter (1955-1967) of Nasserist systematization is nothing but the final chapter of that long series of advancing struggles, which began with the revolution of 1919-1920.

The first moment of that half-century of rising emancipation struggles in Egypt had put its emphasis – with the formation of the Wafd in 1919 – on political modernization through adoption (in 1923) of a bourgeois form of constitutional democracy (limited monarchy) and on the reconquest of independence. The form of democracy envisaged allowed progressive secularization – if not secularism in the radical sense of that term – whose symbol was the flag linking cross and crescent (a flag that reappeared in the demonstrations of January and February 2011). 'Normal' elections then allowed, without the least problem, not merely for Copts to be elected by Muslim majorities

but for those very Copts to hold high positions in the state.

The British put their full power, supported actively by the reactionary bloc comprising the monarchy, the great landlords, and the rich peasants, into undoing the democratic progress made by Egypt under Wafdist leadership. In the 1930s the dictatorship of Sedki Pasha, abolishing the democratic 1923 constitution, clashed with the student movement then spearheading the democratic anti-imperialist struggles. It was not by chance that, to counter this threat, the British Embassy and the Royal Palace actively supported the formation in 1927 of the Muslim Brotherhood, inspired by 'Islamist' thought in its most backward 'Salafist' version of Wahhabism as formulated by Rachid Reda – the most reactionary version, antidemocratic and against social progress, of the newborn 'political Islam'.<sup>3</sup>

The conquest of Ethiopia undertaken by Mussolini, with world war looming, forced London to make some concessions to the democratic forces. In 1936 the Wafd, having learned its lesson, was allowed to return to power and a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty was signed. The Second World War necessarily constituted a sort of parenthesis. But a rising tide of struggles resumed already on February 21, 1946 with the formation of the 'worker-student bloc', reinforced in its radicalization by the entry on stage of the communists and of the working-class movement. Once again the Egyptian reactionaries, supported by London, responded with violence and to this end mobilized the Muslim Brotherhood behind a second dictatorship by Sedki Pasha – without, however, being able to silence the protest movement. Elections had to be held in 1950 and the Wafd returned to power. Its repudiation of the 1936 Treaty and the inception of guerrilla actions in the Suez Canal Zone were defeated only by setting fire on Cairo (January 1952), an operation in which the Muslim Brotherhood was deeply involved.

A first coup d'état in 1952 by the 'Free Officers', and above all a second coup in 1954 by which Nasser took control, was taken by some to 'crown' the continual flow of struggles and by others to put it to an end. Rejecting the view of the Egyptian awakening advanced above, Nasserism put forth an ideological discourse that wiped out the whole history of the years from 1919 to 1952 in order to

push the start of the 'Egyptian Revolution' to July 1952. At that time, many among the communists had denounced this discourse and analyzed the coups d'état of 1952 and 1954 as aimed at putting an end to the radicalization of the democratic movement. They were not wrong, since Nasserism only took the shape of an anti-imperialist project after the Bandung Conference of April 1955. Nasserism then contributed all it had to give: a resolutely anti-imperialist international posture (in association with the pan-Arab and pan-African movements) and some progressive (but not 'socialist') social reforms. The whole thing done from above, not only 'without democracy' (the popular masses being denied any right to organize by and for themselves) but even by 'abolishing' any form of political life. This was an invitation to political Islam to fill the vacuum thus created.

In only ten short years (1955-1965) the Nasserist project used up its progressive potential. Its exhaustion offered imperialism, henceforward led by the United States, the chance to break the movement by mobilizing to that end its regional military instrument: Israel. The 1967 defeat marked the end of the tide that had flowed for a half-century. Its reflux was initiated by Nasser himself who chose the path of concessions to the Right (the *infithah* or 'opening', an opening to capitalist globalization of course) rather than the radicalization called for by, among others, the student movement (which held the stage briefly in 1970, shortly before and then after the death of Nasser). His successor, Sadat, intensified and extended the rightward turn and integrated the Muslim Brotherhood into his new autocratic system. Mubarak continued along the same path.

The following period of retreat lasted, in its turn, almost another half-century. Egypt, submissive to the demands of globalized liberalism and to US strategy, simply ceased to exist as an active factor in regional or global politics. In its region, the major US allies – Saudi Arabia and Israel – occupied the foreground. Israel was then able to pursue the course of expanding its colonization of occupied Palestine with the tacit complicity of Egypt and the Gulf countries.

Under Nasser, Egypt had set up an economic and social system that, though subject to criticism, was at least coher-

ent. Nasser wagered on industrialization as the way out of the colonial international specialization which was confining the country in the role of cotton exporter. His system maintained a division of incomes that favoured the expanding middle classes without impoverishing the popular masses. Sadat and Mubarak dismantled the Egyptian productive system, putting in its place a completely incoherent system based exclusively on the profitability of firms most of which were mere subcontractors for the imperialist monopolies. Supposed high rates of economic growth, much praised for thirty years by the World Bank, were completely meaningless. Egyptian growth was extremely vulnerable. Moreover, such growth was accompanied by an incredible rise in inequality and by unemployment afflicting the majority of the country's youth. This was an explosive situation. It exploded.

The apparent 'stability of the regime', boasted of by successive US officials like Hillary Clinton, was based on a monstrous police apparatus counting 1,200,000 men (the army numbering a mere 500,000) free to carry out daily acts of criminal abuse. The imperialist powers claimed that this regime was 'protecting' Egypt from the threat of Islamism. This was nothing but a clumsy lie. In reality, the regime had perfectly integrated reactionary political Islam (on the Wahhabite model of the Gulf) into its power structure by giving it control of education, of the courts, and of the major media (especially television). The sole permitted public speech was that of the Salafist mosques, allowing the Islamists, to boot, to pretend to make up 'the opposition.' The cynical duplicity of the US establishment's speeches (Obama no less than Bush) was perfectly adapted to its aims. The *de facto* support for political Islam destroyed the capacity of Egyptian society to confront the challenges of the modern world (bringing about a catastrophic decline in education and research), while by occasionally denouncing its 'abuses' (like assassinations of Copts) Washington could legitimize its military interventions as actions in its self-styled 'war against terrorism'. The regime could still appear 'tolerable' as long as it had the safety valve provided by mass emigration of poor and middle-class workers to the oil-producing countries. The exhaustion of that system (Asian immigrants replacing those from Arabic countries)

brought with it the rebirth of opposition movements. The workers' strikes in 2007 (the strongest strikes on the African continent in the past fifty years), the stubborn resistance of small farmers threatened with expropriation by agrarian capital, and the formation of democratic protest groups among the middle classes (like the 'Kefaya' and 'April 63 movements) foretold the inevitable explosion – expected by Egyptians but startling to 'foreign observers'. And thus began a new phase in the tide of emancipation struggles, whose directions and opportunities for development we are now called on to analyze.

### **The Components of the Democratic Movement**

The 'Egyptian Revolution' now underway shows that it is possible to foresee an end to the neoliberal system, shaken in all its political, economic, and social dimensions. This gigantic movement of the Egyptian people links three active components: youth 'repoliticized' by their own will in 'modern' forms that they themselves have invented; the forces of the radical left; and the forces of the democratic middle classes.

Youth (about one million activists) spearheaded the movement. They were immediately joined by the radical left and the democratic middle classes. The Muslim Brotherhood, whose leaders had called for a boycott of the demonstrations during their first four days (sure, as they were, that the demonstrators would be routed by the repressive apparatus) only accepted the movement belatedly once its appeal, heard by the entire Egyptian people, was producing gigantic mobilizations of 15 million demonstrators.

The youth and the radical left sought in common three objectives: restoration of democracy (ending the police/military regime), the undertaking of a new economic and social policy favourable to the popular masses (breaking with the submission to demands of globalized liberalism), and an independent foreign policy (breaking with the submission to the requirements of US hegemony and the extension of US military control over the whole planet). The democratic revolution for which they call is a democratic social and anti-imperialist revolution.

Although the youth movement is diversified in its social composition and in its political and ideological expressions, it

places itself as a whole 'on the left'. Its strong and spontaneous expressions of sympathy with the radical left testify to that.

The middle classes as a whole rally around only the democratic objective, without necessarily objecting thoroughly to the 'market' (such as it is) or to Egypt's international alignment. Not to be neglected is the role of a group of bloggers who take part, consciously or not, in a veritable conspiracy organized by the CIA. Its animators are usually young people from the wealthy classes, extremely 'Americanized', who nevertheless present themselves as opponents of the established dictatorships. The theme of democracy, in the version required for its manipulation by Washington, is uppermost in their discourse on the 'net.' That fact makes them active participants in the chain of counter-revolutions, orchestrated by Washington, disguised as 'democratic revolutions' on the model of the East European 'color revolutions'. But it would be wrong to think that this conspiracy is behind the popular revolts. What the CIA is seeking is to reverse the direction of the movement, to distance its activists from their aim of progressive social transformation and to shunt them onto different tracks. The scheme will have a good chance to succeed if the movement fails in bringing together its diverse components, identifying common strategic objectives, and inventing effective forms of organization and action. Examples of such failure are well known – look at Indonesia and the Philippines. It is worthy of note that those bloggers – writing in English rather than Arabic(!) – setting out to defend 'American-style democracy', in Egypt often present arguments serving to legitimize the Muslim Brotherhood.

The call for demonstrations enunciated by the three active components of the movement was quickly heeded by the whole Egyptian people. Repression, extremely violent during the first days (more than a thousand deaths), did not discourage those youths and their allies (who at no time, unlike in some other places, called on the Western Powers for any help). Their courage was decisive in drawing 15 million Egyptians from all the districts of big and small cities, and even villages, into demonstrations of protest lasting days (and sometimes nights) on end. Their overwhelming political victory had as its effect that fear switched sides.

Obama and Hillary Clinton discovered that they had to dump Mubarak, whom they had hitherto supported, while the army leaders ended their silence and refused to take over the task of repression – thus protecting their image – and wound up deposing Mubarak and several of his more important henchmen.

The generalization of the movement among the whole Egyptian people represents in itself a positive challenge, for this people, like any other, are far from making up a 'homogeneous bloc'. Some of its major components are without any doubt a source of strength for the perspective of radicalization. The 5-million-strong working class's entry into the battle could be decisive. The combative workers, through numerous strikes, have advanced further in constructing the organizations they began in 2007. There are already more than fifty independent unions. The stubborn resistance of small farmers against the expropriations permitted by the abolition of the agrarian reform laws (the Muslim Brotherhood cast its votes in parliament in favour of that vicious legislation on the pretext that private property was 'sacred' to Islam and that the agrarian reform had been inspired by the Devil, a communist!) is another radicalizing factor for the movement. What is more, a vast mass of 'the poor' took active part in the demonstrations of February 2011 and often are participating in neighbourhood popular committees 'in defence of the revolution.' The beards, the veils, the dress-styles of these 'poor folk' might give the impression that in its depths Egyptian society is 'Islamic,' even that it is mobilized by the Muslim Brotherhood. In reality, they erupted onto the stage and the leaders of that organization had no choice but to go along. A race is thus underway: who – the Brotherhood and its (Salafist) Islamist associates or the democratic alliance – will succeed in forming effective alliances with the still-confused masses and even to (a term I reject) 'get them under discipline'?

Conspicuous progress in constructing the united front of workers and democratic forces is happening in Egypt. In April 2011, five socialist-oriented parties (the Egyptian Socialist Party, the Popular Democratic Alliance – made up of a majority of the membership of the former 'loyal-left' Tagammu party, the Democratic Labour Party, the trotskyst Socialist Revolutionary Party, and the Egyptian Communist Party – which had been

a component of Tagammu) established an Alliance of Socialist Forces through which they committed themselves to carry out their struggles in common. In parallel, a National Council (Maglis Watany) was established by all the active political and social forces of the movement (the socialist-oriented parties, the diverse democratic parties, the independent unions, the peasant organizations, the networks of young people, numerous social associations). The Council has about 150 members, the Muslim Brotherhood and the right-wing parties refusing to participate and thus reaffirming their well-known opposition to continuation of the revolutionary movement.

### **Confronting the Democratic Movement: The Reactionary Bloc**

Just as in past periods of rising struggle, the democratic social and anti-imperialist movement in Egypt is up against a powerful reactionary bloc. This bloc can perhaps be identified in terms of its social composition (its component classes, of course) but it is just as important to define it in terms of its means of political intervention and the ideological discourse serving its politics.

In social terms, the reactionary bloc is led by the Egyptian bourgeoisie taken as a whole. The forms of dependent accumulation operative over the past forty years brought about the rise of a rich bourgeoisie, the sole beneficiary of the scandalous inequality accompanying that 'globalized liberal' model. They are some tens of thousands – not of 'innovating entrepreneurs' as the World Bank likes to call them but of millionaires and billionaires, all owing their fortunes to collusion with the political apparatus (corruption being an organic part of their system). This is a comprador bourgeoisie (in the political language current in Egypt, the people term them 'corrupt parasites'). They make up the active support for Egypt's placement in contemporary imperialist globalization as an unconditional ally of the United States. Within its ranks, this bourgeoisie counts numerous military and police generals, 'civilians' with connections to the state and to the dominant National Democratic Party created by Sadat and Mubarak, and of religious personalities – the whole leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and the leading sheikhs of the Al Azhar University are all of them 'billionaires'. Certainly, there still exists a bourgeoisie of

active small-and-medium entrepreneurs. But they are the victims of the racketeering system put in place by the comprador bourgeoisie, usually reduced to the status of subordinate subcontractors for the local monopolists, themselves mere transmission belts for the foreign monopolies. In the construction industry, this system is the general rule: the 'greats' snap up the state contracts and then subcontract the work to the 'smalls'. That authentically entrepreneurial bourgeoisie is in sympathy with the democratic movement.

The rural side of the reactionary bloc has no less importance. It is made up of rich peasants who were the main beneficiaries of Nasser's agrarian reform, replacing the former class of wealthy landlords. The agricultural cooperatives set up by the Nasser regime included both rich and poor peasants and so they mainly worked for the benefit of the rich. But the regime also had measures to limit possible abuse of the poor peasants. Once those measures had been abandoned, on the advice of the World Bank, by Sadat and Mubarak, the rural rich went to work to hasten the elimination of the poor peasants. In modern Egypt the rural rich have always constituted a reactionary class, now more so than ever. They are likewise the main sponsors of conservative Islam in the countryside and, through their close (often family) relationships with the officials of the state and religious apparatuses (in Egypt the Al Azhar university has a status equivalent to an organized Muslim Church) they dominate rural social life. What is more, a large part of the urban middle classes (especially the army and police officers but likewise the technocrats and medical/legal professionals) stem directly from the rural rich.

This reactionary bloc has strong political instruments in its service: the military and police forces, the state institutions, the privileged National Democratic political party (a *de facto* single party) that was created by Sadat, the religious apparatus (Al Azhar), and the factions of political Islam (the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists). The military assistance (amounting to some \$1.5 billion annually) extended by the US to the Egyptian Army never went toward the country's defensive capacity. On the contrary, its effect was dangerously destructive through the systematic corruption that, with the greatest cynicism, was not merely known and tolerated but actively promoted. That

'aid' allowed the highest ranks to take over for themselves some important parts of the Egyptian comprador economy, to the point that 'Army Incorporated' (Sharika al geish) became a commonplace term. The High Command, who made themselves responsible for directing the Transition, is thus not at all 'neutral' despite its effort to appear so by distancing itself from the acts of repression. The 'civilian' government chosen by and obedient to it, made up largely of the less-conspicuous men from the former regime, has taken a series of completely reactionary measures aimed at blocking any radicalization of the movement. Among those measures are a vicious anti-strike law (on the pretext of economic revival), and a law placing severe restrictions on the formation of political parties, aimed at confining the electoral game to the tendencies of political Islam (especially the Muslim Brotherhood), which are already well organized, thanks to their systematic support by the former regime. Nevertheless, despite all that, the attitude of the army remains, at bottom, unforeseeable. In spite of the corruption of its cadres (the rank and file are conscripts, the officers professionals) nationalist sentiment has still not disappeared entirely. Moreover, the army resents having in practice lost most of its power to the police. In these circumstances, and because the movement has forcefully expressed its will to exclude the army from political leadership of the country, it is very likely that the High Command will seek in the future to remain behind the scenes rather than to present its own candidates in the coming elections.

Though it is clear that the police apparatus has remained intact (their prosecution is not contemplated) like the state apparatus in general (the new rulers all being veteran regime figures), the National Democratic Party vanished in the tempest and its legal dissolution has been ordered. But we can be certain that the Egyptian bourgeoisie will make sure that its party is reborn under a different label or labels.

### **Political Islam**

The Muslim Brotherhood makes up the only political force whose existence was not merely tolerated but actively promoted by the former regime. Sadat and Mubarak turned over to them control over three basic institutions: education,

the courts, and television. The Muslim Brotherhood have never been and can never be 'moderate,' let alone 'democratic.' Their leader – the *murchid* (Arabic word for 'guide' – *Führer*) is self-appointed and its organization is based on the principle of disciplined execution of the leaders' orders without any sort of discussion. Its top leadership is made up entirely of extremely wealthy men (thanks, in part, to financing by Saudi Arabia – which is to say, by Washington), its secondary leadership of men from the obscurantist layers of the middle classes, its rank-and-file by lower-class people recruited through the charitable services run by the Brotherhood (likewise financed by the Saudis), while its enforcement arm is made up of militias (the *baltaguis*) recruited among the criminal element.

The Muslim Brotherhood are committed to a market-based economic system of complete external dependence. They are in reality a component of the comprador bourgeoisie. They have taken their stand against large strikes by the working class and against the struggles of poor peasants to hold on to their lands. So the Muslim Brotherhood are 'moderate' only in the double sense that they refuse to present any sort of economic and social program, thus in fact accepting without question reactionary neoliberal policies, and that they are submissive *de facto* to the enforcement of US control over the region and the world. They thus are useful allies for Washington (and does the US have a better ally than their patron, the Saudis?) which now vouches for their 'democratic credentials'.

Nevertheless, the United States cannot admit that its strategic aim is to establish 'Islamic' regimes in the region. It needs to maintain the pretence that 'we are afraid of this'. In this way, it legitimizes its 'permanent war against terrorism' which in reality has quite different objectives: military control over the whole planet in order to guarantee that the US-Europe-Japan triad retains exclusive access to its resources. Another benefit of that duplicity is that it allows it to mobilize the 'Islamophobic' aspects of public opinion. Europe, as is well known, has no strategy of its own in the region and is content from day to day to go along with the decisions of Washington. More than ever, it is necessary to point out clearly this true duplicity in US strategy, which

has quite effectively manipulated its deceived public's opinions. The United States (with Europe going along) fears more than anything a really democratic Egypt that would certainly turn its back to its alignments with economic liberalism and with the aggressive strategy of NATO and the United States. They will do all they can to prevent a democratic Egypt, and to that end will give full support (hypocritically disguised) to the false Muslim Brotherhood alternative which has been shown to be only a minority within the movement of the Egyptian people for real change.

The collusion between the imperialist powers and political Islam is, of course, neither new nor particular to Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood, from its foundation in 1927 up to the present, has always been a useful ally for imperialism and for the local reactionary bloc. It has always been a fierce enemy of the Egyptian democratic movements. And the multibillionaires currently leading the Brotherhood are not destined to go over to the democratic cause! Political Islam throughout the Muslim world is quite assuredly a strategic ally of the United States and its NATO minority partners. Washington armed and financed the Taliban, who they called 'Freedom Fighters,' in their war against the national/popular regime (termed 'communist') in Afghanistan before, during, and after the Soviet intervention. When the Taliban shut the girls' schools created by the 'communists', there were 'democrats' and even 'feminists' at hand to claim that it was necessary to 'respect traditions'!

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood are now supported by the 'traditionalist' Salafist tendency, who also are generously financed by the Gulf States. The Salafists (fanatical Wahhabites, intolerant of any other interpretation of Islam) make no bones about their extremism, and they are behind a systematic murder campaign against Copts. It is scarcely conceivable that such operations could be carried out without the tacit support (and sometimes even greater complicity) of the state apparatus, especially of the courts which had mainly been turned over to the Muslim Brotherhood. This strange division of labour allows the Muslim Brotherhood to appear moderate: which is what Washington pretends to believe. Nevertheless, violent clashes among the Islamist religious groups in Egypt are to

be expected. That is on account of the fact that Egyptian Islam has historically mainly been Sufist, the Sufi brotherhoods even now grouping 15 million Egyptian Muslims. Sufism represents an open, tolerant, Islam – insisting on the importance of individual beliefs rather than on ritual practices (they say 'there are as many paths to God as there are individuals'). The state powers have always been deeply suspicious of Sufism although, using both the carrot and the stick, they have been careful not to declare open war against it. The Wahhabi Islam of the Gulf States is at the opposite pole from Sufism: it is archaic, ritualist, conformist, declared enemy of any interpretation other than repetition of its own chosen texts, enemy of any critical spirit – which is, for it, nothing but the Devil at work. Wahhabite Islam considers itself at war with, and seeks to obliterate, Sufism, counting on support for this from the authorities in power. In response, contemporary Sufis are secularistic, even secular; they call for the separation of religion and politics (the state power and the religious authorities of Al Azhar recognized by it). The Sufis are allies of the democratic movement. The introduction of Wahhabite Islam into Egypt was begun by Rachid Reda in the 1920s and carried on by the Muslim Brotherhood after 1927. But it only gained real vigour after the Second World War, when the oil rents of the Gulf States, supported by the United States as allies in its conflict with the wave of popular national liberation struggles in the '60s, allowed a multiplication of their financial wherewithal.

### US Strategy: The Pakistan Model

The three powers that dominated the Middle East stage during the period of ebb tide (1967-2011) were the United States, boss of the system, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Three very close allies, all sharing the same dread that a democratic Egypt would emerge. Such an Egypt could only be anti-imperialist and welfarist. It would depart from globalized liberalism, would render insignificant the Gulf States and the Saudis, would reawaken popular Arab solidarity and force Israel to recognize a Palestinian state.

Egypt is a cornerstone in the US strategy for worldwide control. The single aim of Washington and its allies, Israel and Saudi Arabia, is to abort the Egyptian democratic movement, and to that end they want to impose an 'Islamic regime'

under the direction of the Muslim Brotherhood – the only way for them to perpetuate the submission of Egypt. The ‘democratic speeches’ of Obama are there only to deceive a naïve public opinion, primarily that of the United States and Europe.

There is much talk of the Turkish example in order to legitimize a government by the Muslim Brotherhood (‘converted to democracy!’). But that is just a smokescreen; for the Turkish Army is always there behind the scene, and though scarcely democratic and certainly a faithful ally of NATO, it remains the guarantor of ‘secularism’ in Turkey. Washington’s project, openly expressed by Hillary Clinton, Obama, and the think tanks at their service, is inspired by the Pakistan model: an ‘Islamic’ army behind the scene, a ‘civilian’ government run by one or more ‘elected’ Islamic parties. Plainly, under that hypothesis, the ‘Islamic’ Egyptian government would be recompensed for its submission on the essential points (perpetuation of economic liberalism and of the self-styled ‘peace treaties’ permitting Israel to get on with its policy of territorial expansion) and enabled, as demagogic compensation, to pursue its projects of ‘Islamization of the state and of politics’ and of assassinating Copts! Such a beautiful democracy has Washington designed for Egypt! Obviously, Saudi Arabia supports the accomplishment of that project with all its (financial) resources. Riyadh knows perfectly well that its regional hegemony (in the Arab and Muslim worlds) requires that Egypt be reduced to insignificance. Which is to be done through ‘Islamization of the state and of politics’; in reality, a Wahhabite Islamization with all its effects, including anti-Copt pogroms and the denial of equal rights to women.

Is such a form of Islamization possible? Perhaps, but at the price of extreme violence. The battlefield is Article 2 of the overthrown regime’s constitution. This article stipulating that ‘sharia is the origin of law’ was a novelty in the political history of Egypt. Neither the 1923 constitution nor that of Nasser contained anything of the sort. It was Sadat who put it into his new constitution with the triple support of Washington (‘traditions are to be respected!’), of Riyadh (‘the Koran is all the constitution needed’), and of Tel Aviv (‘Israel is a Jewish State’).

The project of the Muslim Brotherhood remains the establishment of a theocratic state, as is shown by its attachment to Article 2 of the Sadat/Mubarak Constitution. What is more, the organization’s most recent program further reinforces that medievalist outlook by proposing to set up a ‘Council of Ulemas’ empowered to assure that any proposed legislation be in conformity with the requirements of sharia. Such a Religious Constitutional Council would be analogous to the one that, in Iran, is supreme over the ‘elected’ government. It is the regime of a religious single super-party, all parties standing for secularism becoming ‘illegal.’ Their members, like non-Muslims (Copts), would thus be excluded from political life. Despite all that, the authorities in Washington and Europe talk as though the recent opportunist and disingenuous declaration by the Brotherhood that it was giving up its theocratic project (its program staying unchanged) should be taken seriously. Are the CIA experts, then, unable to read Arabic? The conclusion is inescapable: Washington would see the Brotherhood in power, guaranteeing that Egypt remain in its grip and that of liberal globalization, rather than that power be held by democrats who would be very likely to challenge the subaltern status of Egypt. The recently created Party of Freedom and Justice, explicitly on the Turkish model, is nothing but an instrument of the Brotherhood. It offers to admit Copts (!) which signifies that they have to accept the theocratic Muslim state enshrined in the Brotherhood’s program if they want the right to ‘participate’ in their country’s political life. Going on the offensive, the Brotherhood is setting up ‘unions’ and ‘peasant organizations’ and a rignarole of diversely named ‘political parties,’ whose sole objective is to foment division in the now-forming united fronts of workers, peasants and democrats – to the advantage, of course, of the counter-revolutionary bloc.

Will the Egyptian democratic movement be able to strike that Article from the forthcoming new constitution? The question can be answered only through going back to an examination of the political, ideological, and cultural debates that have unfolded during the history of modern Egypt.

In fact, we can see that the periods of rising tide were characterized by a diversity of openly expressed opinions,

leaving religion (always present in society) in the background. It was that way during the first two-thirds of the 19th century (from Mohamed Ali to Khedive Ismail). Modernization themes (in the form of enlightened despotism rather than democracy) held the stage. It was the same from 1920 through 1970: open confrontation of views among ‘bourgeois democrats’ and ‘communists’ staying in the foreground until the rise of Nasserism. Nasser shut down the debate, replacing it with a populist pan-Arab, though also ‘modernizing’, discourse. The contradictions of this system opened the way for a return of political Islam. It is to be recognized, contrariwise, that in the ebb-tide phases such diversity of opinion vanished, leaving the space free for medievalism, presented as Islamic thought, that arrogates to itself a monopoly over government-authorized speech. From 1880 to 1920, the British built that diversion channel in various ways, notably by exiling (mainly to Nubia) all modernist Egyptian thinkers and actors who had been educated since the time of Mohamed Ali. But it is also to be noted that the ‘opposition’ to British occupation also placed itself within that medievalist consensus. The Nadha (begun by Afghani and continued by Mohamed Abdou) was part of that deviation, linked to the Ottomanist delusion advocated by the new Nationalist Party of Moustapha Kamil and Mohammad Farid. There should be no surprise that, toward the end of that epoch, this deviation led to the ultra-reactionary writings of Rachid Reda, which were then taken up by Hassan el Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

It was the same again in the ebb-tide years 1970-2010. The official discourse (of Sadat and Mubarak), perfectly Islamist (as proven by their insertion of sharia into the constitution and their yielding essential powers to the Muslim Brotherhood), was equally that of the false opposition, alone tolerated, which was sermonizing in the Mosque. Because of this, that Article 2 might seem solidly anchored in ‘general opinion’ (the ‘street’ as American pundits like to call it). The devastating effects of the depolarization systematically enforced during the ebb-tide periods is not to be underestimated. The slope can never easily be re-ascended. But it is not impossible. The current debates in Egypt are centred, explicitly or implicitly, on the supposed

'cultural' (actually, Islamic) dimensions of this challenge. And there are signposts pointing in a positive direction: the movement making free debate unavoidable – only a few weeks sufficed for the Brotherhood's slogan 'Islam is the Solution' to disappear from all the demonstrations, leaving only specific demands about concretely transforming society (freedom to express opinions and to form unions, political parties, and other social organizations; improved wages and workplace rights; access to landownership, to schools, to health services; rejection of privatizations and calls for nationalizations, etc.). A signal that does not mislead: in April elections to the student organization, where five years ago (when its discourse was the only permitted form of supposed opposition) the Brotherhood's candidates had obtained a crushing 80 per cent majority, their share of the vote fell to 20 per cent! Yet the other side likewise sees ways to parry the 'democracy danger.' Insignificant changes to the Mubarak constitution (continuing in force), proposed by a committee made up exclusively of Islamists chosen by the army high command and approved in a hurried April referendum (an official 23% negative vote but a big affirmative vote imposed through electoral fraud and heavy blackmail by the mosques) obviously left Article 2 in place. Presidential and legislative elections under that constitution are scheduled for September/October 2011. The democratic movement contends for a longer 'democratic transition,' which would allow its discourse actually to reach those big layers of the Muslim lower classes still at a loss to understand the events. But as soon as the uprising began, Obama made his choice: a short, orderly (that is to say without any threat to the governing apparatus) transition, and elections that would result in victory for the Islamists. As is well known, 'elections' in Egypt, as elsewhere in the world, are not the best way to establish democracy but often are the best way to set a limit to democratic progress.

Finally, some words about 'corruption': Most speech from the 'transition regime' concentrates on denouncing it and threatening prosecution (Mubarak, his wife, and some others arrested, but what will actually happen remaining to be seen). This discourse is certainly well

received, especially by the major part of naive public opinion. But they take care not to analyze its deeper causes and to teach that 'corruption' (presented in the moralizing style of American speech as individual immorality) is an organic and necessary component in the formation of the bourgeoisie. And not merely in the case of Egypt and of the southern countries in general, where if a comprador bourgeoisie is to be formed, the sole way for that to take place is in association with the state apparatus. I maintain that at the stage of generalized monopoly, capitalism corruption has become a basic organic component in the reproduction of its accumulation model: rent-seeking monopolies require the active complicity of the state. Its ideological discourse (the 'liberal virus') proclaims 'state hands off the economy' while its practice is 'state in service to the monopolies'.

### The Storm Zone

Mao was not wrong when he affirmed that really existing (which is to say, naturally imperialist) capitalism had nothing to offer to the peoples of the three continents (the periphery made up of Asia, Africa, and Latin America – a 'minority' counting 85 per cent of world population!) and that the South was a 'storm zone', a zone of repeated revolts potentially (but only potentially) pregnant with revolutionary advances toward socialist transcendence of capitalism.<sup>4</sup>

The 'Arab spring' is enlisted in that reality. The case is one of social revolts potentially pregnant with concrete alternatives that in the long run can register within a socialist perspective. Which is why the capitalist system, monopoly capital dominant at the world level, cannot tolerate the development of these movements. It will mobilize all possible means of destabilization, from economic and financial pressures to military threats. It will support, according to circumstances, either fascist and fascistic false alternatives or the imposition of military dictatorships. Not a word from Obama's mouth is to be believed. Obama is Bush with a different style of speech. Duplicity is built into the speech of all the leaders of the imperialist triad (United States, Western Europe, Japan).

I do not intend in this article to examine in as much detail each of the ongoing movements in the Arab world (Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Yemen, etc.). The compo-

nents of the movement differ from one country to the other, just like the forms of their integration into imperialist globalization and the structures of their established regimes.

The Tunisian revolt sounded the starting gun, and surely it strongly encouraged the Egyptians. Moreover, the Tunisian movement has one definite advantage: the semi-secularism introduced by Bourguiba can certainly not be called into question by Islamists returning from their exile in England. But at the same time, the Tunisian movement seems unable to challenge the extraverted development model inherent in liberal capitalist globalization.

Libya is neither Tunisia nor Egypt. The ruling group (Kaddafi) and the forces fighting it are in no way analogous to their Tunisian and Egyptian counterparts. Kaddafi has never been anything but a buffoon, the emptiness of whose thought was reflected in his notorious 'Green Book.' Operating in a still-archaic society, Kaddafi could indulge himself in successive 'nationalist and socialist' speeches with little bearing on reality, and the next day proclaim himself a 'liberal'. He did so to 'please the West!' as though the choice for liberalism would have no social effects. But it had and, as is commonplace, it worsened living conditions for the majority of Libyans. Those conditions then gave rise to the well-known explosion, of which the country's regionalists and political Islamists took immediate advantage. For Libya has never truly existed as a nation. It is a geographical region separating the Arab West from the Arab East (the Maghreb from the Mashreq). The boundary between the two goes right through the middle of Libya. Cyrenaica was historically Greek and Hellenistic, then it became Mashreqian. Tripolitania, for its part, was Roman and became Maghrebian. Because of this, regionalism has always been strong in the country. Nobody knows who the members of the National Transition Council in Benghazi really are. There may be democrats among them, but there are certainly Islamists, some among the worst of the breed, as well as regionalists. From its outset 'the movement' took in Libya the form of an armed revolt fighting the army rather than a wave of civilian demonstrations. And right away, that armed revolt called NATO to its aid. Thus, a chance for military intervention

was offered to the imperialist powers. Their aim is surely neither 'protecting civilians' nor 'democracy' but control over oilfields and acquisition of a major military base in the country. Of course, ever since Khaddafi embraced liberalism, the Western oil companies had control over Libyan oil. But with Khaddafi, nobody could be sure of anything. Suppose he were to switch sides tomorrow and start to play ball with the Indians and the Chinese? But there is something else more important. In 1969, Khaddafi had demanded that the British and Americans leave the bases they had kept in the country since World War II. Currently, the United States needs to find a place in Africa for its Africom (the US military command for Africa, an important part of its alignment for military control over the world but which still has to be based in Stuttgart!). The African Union refusing to accept it, until now no African country has dared to do so. A lackey emplaced at Tripoli (or Benghazi) would surely comply with all the demands of Washington and its NATO lieutenants.

The components of the Syrian revolt have yet to make their programs known. Undoubtedly, the rightward drift of the Baathist regime, gone over to neo-liberalism and singularly passive with regard to the Israeli occupation of the Golan, is behind the popular explosion. But CIA intervention cannot be excluded: there is talk of groups penetrating into Diraa across the neighbouring Jordanian frontier. The mobilization of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been behind earlier revolts in Hama and Homs, is perhaps part of Washington's scheme seeking an eventual end to the Syria/Iran alliance that gives essential support to Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

In Yemen, the country was united through the defeat of progressive forces that had governed independent South Yemen. Will the movement mark a return to life of those forces? That uncertainty explains the hesitant stance of Washington and the Gulf States.

In Bahrain, the revolt was crushed at birth by massacres and intervention by the Saudi army, without the dominant media (including Al Jazeera) having much to say about it; as always, the double standard.

The 'Arab revolt,' though its most recent expression, is not the only example showing the inherent instability of the 'storm zone'.

A first wave of revolutions, if that is what they are to be called, had swept away some dictatorships in Asia (the Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa (Mali) which had been installed by imperialism and the local reactionary blocs. But there the United States and Europe succeeded in aborting the potential of those popular movements, which had sometimes aroused gigantic mobilizations. The United States and Europe seek in the Arab world a repetition of what happened in Mali, Indonesia, and the Philippines: 'to change everything in order that nothing changes!' There, after the popular movements had gotten rid of their dictators, the imperialist powers undertook to preserve their essential interests by setting up governments aligned with their foreign-policy interests and with neoliberalism. It is noteworthy that in the Muslim countries (Mali, Indonesia) they mobilized political Islam to that end.

In contrast, the wave of emancipation movements that swept over South America allowed real advances in three directions: democratization of state and society; adoption of consistent anti-imperialist positions; and entry onto the path of progressive social reform.

The prevailing media discourse compares the 'democratic revolts' of the third world to those that put an end to East-European 'socialism' following the fall of the 'Berlin Wall.' This is nothing but a fraud, pure and simple. Whatever the reasons (and they were understandable) for those revolts, they signed on to the perspective of an annexation of the region by the imperialist powers of Western Europe (primarily to the profit of Germany). In fact, reduced thenceforward to a status as one of developed capitalist Europe's peripheries, the countries of Eastern Europe are still on the eve of experiencing their own authentic revolts. There are already signs foretelling this, especially in the former Yugoslavia.

Revolts, potentially pregnant with revolutionary advances, are foreseeable nearly everywhere on those three continents which more than ever remain the storm zone, by that fact refuting all the cloying discourse on 'eternal capitalism' and the stability, the peace, the democratic progress attributed to it. But those revolts, to become revolutionary advances, will have to overcome many obstacles. On the one hand, they will have to overcome the weaknesses of the move-

ment, arrive at positive convergence of its components, formulate and implement effective strategies. On the other hand, they will have to turn back the interventions (including military interventions) of the imperialist triad. Any military intervention of the United States and NATO in the affairs of the southern countries must be prohibited, no matter its pretext, even seemingly benign 'humanitarian' intervention. Imperialism seeks to permit neither democracy nor social progress to those countries. Once it has won the battle, the lackeys whom it sets up to rule will still be enemies of democracy. One can only regret profoundly that the European 'left,' even when its claims to be radical has lost all understanding of what imperialism really is.

The discourse currently prevailing calls for the implementation of 'international law' authorizing, in principle, intervention whenever the fundamental rights of a people are being trampled. But the necessary conditions allowing for movement in that direction are just not there. The 'international community' does not exist. It amounts to the US embassy, followed automatically by those of Europe. No need to enumerate the long list of such worse-than-unfortunate interventions (Iraq, for example) with criminal outcomes. Nor to cite the 'double standard' common to them all (obviously one thinks of the trampled rights of the Palestinians and the unconditional support of Israel, of the innumerable dictatorships still being supported in Africa).

### **Springtime for the People of the South and Autumn for Capitalism**

The 'springtime' of the Arab peoples, like that which the peoples of Latin America are experiencing for two decades now, and which I refer to as the second wave of awakening of the Southern peoples – the first having unfolded in the 20th century until the counter-offensive unleashed by neoliberal capitalism/imperialism – takes on various forms, running from explosions aimed against precisely those autocracies participating in the neoliberal ranks to challenges by 'emerging countries' to the international order. These springtimes thus coincide with the 'autumn of capitalism', the decline of the capitalism of globalized, financialized, generalized, monopolies. These movements begin, like those of the preceding century, with peoples and states of the system's periphery regain-

ing their independence, retaking the initiative in transforming the world. They are thus above all anti-imperialist movements and so are only potentially anti-capitalist. Should these movements succeed in converging with the other necessary reawakening, that of the workers in the imperialist core, a truly socialist perspective could be opened for the whole human race. But that is in no way a predestined 'historical necessity'. The decline of capitalism might open the way for a long transition toward socialism, but it might equally well put humanity on the road to generalized barbarism. The ongoing US project of military control over the planet by its armed forces, supported by their NATO lieutenants, the erosion of democracy in the imperialist core countries, and the medievalist rejection of democracy within southern countries in revolt (taking the form of 'fundamentalist' semi-religious delusions disseminated by political Islam, political Hinduism, political Buddhism) all work together toward that dreadful outcome. At the current time

the struggle for secularist democratization is crucial for the perspective of popular emancipation, crucial for opposition to the perspective of generalized barbarism.

### Notes

1. This article was translated by Shane Henry Mage and first appeared in Monthly Review.
2. The reader will find there my interpretations of the achievements of the viceroy Muhammad Ali (1805-1848) and of the Khedives who succeeded him, especially Ismail (1867-1879); of the Wafd (1920-1952); of the positions taken by Egyptian communists in regard to nasserism; and of the deviation represented by the Nahda from Afghani to Rachid Reda.
3. The best analysis of the components of political Islam (Rachid Reda, the Muslim Brotherhood, the modern Salafists).
4. Concerning the relationship between the North/South conflict and the opposition between the beginning of a socialist transition and the strategic organization of capitalism.

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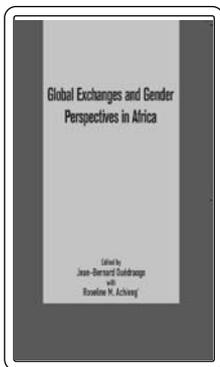
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## Global Exchanges and Gender Perspectives in Africa

Edited by

Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo with Roseline Achieng

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The global perspectives adopted in this volume by the authors, from different academic disciplines and social experiences, ought not to be locked in sterile linearity which within process of globalisation would fail to perceive, the irreversible opening up of the worlds of the south. There is the need within the framework of the analyses presented here, to quite cogently define the sense of the notion of the market. The market here does not refer to saving or the localised exchange of goods, a perspective which is imposed by normative perceptions. In fact, a strictly materialistic reading of exchange would be included, since every social practice and interaction implies a communitarian transaction ; meanwhile the exchange system under study here broadens to root out the obligation of the maximisation of mercantile profit from the cycle of exchange. Trade here would have a meaning closer to those of old, one of human interaction, in a way that one could also refer to "bon commerce" between humans. In one way, trade places itself at the heart of social exchanges, included the power of money, and is carried along by a multitude of social interactions. The reader is called upon to take into account the major mercantile formations of the social trade system, the market society, without forgetting the diversity of exchange routes as well as the varying modalities of social construction, at the margins and within market logics – those of implicit value in trade between humans – which the texts herein also seek to review.

The age-old project of restructuring the domestic economy, the market society as it has developed in the West, – whence it has set out to conquer the whole wide world – places at the very centre of the current capitalist expansion the challenge of imperatively reshaping gender identity, inter alia, in market relations.

# The Political Economy of the Jasmine Revolution: On the Collapse of a Model and the Challenges of the Revolution

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In recent days, Tunisia has experienced a major change in its contemporary political history, a change that has allowed it to end a hated dictatorship and has paved the way for the establishment of a truly democratic regime that could promote the emergence of a new historical experience and the building of a new, open and inclusive government, placing the interests of its citizens at the heart of its concerns. The Jasmine Revolution and the hasty departure of the former President were the culmination of a sweeping popular movement that started with the self-immolation of young Mohamed Bouazizi in Sidi Bouzid on 17 December 2010, in protest against harassment by administrative officials. This desperate and symbolic act aroused strong popular mobilization which continued to grow despite repression, backpedalling and manoeuvres by the old regime and its promise to foster greater democratic openness and a new era of freedom. It was too little, too late.

The demonstration held on Friday 14 January 2011 in downtown Tunis had many points in common with the great popular revolts of recent history, such as the events of May 1968 or the demonstrations in the former 'homelands of the workers' movement': Prague, Budapest, and Gdansk which culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall. The demonstration swept away all hope for the former President to remain in power. It will go down as one of the major events in the history of Tunisia.

Thousands of demonstrators took part: young people who had probably known no other government than Ben Ali's; former activists who had become resigned due to the ferocity of the repressive machinery but now found a new taste for struggle; and union members and civil society activists who carried on resistance through thick and thin, so that, even now, one can only wonder how they found the strength to stand up to such a cruel and repressive regime. On the morning of 14 January 2011, the demonstrators were joyous and festive, but also determined and committed. They spoke of a

**Hakim Ben Hammouda**  
Africa Development Bank  
Tunisia

'Tunisian Spring' and a new Arab era without knowing that by the end of the day people would be talking about the Jasmine Revolution. Men and women of all generations united around two slogans: 'Ben Ali, out', and 'Trial for figures of corruption'.

A power struggle then took place between the demonstrators, who occupied the main street, Avenue Habib Bourguiba, and the forces of law and order, which defended the besieged Ministry of the Interior. The struggle went on all morning and part of the afternoon. In mid-afternoon, law enforcement officers decided to clear the main street of Tunis with tear gas and beat back the last resisters with batons. The forces of law and order thereby put an end to the unique gathering and the police announced a state of siege. And yet it was a Pyrrhic victory, for the television announced what many had already begun to whisper: the President was gone and the popular revolution had triumphed. A movement of jubilation and euphoria swept through all of Tunisia, a movement that was expressed enthusiastically and uninterruptedly on radio and television stations suddenly freed from the fear and worry that had silenced them for years. But this joy was darkened by hours of anxiety caused by the reign of murderous insanity and terror perpetrated by armed groups hoping to restore the old regime by creating chaos: a sorry wager on the part of the security services of a people that had been demonstrating a desire for freedom and a thirst for dignity for nearly a month. Not only did this Machiavellian scheme fail, but it actually reinforced the revolutionary process by making the citizens the true guardians of the new era. Neighbourhood defence committees multiplied, sparking the return to politics

of millions of citizens who had been discouraged by the Ben Ali regime.

This revolution is an important date in the history, not only of Tunisia, but of the whole Arab world, where most countries managed to avoid the democratic revolutions experienced around the world in the 1990s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the post-colonial world also underwent a democratic transition, and freedom became the foundation of tropical political regimes. From Africa to Asia and from South to Central American countries, authoritarianism retreated in the face of democratic revolts, thereby allowing citizens to overcome their 'national disenchantment' (to quote the title of one of Hélé Béji's prescient essays) and write a new page in post-national history. Only the Arab world was left untouched by the winds of freedom that swept across the South and which our old autocratic regimes disdained. These regimes also resisted democracy 'at gunpoint, when American neo-conservatives decided to impose freedom on our countries in the early 2000s. Of those years of imperialistic adventurism promoting a democracy from the outside, nothing is left but the desolation of civil wars, the rise of intolerance in Iraq and the smiles on the lips of our old autocrats as they contemplate the 'butter-wouldn't-melt-in-the-mouth' attitudes of the American administration!

These repeated failures of democracy in the Arab world confirmed what neo-orientalists had always written about the hermetic nature of our societies when faced with modernity and the winds of freedom. The failure of transplanted democracy to 'take' in our societies confirmed their hypotheses on the essential separation between the eternal East subject to myths and unable to look beyond the allegory of the golden age, and the West with its universal freedoms and human rights. These views have been shared by different ends of the spectrum, ranging from certain Westerners, who used them to justify their lack of interest in the region, to Islamists who used them to legitimize their rejection of modernity

and prove the relevancy of the Islamic revolution or autocratic regimes that could openly criticize the imposition of Western standards on our lands.

However, the Jasmine Revolution contradicted all these views and all the right-minded people who had speculated for years on the confinement of our societies in an absolute relationship with the divine and submission to an external Other. The revolution and its echoes in other Arab countries showed that we are no strangers to the horizons of freedom and reason, and that active citizenship is a goal that is also shared by Arabs.

Today, the euphoria and enthusiasm of the people's mobilization and victory are giving way to reflection and analysis. No doubt in the days to come, this revolution will be the subject of research, analysis and studies. This article is intended as a contribution to these thoughtful efforts to better understand and study the revolution, its underlying causes and its future. With this in mind, we will focus on a specific question, which is the role of the economy and its place among the causes of the revolution. This question is particularly important in the light of the fact that the stability of the political regime in Tunisia has always been attributed to the success of its economic model. In the view of many, the liberal economic model, open to globalization, was the reason for Tunisia's strong economic growth, which promoted the development of a large middle class that formed the social foundation for its political regime and a rampart against Islamists. For many years, the discourse on Tunisia highlighted the successes of a model of development that was central to the political legitimization of the regime and which explained the silences on such issues as freedom and democracy.

The discourse changed radically at the time of the revolt. Rather than a model of economic development, people spoke of a mirage undermined by corruption and racketeering by a Mafioso clique. There was also a new focus on the poverty of the inland regions and the growing imbalances between the coastal areas and the inland areas, indicating that the model was on its last legs. Furthermore, the crises in the mining regions of Gafsa in 2008, the border region of Béni Guerden, and in Sidi Bouzid as of autumn 2010, served as points of departure for the revolution that would ultimately put paid

to the government of Ben Ali. Others did not hesitate to point to unemployment and particularly unemployment among graduates which, for the past several years, had constituted a serious limitation with considerable impact on the prevailing development model.

Thus, the economy and the development model were at the heart of a major controversy. From being a factor of stability and considerable success, the development model became a target of criticism from the outset of the revolution, and many do not hesitate to point out that the major limitations of the model, particularly in terms of transparency, regional imbalance and unemployment, are at the root of the crisis. And so the development model, which had acted as a supporting force for the political regime, ended up digging its grave.

The question that is raised today is what was the weight and impact of the economy on the Tunisian revolution? Our aim is to determine whether economic issues were the real cause of the revolution, or whether the true motivation for the upheaval was political in nature, notably due to authoritarianism. How much did symbolic issues and corruption contribute to the fall of the Ben Ali regime?

The goal of this article is to reflect on the origins of the revolution and the challenges that lie on the road ahead.

### **Years of High-tech Dictatorship**

The change of government and the arrival of Ben Ali at the head of the state on 7 November 1987 were causes of great hope for several reasons. First of all, the atmosphere at the end of the Bourguiba regime and the struggles for power in the topmost ranks had caused great uncertainty and anxiety as to the future in all segments of society. Furthermore, the end of the regime had been marked by heightened repression and arbitrariness, and an explosion of political arrests and trials. The biggest trial was that of the leadership and high-ranking officials of the Islamic Tendency Movement, with heavy punishments that were apparently far from satisfying an increasingly absent 'father of the nation', who would have preferred for the court to hand down capital sentences against certain leaders, notably Rached Ghannouchi, the head of the movement. The trials led to the radicalization of major factions, and particularly the youth of the Islamist

movement, some of whom turned to violent action. Islamist activists placed a bomb in a hotel in the tourist area of Monastir, killing one. The aim was to weaken the regime by attacking its economic foundations and thereby retaliate against repression of the Islamist movement. Parallel to this attack, which received considerable international attention, there was a spate of attacks by Islamist activists against local militant supporters of the party in power or judges.

Times were tense in the late 1980s and the atmosphere was heavy and grave. The change that took place on 7 November 1987 appeared to be a deliverance for a country on the verge of a breakdown. The resignation of the 'father of the nation' for 'health reasons' and the arrival of a new president were welcomed as the removal of a heavy weight from the country. However, it should be noted that the change of leadership did not give rise to overwhelming joy or euphoria on the part of the population. Instead, an attitude of reserve and circumspection prevailed for several months. Initially, there were no major popular demonstrations in favour of the new government. Even the single party, caught short by the ousting of its historical leader, was slow to put its full support behind the new Head of State, to the point where, for a time, Ben Ali envisaged founding a new presidential party that would be unwaveringly devoted to him.

There were several reasons for the tepid welcome of the new government, notably the personality of the new strongman. Ben Ali was not an unknown and he brought back memories of the dark days of repression by the authoritarian regime. In fact, he had been in charge of the police forces and had supervised the repression of demonstrators in the riots of 28 January 1978. Then, during the brief democratic spring in the early 1980s, he was exiled to the Embassy of Tunisia in Poland. He was later called back, in the mid-1980s, when the authorities reneged on their promise of democratic openness and felt the need to stifle the growing Islamist protest movement. Thus, the image of Ben Ali was associated a time of repression and his arrival in power was perceived with considerable restraint, or even fear. However, an effort was made to improve his image by associating him, during the change of government, with a handful of civilian officials from the party

in power, and particularly with the liberal and social wing, notably including the former Minister of Social Affairs, Hédi Baccouche, who would be Ben Ali's first Prime Minister.

The new authorities rapidly sought to quell the people's apprehensions by undertaking to reform the authoritarian regime and engage Tunisian nationalism on the road to democracy and pluralism. These commitments were included in the statement read by the new President during a speech broadcast on radio and television, which became the hallmark and foundation of the new regime, although the commitments would be buried a few years afterwards. Furthermore, the President and his new Prime Minister held numerous talks and dialogues with opposition leaders, union officials and civil society associations. These meetings and dialogues culminated in the preparation of a national agreement document ('Mithak al-Watani') that would be signed by the different political and social forces and which announced a commitment in favour of the liberalization of the political regime.

These commitments were followed by concrete reforms in the political area aimed at opening up the political system. The most important reform was probably the constitutional reform, which put an end to the lifetime presidency inherited from the 'father of the nation'. The period also marked a thaw in Tunisian politics, which experienced a new spring until the end of the decade, with the liberalization of the media and the return of newspapers that had been forbidden or seized in the past. New opposition newspapers were also allowed, the most important of which were the weekly *El-fajr* published by the Islamist movement, which had taken on the name Ennahda, and *La voix du peuple*, the organ of the far-leftist party led by Hamma Hammami (the POCT). Opposition parties were able to resume their activities with increased energy. It was also a time of new impetus for civil society, particularly the Human Rights League.

Alongside the political reforms, the new government also undertook to address the obstacles in the system of accumulation and the limitations of the structural adjustment programmes. Economic reform focused on three main orientations. The first involved the stability of the major economic accounts, where the State sought to significantly reduce major defi-

cits and inflation. This was achieved through an orthodox economic policy that sought to wipe out major deficits by spending cuts and higher interest rates. From this standpoint, the policy made it possible to meet its objectives in terms of reducing disequilibria, and the government officials at that time did not hesitate to say how proud they were of meeting the Maastricht criteria, which even certain developed countries and members of the European Union were unable to achieve.

The second thrust of the reforms consisted of liberalizing and opening up the economy to international markets. In this regard, the new government strengthened the reform programme undertaken in the early 1980s by negotiating several free-trade agreements, the most important of which was signed with the EU. The agreement was accompanied by an upgrading programme to help businesses increase their competitiveness and meet the challenge of foreign business. Other free-trade agreements are worthy of mention, such as the Agadir agreement with certain Arab countries, the agreement signed with Turkey and those negotiated with sub-Saharan African countries. This liberalization led to increased foreign investments and rapid growth in exports of manufactured products, which became the main source of foreign-origin income in the Tunisian economy.

The third thrust of the reforms concerned the degree of priority given to new technologies. This issue was at the heart of the crisis affecting the old development model based on cheap labour, and the transition towards an economy founded on sectors making more intensive use of new technologies. The transition to a knowledge economy was the key to the different economic development plans beginning in the 1990s. Seven technology poles, the most famous of which was El Ghazala, were set in place and managed to attract considerable investment from new local start-ups or major international firms including Alcatel, Ericsson and STMicroelectronics. There was also a rise in investment in telecommunications with the development of infrastructure, increased telephone network coverage and quality and improved access to Internet.

These choices led to the rapid development of new technologies – particularly the Internet – in Tunisia. Publinets (subsidized public Internet centres) and cyber

cafes proliferated and the new technology craze took off in the various regions. Like other countries around the world, Tunisia saw strong falls in the cost of equipment, and Internet connections allowed a growing number of cyberspace users to escape the constraints and repression that prevailed in the real world. In the second half of the decade, Tunisia entered the Web 2.0 era and participated in the social network revolution with the development of Facebook, YouTube, blogs and other new forms of communication and networking. Note should also be taken of the spread of mobile telephones with the liberalization of the sector and the emergence of three operators. Internet and mobile telephones soon converged to offer new communication opportunities, including the ability to send photos and video images instantly. Progressively, the development of new technologies led to the formation of a new community and a cyber-society which escaped the mechanisms of state control and the headaches of nit-picking bureaucracy. This new society played a considerable role in cyber-dissidence and the revolution of 14 January 2011.

New technologies were more than an economic choice; they became an ideology for a regime in search of a benchmark and a link to the modern world. New technologies offered a source of legitimation and fulfilled a need for contemporariness and belonging to the times and the world. The image of a President keen on new technologies and the Internet was projected by the official media to reinforce the image of a Tunisia firmly anchored in technological modernity. Several initiatives were launched by the government to demonstrate its commitment to new technologies. The most important of these was the hosting of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005. The event, which was supposed to confirm Tunisia's commitment to modernism and the emerging world, rapidly turned however into a disaster. In his opening speech, the President of the Swiss Confederation did not hesitate to remind the audience that new technologies and the world of Internet and the future did not mix well with repression and denial of freedom. A serious disavowal for an authoritarian regime that had always believed it was possible to modernize without embracing modernity and be rational without reason and freedoms.

As of 1987, the new government attempted to reform the floundering authoritarian regime and open up new perspectives for the aging nationalism that had been unable to bring about a democratic revolution. However, this attempt at reform by the authoritarian regime was cut short by the start of the next decade. At the political level, the flowers of the new Tunisian spring were quick to wilt and authoritarianism reappeared. The regime reverted to its original nature, beginning with the first free legislative and presidential elections, which were marked by a major fraud and helped the party in power to strengthen its hegemony over the political landscape. Then, the Islamist movement was subjected to fierce and indiscriminate repression in the 1990s, and its leaders were condemned to long prison sentences or exile. This repression was later extended to the whole of the opposition and civil society institutions, and notably the Human Rights League and professional associations such as the association of journalists and the association of judges.

The closing of the public space also affected the press. Several independent newspapers were either shut down or subjected to strong censorship. Furthermore, the centralization of advertising spending through the ATCE (Tunisian External Communication Agency) reinforced political control by subjecting independent newspapers to a financial diktat. While independent newspapers were caught in a vice-like grip, government-backed newspapers proliferated. These papers distinguished themselves by their campaigns against the opposition and the leaders of civil society institutions. Furthermore, the liberalization of communications benefited those close to the government, who were on the receiving end of agreements for the launching of new radio and television stations.

Repression and authoritarianism had returned to the fore. Their return was not restricted to modern phenomena, such as political parties or newspapers; it also extended to the virtual world. Indeed, the regime was quick to realize that cyberspace was home to a libertarian and subversive culture. The world of the Web had escaped the aging mechanisms of control and repression typical of the modern world and created a new universe of contestation and dissidence. But repression extended its grasp to cyberspace through a ban on opposition websites

and blogs, and even the sites of certain newspapers such as *Le Monde* and *Libération*. Control even extended as far as manipulation of the email boxes and social network accounts of opposition leaders. Thus, a tool for individual freedom and autonomy and for escaping the constraints of the modern world became a new locus of control and repression for the authoritarian regime. An Orwellian Big Brother was watching the Net. It imposed a high-tech dictatorship to overcome 'cyber-dissidence' the same way it had subjected and silenced the opposition and independent voices in the world of classical modernity.

At the economic level, the new development model experienced a few weeks of glory in the 1990s and managed to further boost the relatively strong growth that had always been above global and regional averages. However, the growth dynamics could have been much stronger as indicated by several international institutions, including the IMF. Instead, they were undermined by serious constraints. The first of those was obviously the corruption and poor governance that developed in the early 1990s and which benefited the circles closest to the government and various Mafioso clans. These practices led to the accumulation of large fortunes in a very short time and above all control over large sectors of the economy, particularly in the areas of banking, tourism, and housing construction. The fortunes amassed, but above all their obscene display, which many Tunisians discussed in secret and which was exposed by the American ambassador's cables published by Wikileaks, contributed to the loss of legitimacy and the popular rejection of the Mafioso clans.

Above all, the rising corruption affected and hindered economic growth. The private sector, subject to growing uncertainty caused by corrupt practices and a lack of transparency, curtailed its investments and risks taken on the future. It adopted a wait-and-see attitude that prevailed for years and was the focus of a great number of restricted ministerial councils that were unable to change the situation. Thus, the contribution of the private sector to growth dynamics was smaller than expected.

The limitations of the development model and the obstacles to the transition towards capital-intensive growth led to deepening unemployment, especially

among graduates. Official figures estimated the unemployment rate at 14.2 per cent in 2008. However, among young people aged 20 to 24, it reached 30 per cent, and 19 per cent among degree holders. In addition to unemployment, there was rising inequality between the regions and considerable despair in the inland areas with the decline of farming and mining activities. These inequalities and the increased unemployment in these regions caused the initial revolts in 2008, with the uprisings in the mining basin. Later, the border areas with Libya were inflamed by the proliferation of red tape hindering population movements between the two countries. These inequalities and the demoralization and despair that reigned in those regions were the underlying causes of the desperate act committed by the man viewed as the first martyr and the initiator of the Jasmine Revolution.

The obstacles inherent in the model were heightened as of 2008 due to the global crisis, whose shock waves hit Tunisia hard. Economic growth dropped strongly in 2009 and even more sharply in 2010. Exports also dropped considerably, especially exports to the EU, which continued to be Tunisia's main trade partner.

The year 2010 dawned in a Tunisia in the midst of crisis. The political authorities were increasingly cut off from society and answered its demands with growing repression. At the same time, the wildest innuendo and rumours were spread regarding the power struggles between the different clans surrounding the President. There was a rise in corruption and displays of Mafioso fortunes, which only reinforced the rejection and feelings of indignation among the people. The stifling of the media and the even more aggressive and repressive control of cyber-society were unprecedented and contributed to a heavy and uncomfortable atmosphere throughout 2010. The climate was explosive and steeped in unprecedented violence, which broke out inexplicably and uncontrollably at every major popular gathering, notably during football matches. This detrimental atmosphere was heightened by the economic crisis that weighed heavily on Tunisia's economy and was the cause of increased unemployment and inequalities. The times were dismal in late 2010 and the atmosphere was sullen. The zeitgeist was strangely reminiscent of the latter days of the regime of the 'father of the nation', prior to the advent of the Ben Ali regime

in 1987. With one notable difference: this time, the failure of the second attempt at reforming the authoritarian regime did not lead to a new beginning, but rather a genuine popular revolution. It was the point of departure of the Jasmine Revolution.

### **The Challenges of the Tunisian Revolution**

In this context of great anger and tremendous disenchantment, Mohamed Bouazizi committed an act of desperation which would become the founding act of the popular revolution in Tunisia. His act would serve as a catalyst for a broad social movement that would topple an authoritarian regime that had made repression its only response to the social movement and political opposition. Initially, it was a movement of the disadvantaged, the unemployed and the hopeless. These outcasts, many of whom had been jobless degree-holders for some time, were at the heart of the revolts, both in the inland regions and the major social protests in various regions, from Gafsa to Kasserine, and from Kef to Jendouba. These social movements escaped the grasp of the traditional political parties and made rioting and insurrection their chief means of political action. These choices were sparked by the closing off of the legal political space and reduced opportunities for expression and negotiation. The authoritarian regime responded to social movements with repression. Retribution, punishment and occasionally grotesque propaganda, as during the festivities of the year of youth, formed most of its interaction with the social movements. And yet the movements did not weaken and their impact only grew, notably with the establishment of support committees in the various regions during revolts in the mining basin.

Another major force that was strongly mobilized and played an essential role in the Tunisian revolution was cyber-dissidence. The development of new technologies and the Internet in Tunisia led to the rapid emergence of a community of bloggers and cyber-dissidents who escaped repression by the authorities and their totalitarian methods that no longer fit with the new political production modes. A Web 2.0 civil society was formed and its mobilization capacity far exceeded that of the political parties and traditional civil society organizations. These new forms of mobilization took advantage of the digital revolution to join

in the fight for democracy and reject authoritarianism, nepotism and corruption. This new opposition was very different from the traditional modern oppositions, in that it diverged from the Leninist image of a headquarters preparing for political revolution. It was a more diffuse, secret opposition that proved impossible to silence. It had also broken away from the old patterns of democratic centralism typical of the communist parties and advocated a new political culture marked by the absence of a charismatic leader and considerable decentralization and dissemination of its forms of political organization.

It should also be noted that this Web 2.0 civil society advocated a new political culture marked by pluralism and diversity, distancing itself from the major ideological schemas and tales of a better world inherited from modernity. The new, libertarian political culture subverted the classical patterns and above all the models of closed societies and closed projects. The new cyber-dissidence, where democracy and freedom became essential values, marked the advent of a new political culture. This new political culture was probably why the Islamist parties and the far-leftist parties calling for total revolution experienced difficulties in taking on a major role, hence their marginalization since the beginning of the events and in all the social movements that began since the revolts in the mining basin in 2008. The Web 2.0 opposition played an important role in strong mobilization by denouncing repression and by producing new discourses contradicting the hegemonic one, thereby successfully breaking the monopoly on narratives and discourse heretofore held by the authoritarian regimes. From this standpoint, the Tunisian revolution and its Egyptian counterpart became the first post-modern revolutions.

The role of the radical opposition forces in the revolution should also be mentioned. Despite repression, they never lost hope for a major political change that would spell the end of authoritarianism. They included opposition parties, civil society institutions and especially the main labour congress which, it should be recalled, was the initiator of the demonstrations of 13 and 14 January. However, as we have already pointed out, the parties' contribution did not attain the same scope as that of the social movements. It should be noted that the parties, particularly those that refused to join the government,

were subjected to merciless repression and saw the space available to them for political action shrink alarmingly.

The convergence of these different forms of mobilization was the source of a revolution without precedent in the contemporary history of Tunisia. The revolution tolled the death knell for an authoritarian regime whose growing isolation was accompanied by rising despotism. The regime had reduced political space considerably and made its despot the only actor allowed to play a political role. The system also established corruption and nepotism as foundations for the exercise of power. In recent years, authoritarianism, despotism and nepotism had become the essential characteristics of the regime, and they were the crux of the ever-growing divisions between the regime and society. The revolts in the mining basin and other mobilizations in the inland regions, such as the mobilization of civil society, including the Human Rights League and independent associations, such as associations of lawyers, journalists and judges, were unable to halt the regime's downward spiral into authoritarian abuse. It took the desperate act of Mohamed Bouazizi to convince the social movements, cyber-dissidence, political opposition and society as a whole to go beyond the point of no return and begin the revolution that would ultimately topple the authoritarian regime and become the point of departure for a genuine democratic spring in the Arab world which, in turn, would bring the Egyptian government to its knees.

The importance of this revolution lies in the fact that it managed to overcome the reign of fear that had been imposed by an authoritarian regime over the whole of society. The police and information services had been developed until they were able to permeate the whole social fabric. Above all, they managed to convince the public that they were everywhere and that 'big brother' was watching them at all times. And beware to those who sought to challenge the established order collectively or individually! Such people were subjected to fierce repression, as in the case of the Islamist movement and certain personalities such as the lawyer Mohamed Abbou, Moncef Marzouki, or the journalist Taoufik Ben Brik, and many other personalities. Henceforth, people only spoke in whispers. Rather than speak out, they mumbled. Rather than voicing their opinions

clearly, they suggested them half-heartedly. But these attitudes and fears were the sources of an unprecedented feeling of shame throughout the social body. People were ashamed of submitting to despotism. In the face of this defeat at the hands of the authoritarian system, shamefulness prevailed. The feeling of dishonour dominated an elite that had deserted civic life and the political sphere and sought refuge in the private sphere, thereby escaping the wrath of the regime. Thus, the public sphere was given up to despotism, incivility, vulgarity and sometimes gratuitous violence, which allowed the social body to escape from the leaden weight of repression. The revolution was an important moment in recent history to the extent that it enabled the social body to overcome its fear and recover its dignity.

The Tunisian revolution and the fall of the Egyptian dictatorship were also crucial moments to the extent that they made it possible to overcome the Orientalist prophecies that tut-tutted on the theme of the 'Arab exception' and the supposed incapacity of the Arab world to cast off its myths and the dream of a return to the glory days of Medina. Of course, it should be noted that the events of the second half of the last century had backed up their claims. The Arab world remained silent during the three great democratic revolutions since the fall of the southern European dictatorships in the 1970s, in Latin America in the 1980s and in the 1990s in the former 'peoples' democracies' and in Africa. Throughout those times of democratic joy and euphoria, Arabs remained faithful to their nationalisms, which grew increasingly authoritar-

ian and closed the doors to the winds of freedom. Their deafness to the siren calls of democracy was the cause of the expansions and theses on the Arab exception and the lack of democrats in a region still steeped in mythology and submission to divinities, and its resulting incapacity to free the individual. But these revolutions showed that the Arab exception did not exist and that the region, like others, only sought to join the universal movement of liberty and reason.

Since victory and the departure of the former President on 14 January, Tunisia has been confronted with the challenges of building a new and open democratic regime. These are of two types: short-term challenges, and medium- and long-term challenges. Over the short term, it seems to us that the Tunisian revolution is faced with three major concerns. The first is linked to the explosion of sectoral demands that the authoritarian regime had managed to contain and which are now mushrooming and require solutions. However, while addressing these demands is important, it is obvious that they could threaten already delicate economic equilibriums. The second type of challenge involves security. It is linked to the dismantling of the former security apparatus that relied on the old Mafioso clans and the difficulties of reconstruction. The security issue should be counted among the priorities of the new government to ensure a return to normal living conditions and forestall those nostalgic for the old regime from glorifying it as a defender of law and order. The third type of challenge is linked to the difficulties of running the country's institutions. It should be noted that these

difficulties are due in part to resistance by the former party in power and in part to 'casting errors' in the appointment of certain officials. From this standpoint, it is necessary to ensure that all appointments are the subject of a broad consensus and that they are entrusted to respected personalities who can succeed in re-establishing the legitimacy of the institutions.

The medium-term and long-term challenges are also considerable. On this level, three major issues should be highlighted. The first involves political reforms and the establishment of a new democratic regime. A committee of high-level experts and jurists presided over by Professor Yadh Ben Achour has undertaken reflection to increase Tunisia's grounding in freedom and economic modernity. The second challenge is economic in nature and concerns the definition of a new model for development that will ensure a real transition to an economy based on knowledge and new technologies. This model will require a break with the economic policies of the past, which, contrary to those set in place in the emerging countries, lacked ambition and scope. Finally, the last major issue is the emergence of a new political elite and a leadership capable of making way for social change and democratic revolution.

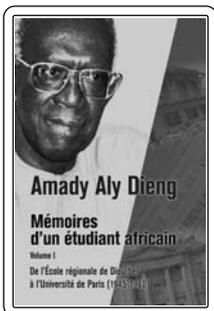
The popular revolution in Tunisia has been an important moment of euphoria, freedom and liberation from the authoritarianism that was at the heart of the nationalist project. It is crucial for this new era of freedom to be embodied in new democratic institutions and a new, inclusive, development project that will allow Tunisia to join the ranks of the new emerging countries.

**Mémoires d'un étudiant africain – Volume I**  
**De l'École régionale de Diourbel à l'Université de Paris (1945-1960)**

Amady Aly Dieng

Dakar, CODESRIA, 194 p.

Price/prix: Africa 5000 frs CFA/ Afrique non CFA 12 USD



Ces mémoires d'un étudiant africain sont essentiellement destinés aux jeunes Africains qui veulent continuer le combat en faveur d'une indépendance et d'un développement véritables. Il ne s'agit pas d'égrener un chapelet de souvenirs d'anciens combattants, mais de transmettre par écrit aux jeunes Africains les expériences politiques, syndicales et sociales de l'ancienne génération. L'auteur, né durant les années consécutives à la Grande Crise de 1929, a pu obtenir son Certificat d'études primaires élémentaires (CEPE) en 1945. Comme tous les élèves de sa génération, il a connu les affres de la Seconde guerre mondiale et les pénuries qui en ont résulté. La période allant de 1945 à 1960 est une période exaltante de lutte en faveur de l'indépendance et de l'unité des pays africains. La défaite de l'armée française à Dien Bien Phu en Indochine a considérablement contribué à affaiblir le système colonial français. Elle sera suivie par le déclenchement de l'insurrection de 1954 en Algérie, l'indépendance du Maroc, de la Tunisie, du Ghana et l'accession de beaucoup d'autres pays africains subissant la domination française à la souveraineté internationale. L'année 1960 qualifiée d'année africaine va clore le chapitre de la lutte contre le colonialisme classique, et ouvrir une ère nouvelle caractérisée par le combat contre le néocolonialisme.

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## Will the West Ever Learn?

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The XI World Social Forum was about to take place in Dakar. This was the second time that it was being held in Africa (the first was in 2007, in Nairobi), revealing the interest of organizers in calling attention to African problems and the impact those problems will have on the world. The organizers could not have imagined that, at the Forum, North Africa would be the primary focus of reports by news agencies from all over the world, nor that the social protests against the economic crisis and the Western-backed dictatorships could be so vigorous, so contagious and so assertive of one of the basic principles of the WSF: the radicalization of democracy as an instrument of social transformation.

The solidarity of the WSF with the social struggle in North Africa has roots and reasons that are either ignored by Western media or reported in a way that reveals the double difficulty in the West of learning from the experiences of the world and giving justice to the principles and values which it proclaims to be guarding. Since the beginning, the WSF has warned about the economic, social, political, energy and environmental unsustainability of the current neoliberal economic model, dominated as it is by unregulated financial capital, and about the fact that the global costs of their decisions are not restricted to the less developed countries. The social movement in North Africa has one of its roots in the deep economic crisis that the region is suffering from. The social protests in Egypt cannot be understood without the series of strikes in the clothing sector over the last three years that, although violently repressed,

**Boaventura de Sousa Santos**  
University of Coimbra  
Portugal

did not catch the attention of the Western press. Ten years after the WSF alerted the world to the situation, the World Economic Forum (WEF), in a meeting early this year in Davos, declared that deepening social disparity is the most urgent problem (even worse than environmental degradation) the world needs to face in the coming decades. What the WEF did not say is that the problem exists precisely because of the economic policies defended by that Forum over the last decade. Like a rich man's club, they are capable of pangs of guilt, but cannot admit that the cause is their own scandalous accumulation of wealth.

Seen from the WSF, the North African crisis is a collapse on the second frontier of Europe. The first is constituted by Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland. With two borders in crisis, the centre becomes fragile and the German-French axis can soon turn from steel to plastic. More deeply, history shows us that stability and prosperity in Europe starts and ends at the Mediterranean. Why is it that the West (Europe and North America) cannot learn from history and the facts? For the WSF, the West will only learn when whatever happens in the periphery is similar to what happens in the centre. If it takes too long, the problem will be that it is already too late to learn the lesson.

Solidarity in the WSF with North Africa has another root: the unconditional respect for democratic aspirations. In this respect, Western hypocrisy has no limits. Its objectives are to guarantee the peaceful transition from a pro-American, pro-Israel dictatorship, pro-colonial occupation of Palestine by Israel, anti-Iranian, pro-free circulation of petrol, pro-blocking of the Gaza Strip, anti-Hamas, pro-Fatah/Hamas division, into a democracy with the same characteristics. That is the only way to explain the obsession in naming the fundamentalists participating in protests and in falsifying the political and social nature of the Islamic Brotherhood. The interests of Israel and of petrol do not allow the West to act coherently in this part of the world with the principles it proclaims. The West did not learn from the 100,000 dead as a result of cancelling the democratic victory of the enthusiastically-supported Islamic Salvation Front in the elections of Algeria in 1991. Nor did it learn from the conversion of the Gaza Strip into one of the most repugnant concentration camps as a result of the non-recognition of the electoral victory of Hamas in 2006.

Is the West going to learn only when it becomes post-Western?

### **NB**

This article was translated into English by Christopher Reid and Luciano Dalcol-Viana.

## The Market Colonization of Intellectuals<sup>1</sup>

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In many fora over the past decade, public intellectuals seem unable to talk about pressing social issues without performing the equivalent of an academic literature review. Although reasons range from trying to inform their audiences of relevant debates to efforts to demonstrate erudition, that many public intellectuals present their work as the basis for rewards in academe and the entertainment industry suggests influences tantamount to the colonization of intellectuals by the ever-expanding market.

There was a time when the divide between academic intellectuals and those whose primary vocation was the common weal was marked by location. The former worked in universities, colleges, professional schools and seminaries. The latter worked in public organizations, advocacy groups, civic and religious associations, political parties and given the consequences of dissent, a good number of them produced their work from prisons and the trenches in times of war.

These two spheres offered communities for intellectual development and, crucially, they offered, albeit in the past, modest employment. To think, everyone needs also to eat.

Along the way, some academics became public figures and some public figures became academics. But the political legitimization of either depended on the impact of their work on public institutions and social movements. Then came a wave of reactionary policies in the 1980s into the past decade in an effort to push back the achievements of the 1960s. Accompanying these efforts was a war against left-oriented intellectuals.

In an ironic development, the anti-left quickly took advantage of at least one Marxian insight, well exemplified in Ayn Rand's 1957 novel "Atlas Shrugged": Attack the material conditions of the opposition. Right-wing think tanks, bloated with funding, waged war on social policies and institutions that offer safety nets for dissenting and creative left-wing and even centrist intellectuals. As public intellectuals became more academic, they increasingly relied on

**Lewis R. Gordon**  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, USA

academic institutions for employment. So, the right hit them where it hurts.

Increased pressures in the academic job market began to affect every aspect of academic life, while the shift to neoliberal and neoconservative policies dried up government support once enjoyed during the cold war, where the public image of capitalist countries mattered as much as the demand for technical mastery over implements of war. Privatization became the mantra against humanistic projects and the shift, familiar to all, is to a corporate and consumer model of higher education. This change affected the sociology of academic institutions. One outcome is the emergence of an academic managerial class. In many universities, a consequence is administrators outnumbering faculty, a development rarely discussed as a factor in the rising costs of higher education. Administrators are more expensive than faculty.

Not all administrators fit this portrait. But the exception to a rule does not eliminate the explanatory force of the rule. It only shows that the rule has limits. In the past, an administrator was a scholar motivated by civic commitment to her or his institution. Today, there are administrators who skip over scholarship beyond achievement of the Ph.D. or comparable degree. Their relationship to academic management becomes, then, instrumental, the way managers with M.B.A. degrees learn the techniques of business without necessarily grasping its larger social problematics.

This academic managerial class consists of a mixture of academics, accountants, lawyers and business people (often serving on boards of trustees and on different levels of administrating universities). They are generally without goals short of imitation. Thus, their avowed purpose is to align the university

with the sociology and norms of the market. This alignment brings along an accompanying rationality with market-driven social practices. The hegemony of those practices, which also assert themselves as the bases of intellectual and professional legitimacy, is a form of colonizing rationality. Since it has an impact on how academics behave and aims to determine what and how academics think and what they produce, I call it the market colonization of the academy. Its correlate is the market colonization of knowledge.

The managerial academic class works with a logic governed by quantitative models of assessment and consumption. Thus, knowledge is constantly measured and so, too, are its modes of assessment: the ranking of journals and the number of publications a scholar achieves in those of the highest rank. The result is the prevalence of more conservative models of assessment, where prestige of publishing houses and establishment auspices prevail over ideas.

Content falls sway to form and abrogated reasoning emerges, where judgment is supposedly reserved while only access to certain markers dominates. A weird circular logic results, in which work is praised by its appearance in distinguished places. In other words, a scholar or a public intellectual is important if her work appears in distinguished places determined by distinguished people appearing in them.

These developments have an impact on knowledge at the level of content in the following ways. As institutions become more consumer driven, interest in research declines as consumers seek degrees and predictable markers of appearing educated instead of the critical and difficult achievements of an actual education. As more scholars apply for fewer jobs, risk aversion develops and creativity declines.

In the humanities, for instance, employment safety means a return to scholastic forms of knowledge with the replacement of science instead of the god or gods around which past institutions were built. What this means today is that

a demonstration of two kinds of expertise become marketable in a consumer-driven academy – namely, mastery of technical knowledge (sometimes scientific, but more often science-like) and textual mastery, which is a correlate of the first.

Mastery of technical knowledge offers opportunities of securing precious grants from private foundations, for-profit corporations, and neoliberal or neoconservative government projects. As well, for the consumers who also seek employment with their degree, technical scientific or professional knowledge offers skills for those markets.

Textual mastery imitates, in the humanities and some areas of the social sciences, scientific technical knowledge. The job of teaching texts promises consumers the appearance of education through textual familiarity. Thus, research that challenges texts, produces new kinds, and may even transcend textual virtuosity is less marketable. The academic, in this sense, offers technique, which is marketable.

Should a budding young scholar object to this portrait, her or his peers, in addition to advisers and friends, offer a powerful corrective: “You want a job, don’t you?”

Securing a job is the rhetorical trump that legitimizes the entire process. In the academy, it leads to a strange logic: The best way to get a job is to have one. Thus, many academics and by extension many public academic intellectuals are perpetually on the job market. Market potentiality governs everything they produce.

In the academy, nothing is more marketable than the reputation of being smart. This makes sense: No one wants dumb intellectuals.

The problem, of course, is how “smart” is defined. In a market-oriented society, that means knowing how to play the game of making oneself marketable. The problem here is evident if we make a comparison with ethics. I once asked an environmental activist, who argued that a more ethical ecological position is the key against looming disaster, which would bother her more: to be considered unethical or stupid? She admitted the latter. In a society that makes it stupid to be ethical, what should public intellectuals do?

The impact of this development of market-driven knowledge is evident in how many professional intellectuals with an

avowed social critical project write and present their work. Although it is important to engage valuable research in presenting matters for the public good, the reality is that some scholars function more like the knowledge equivalent of brand names than ideas. The result is, as I initially protested, much cultural criticism looking more like academic literature reviews (textual marketability) in dissertations and professional journals. As the market gets more conservative, this becomes increasingly so in relation to canonical texts. The big boys of ages past offer marketable support.

The effect is that many well-meaning people no longer have the capacity to think, or at least formulate thought, outside of the rehearsal of the academic job talk. They present their marketability and this mode of presentation affects even those who are at first not academic. The nonacademic intellectual has “arrived,” so to speak, when the academic post is offered in recognition of the supposedly nonacademic intellectual achievement.

Now, this concern about the market colonization of the academy and its impact on public intellectual life is not a criticism of individuals whose goals are primarily academic. It is not my wish to join the neurotic call of condemning academics for being part of a profession our civilization values, or at least used to value, greatly. What is crucial here is whether the underlying practices of academic assessment are, at the end of the day, academic at all. This consideration emerges not only from intrusive boards of trustees, who increasingly seem to want academics to lose spiritual remnants of their vocation and become the equivalent of automatons, but also from academics and public intellectuals who have learned how to play the market, as it were. Those academics and public intellectuals, having achieved the coveted judgment “smart”, understand that there is nothing more marketable than becoming a “brand”, and this is usually done at the level of phrases that become isomorphic with their authors.

To produce an idea that contributes to the advancement of human knowledge is a wonderful achievement. Yet, it could also leave its author out in the proverbial cold. To produce an idea wedded to the author in such a way as to make her or him the exemplar of the idea, the brand,

so to speak, makes the presence of that author indispensable for the experience of the product. Even more effective is the transformation of the author’s name into a product itself or at least an isomorphic relationship between the two. There are many examples. In recent times, can one think of deconstruction without Jacques Derrida or Jacques Derrida without deconstruction?

This is not to say there must be something nefarious about these associations. After all, the same could be said about relativity and Einstein, psychoanalysis and Freud, hegemony and Gramsci, justice as fairness and John Rawls or Orientalism and Edward Said. The list can go on, but I think the reader gets the point.

Becoming an eponym for an intellectual achievement works, however, if the demand grows in the market place. Intellectuals thus face selling their knowledge goods in ways that many did not have to in the past. Prior intellectuals were subject to different criteria of assessment in a world with a very different relationship between the university and the market and the academic and the nonacademic intellectual. To illustrate this changed relationship, the discussion thus far can be made salient through consideration of the role of capital itself in modern times.

Capital refers to ownership over the means of production. This was the designation of the class known as the bourgeoisie. Correlated with the bourgeoisie was the production of mystifying modes of argumentation, knowledge practices whose purpose it was to create a labyrinth of rationalizations of the alienation of flesh and blood human beings. As Peter Caws, the famed English philosopher of science and culture, explained:

One convenient way of escaping responsibility for unfortunate social facts (private property and wage labor, for example) is to regard them as relations between people and things: The capitalist is related to his property, so the expropriated worker vanishes from the equation; the worker is related to his work, so the factory owner similarly vanishes. Marx insists that both are disguised relations between people and other people: The owner of private property deprives and the wage slave is enslaved to, human beings in flesh and blood, not economic abstractions.<sup>2</sup>

The bourgeois academy maintains itself, in similar kind, through legitimating the practices of bourgeois society. Sometimes, this takes ironic forms, as we find in elite anti-elitism (witnessed on a nearly daily basis by many of us who have taught in first-tier institutions across the globe), where bourgeois society espouses also commitments to equality and freedom while demanding that the justice of inequalities should at least receive demonstration.

Although they may be critical of bourgeois society, many public academic intellectuals have bourgeois aspirations. What do those intellectuals do when they lack ownership of the means of material production – when the only type of capital they seem to have is the cultural one of their degree? Our brief discussion of branding suggests that they seek its epistemological equivalent: ownership over the means of knowledge production.

This ownership, governed by the social, cultural and legal institutions in contemporary, market-dominated society, brings along with it the correlative problems of colonization faced by material production. For example, the more mystifying knowledge capital becomes, the more linked is the relationship between the author and the product, making them one and the same and, since no one else is identical with the author and the brand, the reference point of the flow of profit becomes restricted. What this means is that the demand for the product becomes the demand for the author who has also become the product and, thus, an affirmation of market forces.

In recent times, what is even weirder is that the political identity of intellectual product has also become marketable. Thus, consumers seeking right-wing, centrist or left-wing intellectual products have an array of public intellectuals and academics offering also their politics as grounds of their marketability. Under the right circumstances, one's politics sells.

Together, these streams of market colonization – over academic institutions, academics and the squeezing of public intellectuals into the contemporary market logic of neoliberal and neoconservative academic life – inaugurate a claustrophobic environment for critical thinking and the production of new and revolutionary ideas.

Yet, this dismal picture has many lacunae. The list I offered of individuals associated with great intellectual achievements in the past and recent times is, for instance, a highly imperfect one. I simply included them because of their familiarity and also to encourage the reader to think through alternatives without taking a reactionary stand against the notion of an academic project. Many of the intellectuals on that list were and their proper heirs continue to be, correctly located in academic institutions, even with their clear impact on larger cultural knowledge.

But, yes, there are intellectuals who offered alternatives. For instance, W.E.B. Du Bois, the greatest of African-American scholars in the social sciences, had a tenuous relationship with the academy. He offered some of the most groundbreaking concepts through which to study racism, colonialism and modern political life. When fired from teaching because of his politics, he made a living through employment in alternative institutions and, of course, his writing. Anna Julia Cooper worked as the principal of the M Street High School, although she spent several years in alternative employment. She, too, had to seek alternative employment for a time after being fired because of her politics. Her work in black feminist thought continues to make an impact and she, along with Du Bois, was among the founders of the Pan-African movement. Aimé Césaire, who coined the term *Négritude*, was not mired in a permanent rationalization of the French academy. He will also be remembered in terms of his work as a political figure in Martinique, as the former Mayor of Fort de France, and a critical intellectual presence in the black Diaspora and concerns of postcolonial thought. The same can be said for Leopold Senghor, one of the other fathers of *Négritude*, in Senegal. And, of course, there is the work of Frantz Fanon, whose writings and biography, in spite of his formal role of training interns in psychiatry in Blida-Joinville Hospital in Algeria, remains an abiding testament to the struggle for freedom in the colonial and postcolonial worlds.

Reflections on the market colonization of public intellectuals and academics and the mystifying practices they occasion are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the critical literature on some of the intellectuals I have offered as exemplars

of alternatives. Their critics often offer celebrity academics as politically superior alternatives to intellectuals of the past who were, suspiciously, known as revolutionaries. An example among the more mainstream intellectuals is the presentation of Martin Heidegger (a celebrity philosophy professor who was formerly a member of the Nazi Party) over Jean-Paul Sartre (a celebrity philosophical writer and anti-imperialist who rejected being an academic and who aligned himself with nearly every left-wing revolutionary movement from his middle age to the end of his life) on supposedly political grounds.

This is not to say that there isn't much in Sartre's biography that would not be embarrassing instead of inspiring to a market-colonized academy. Sartre was offered all the prestigious academic prizes in French and the wider European society, including a post at France's premier institution, the Collège de France, and the most prestigious one for a writer, the Nobel Prize for Literature. He rejected them all.

Although Sartre himself became a signifier for existentialism (a major branding if there ever was one), his decisions consistently suggested that he held himself to a standard beyond ordinary models of assessment. He knew he was a bourgeois writer, but he prized writing and the question of public commitment, with his notion of the politically engaged writer, to the point of living more modestly than he could have and dying much less wealthy. His godson John "Tito" Gerassi summarized him well when he eulogized:

Sartre was an enormously generous man and very modest. Though he earned a great deal of money with his plays, novels, essays, philosophical works and biographies of Baudelaire, Genet and Flaubert, he died in debt, having given away most of his fortune to political movements and activists and to an untold number of struggling intellectuals. To this day, five young writers are receiving monthly checks from Sartre's publisher not knowing their true source.<sup>3</sup>

Gerassi added:

Sartre's philosophy is difficult to live. Perhaps because of that, most Anglo-Saxon commentators and teachers, raised on an escape-crammed philosophical tradition of pragmatism, pre-

ferred to praise the moral message propagated by Sartre's existential rival, Albert Camus. Since all organized actions lead to doctrinaire authoritarianism, said Camus, all we can do is shout, No!

Bad faith, replied Sartre. What we must do instead, he said, is commit ourselves over and over again. No act is pure. All acts are choices, which alienate some. No one can live without dirty hands. To be simply opposed is also to be responsible for not being in favor, for not advocating change. To fall back on the proposition that human actions are predetermined is to renounce mankind. No writer can accept the totalitarianism implied by "human nature." If he writes, he wants to change the world – and himself. Writing is an act. It is commitment (Gerassi 2009:275).

These are certainly admissions that would make many contemporary academics and public intellectuals (most of whom are academics) squirm. Gerassi himself is an academic at Queens University of the

City University of New York and public intellectual. His admiration for Sartre is not that Sartre was somehow better than the rest of us with the choices he made, but that he truly reflected his commitments in those choices. Being critical of being an academic, Sartre gave up being one and found a way to live as a writer without academic affiliation.

Critical of being a bourgeois, Sartre attempted to live, as best he could, a life that exemplified his commitment to freedom. Sartre's life, as was Fanon's, places upon all of us the question of the kinds of decisions we would make if we were in his situation. What are we willing to reject or embrace for our avowed commitments?

For many, it's impossible to imagine intellectuals like Fanon and Sartre as anything short of holier than thou, even though neither of them argued that academics should not have academic pursuits and seek academic rewards. They simply asked for the rest of us not to pretend that the world is somehow better off by our being rewarded for such pursuits

and especially so in the most prestigious representations of establishment.

There are intellectuals out there who are struggling for alternatives. And even within the academy, there are those who labor, work and act according to commitments through which they hope to transcend the powerful gravitational pull of market forces. They offer inspiration for many who echo that powerful, historical search for what is to be done. Forgive me, then, as I here end by resisting the marketing seduction of offering their names.

### Notes

1. This article was first published in *Truthout*, April 2010.
2. Peter Caws, "Sartrean Structuralism?" in *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, ed. Christina Howells (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 296.
3. John Gerassi, "Talking with Sartre: Conversations and Debates" (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 274.

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## Reconfiguring Eurocentric Discourse and African Knowledge

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### Introduction

From archaeological times to the present the world has had a long history in which a kind of telos of humankind has made itself evident. Humankind, as a species of the animal kingdom, has been variously described as 'the rational animal', or according to Aristotle as 'a political animal'. But, given the empirical history of humankind, one can also argue that this species can just as easily be described generically as 'the technological animal'. After all, given the evolutionary stasis – according to standard evolutionary biology – that humankind has arrived at over the last approximately one hundred and eighty thousand years, the great differences that are observable between human social arrangements, beliefs, and practices are to be attributed essentially to advances in human inquiry into the structures of the natural world, and its practical representations as forms of tool-making commonly known as technological knowledge.

**Lansana Keita**  
University of the Gambia

I argue that it is technological knowledge that serves as the main explanatory variable for the vagaries and paths of human history in time. It is this variable that explains the migratory movements of peoples over time, the wars and conflicts that arise, and the various aspects of cultural diffusion that accompany all such. It is in this regard that one could seek rational explanations for the expansion of Western Europe into the four corners of the globe over the last 500 years. This expansion would also include European expansion into the vast landmass now known as Africa.

It is the evident qualitative distinctions between forms of technologies and their accompanying cultures that best explain

the irruption of the nations of Western Europe into Africa in particular. In its initial stages, the compass, the printing press, the cannon, and long-haul galleons afforded maximal technological advantage over the extant technologies of the Americas, Africa, and parts of Asia. This differential was crucial for the European success in the settlements of the Americas and parts of Africa (Angola, Mozambique and the southern African Cape area). In its latter stages, it was the Gatling gun, weaponry such as artillery, and a more structured and complete world-view that facilitated an European technological dominance that was used to effect and justify cultural dominance with its embedded modes of knowing.

The technological knowledge that eventually facilitated the European conquest or control of most of Africa was seen by those who employed it as a kind of template for an overall claim to a general superiority in all spheres. Thus, European

technological advantage – promoted as a technological superiority – was extrapolated not only as a cultural advantage but also, crucially, as a qualitatively human superiority. The simple logic behind this extrapolation was that superior humans produce superior (more advanced) technologies and, by further inference, superior cultures with their embedded modes of knowing. The result of all this was that hierarchies of humankind were established according to which the various world populations were graded, not only in terms of the evolutionary worth of their cultures but also in terms of the evolutionary status of their bearers. It is in this connection that the modern idea of ‘race’ was developed to grade human groups along evolutionary lines and thereby to explain technological and cultural differentials.

One of the by-products of the European irruption into Africa was greater cultural diffusion. Thus, the traditional modes of knowing and acting among the various cultures of Africa were much affected by the diffused technologies and modes of knowing emanating from Europe. The most pervasive examples of these were European forms of religion and the modes of knowledge transmission extant in Europe at the time. Thus, the traditional metaphysical lives of Africans, as much as their traditional technological practices, were thrown into conflict with those of European origin. In this connection, the various versions of Christianity made much headway into Africa, disseminated as they were by European missionaries. The various languages of Western Europe also made their headway in the appropriate areas where economic interests and the need for financial accounting were necessary. This was the basis for the dissemination of Western modes of knowing in Africa – whether religious (metaphysical) or technological (empirical). But cultural dissemination just did not stop at that level. It impacted on most aspects of African life thereby creating diverse forms of psychological and intellectual conflict.

The general impact of Europe’s one-sided cultural diffusion – the diffusion was not reciprocated, except later in areas such as art and music – into Africa was to impose forms of knowledge that were decidedly Euro-centred in material and normative terms. Consider for example the exogenous creation of the nation states of Africa without any evident input from

the populations involved. Consider, too, the languages imposed on the colonised territories that were increasingly structured to include terms and meanings that were normatively devaluing of the life-worlds of the peoples involved. In brief, the colonial languages were structured and employed to establish as fact both the biological and cultural superiority of the coloniser. It is this assumption of general superiority that was used to justify the idea that indigenous technological practices and metaphysical beliefs be replaced by those of European origin.

In this Europe-Africa encounter, a dialectic was established in which the thesis of European irruption produced an antithesis of opposition from Africa. The result was a variegated synthesis. For example, take the case of Ghana which, at independence, rejected the imposed colonial name of Gold Coast, thereby revivifying the medieval African empire bearing the name. The same held for the Southern African nation of Zimbabwe that similarly rejected the name Rhodesia to replace it with a name that reflected the indigenous archaeological history of that region. This was a significant development in that Eurocentric ideology in the area of archaeology made the claim that the old stone structures of the Zimbabwe ruins could not have been developed by the indigenous peoples of the area. They were variously attributed to Persians or Arabs. The same applied to the art works of the pre-modern Benin culture of Nigeria. The various bronze and terra cotta works were deemed too sophisticated and realistic to be products of indigenous efforts. It is the African reactive antithesis to the prevailing Euro-centred thesis that eventually led to the problematising of the Eurocentric project itself.

One of the most significant forms of African reaction to the one-sided impositions from Europe was realised in the world of literature. The expansive nature and written form of the languages of Europe were used from the twilight of the colonial era to the dawn of formal independence to express the cultural and psychological ambiguities engendered by the Europe-Africa encounter. Novels such as *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and *Ambiguous Adventure (L’Aventure ambiguë)* by Cheikh Hamidou Kane are internationally recognised for their portrayal especially of the African psychological response to the European presence in Africa engendered by the initial clash of

cultures. One must also note in this regard the Negritude movement of which its major exponents were Césaire, Senghor and Damas. This reactive movement began in the last decades (1930-1960) before the formal independence of African nations and sought to enhance the African past in racial, cultural and moral terms. Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955, 2000) is a well known text in this regard. Senghor (1991) was also noted for his poetry in which he extolled the aesthetic allure of Africa’s peoples and cultures.

In the social sciences, noteworthy responses were those of Samir Amin (*Eurocentrism*), C. A. Diop (*Nations nègres et culture, L’Unité Culturelle de l’Afrique noire*, and *Civilization or Barbarism*), and the various works of Frantz Fanon (*The Wretched of the Earth; Black Skins, White Masks*, etc.). But even so, Euro-centred forms of control still struggle to manifest themselves in the area of the human imagination, thereby reflecting a continuing psychological need for the old Eurocentric colonial images. I refer here to the images portrayed in certain popular films with African themes produced for Western consumption. It is evident that the basis for the Eurocentric structuring of knowledge about Africa is a complex one, but a major consideration is that its foundations rely heavily on issues of economics. The point is that a diminished African status in terms of agency implicitly accords increased agencies to others in terms of access to and utilisation of African resources.

In this connection, the purpose of this paper is to examine epistemologically the various forms according to which orthodox Eurocentric knowledge is presented speciously as objective fact. It should be recognised in this regard that Eurocentric knowledge does not limit itself to just one area of knowledge, but as a paradigm or *Weltanschauung* according to which the world of the past and the present is viewed and understood. Thus there is a Eurocentric approach to structuring the facts of the empirical world whether in the natural or social sciences. In the natural sciences consider how the various universal theories are copyrighted with the names of their theorists, thereby conferring ownership. A proper critique of Eurocentric knowledge in its universalising mode with regard to Africa would provide us therefore with corrective mechanisms as to the proper nature of things.

First, there will be a condensed discussion of what constitutes knowledge in the empirical sciences. I will argue for a weak unity of science model – that is that it is possible to obtain genuine knowledge in both the natural and social spheres – but with the caveat that in the cases of the social sciences such is not easily forthcoming; given that human interests at all levels are involved. Thus, the epistemological goal would be to unpack Eurocentric knowledge in all its dimensions for its ideological content as a prelude to replacing it, where possible, with certifiably more objectivist knowledge. The counter-argument in favour of epistemological relativism cannot be supported, first, on the basis of its question-begging implications, and second, that to accept such a thesis would lead to an experiential world of epistemological anarchy. Although all empirical claims are subject to revision, there are those such as Newton's second law and Boyle's law that have been impervious to all falsificationist contravention. Or consider the anthropological claim that humankind began in what is now known as Africa.

It should be noted in this context that in the case of Africa, the Eurocentric paradigm as an interpretive framework extends itself over three areas to offer a holistic view of the peoples of the continent. The foundational template to the three areas is that concerning the human evolutionary status of the peoples of Africa. It is the thesis propounded in this regard that serves as the basis for African archaeology and history, and ultimately the basis for the idea that Eurocentric agency in the areas of politics and economics is optimal for Africa.

### Epistemology and the Foundations of Knowledge

Intellectual inquiry over the ages has had no other goal but to make claims about the world and to justify such claims implicitly by appeal to epistemological criteria. The problem with this though was that there were no uniform epistemological criteria. With the rise of empirical science, on account of its evident material payoffs in the diverse areas of technological application, it followed that its methodological rules of practice would be seen to be applicable to empirically observable human behaviour in the areas of the social sciences. This was the understood goal of positivism which rap-

idly became the preferred paradigm for the social (human) sciences. Despite ideological differences, both Comte and Marx argued on behalf of a positive social science. But Mannheim (1936), in his *Ideology and Utopia*, argued that if social scientific knowledge reflected class and sectional interests then any critically arrived-at form of such knowledge would automatically be relativistic, that is, not objectively valid. This epistemological scenario would eventually be extended to cover not only the social but also the natural sciences. This was the thesis implicitly argued by Thomas Kuhn (1962) in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to which Karl Popper attempted a counter (1963) in *Conjectures and Refutations*. This general critique of epistemological foundationalism certainly duelled strongly with the traditional positivism of scientific research. Consider the extreme relativism argued for by Paul Feyerabend (*Against Method*, 1975), Barry Barnes (*Interests and the Growth of Knowledge*, 1974), and David Bloor (*Knowledge and Social Imagery*, 1976) in their various works known collectively as the Strong Programme in the Sociology of Knowledge.

The key point made by the theorists of the Strong Programme is that all scientific knowledge in its objectivist claims is compromised by the epistemological relativism embedded in its constituent theories. I argue otherwise that despite the fact that all knowledge exists in a social context, it is indeed possible to establish empirically certifiable knowledge. It is just that this requires much epistemological analysis. Thus an Africa-centred knowledge paradigm need not repeat the same errors and misrepresentations that have marred the constructions of knowledge about Africa by European theorists, often epistemologically compromised by the orthodox Eurocentric paradigm which arbitrarily ascribed a universal superiority to all European modes of knowing, simply on the basis of technological primacy. What follows, therefore, are critical analyses of structures of knowledge developed in the social sciences that are assumed to be conventionally factual but which when probed epistemologically are seen to be heavily compromised in terms of Eurocentric content and orientation. The decision to examine the social sciences in general rather than just a single one is based on the fact that the Eurocentric ideological paradigm, often

under the colour of objectivity, presents itself pervasively in universalist terms across all disciplinary forms of knowledge.

### Eurocentric Human Biology and Anthropology

The rise of modern science was accompanied by the classification of the constituents of the animal kingdom, including humans. The works of Linnaeus and Cuvier come to mind. In the case of humans, classifications were based purely on phenotype to which were assigned particular temperaments. With the advent of Darwinian theory the idea developed that humans could be classified not only according to phenotype and temperament but also to evolutionary status. The idea of 'race' as representing different human categories assumed a centrality in this instance. On account of the technological advantages of West European society, the Eurocentric thesis developed that ranked non-Europeans as biologically less evolved than Europeans. Hume, Kant and others argued in this direction. But the crucial implication of this thesis was that those human groups that were deemed biologically less evolved were subject to the Darwinian principle of evolution by 'natural selection'. The populations of Africa described by the patently non-scientific and Eurocentric term 'negro' were assumed not only to be biologically less evolved but also slated for extinction. Under this prevailing ideology, the Tasmanians and Australian indigenes were themselves subjected to much human rights abuse on the assumption that they were lesser human beings. The inhabitants of Africa were themselves subjected to similar strictures of Eurocentric evolutionary biology, particularly in the case of those transported to the Americas for forced slave labour and those later colonised and virtually enslaved on the African continent, especially in those areas marked out for European settlement such as Southern Africa.

To offer justificatory support for the existing theory of evolutionary gradation, Eurocentric ideology, under the guise of empirical science, resorted to the physical measurements of the crania and other physical aspects of the African phenotype. It was on this basis that the Tutsis of Rwanda and Burundi were rated higher up the evolutionary scale than their Hutu kinsmen. A popular approach was the appeal to the pseudoscience of phrenol-

ogy to make the dubious claim that prognathism and nasal indices afforded proof of African evolutionary retardation.

But this argument was easily belied by the fact that the facial structures of East Asians approximated those of Africa, yet the thesis of evolutionary retardation was not applied in this instance. The biologist Stephen Gould in his text *The Mismeasure of Man* effectively pointed out that the data of a significant number of these supposed scientific studies on race and biology were manipulated (Gould 1981). One effective proof, however, to counter the Eurocentric claim of the evolutionary retardation of African populations was that colonised Africans easily learned to communicate in the languages of Europe coupled with the fact that there were noted instances of impressive intellectual abilities. Cases in point are the academic achievements of individuals such as philosopher Anthony Amo, who lectured at the German universities of Halle and Jena during the first half of the eighteenth century. The biographical account (1789) of Gustavus Vassa, once a victim of the Trans-Atlantic trade, is another noteworthy instance. Another proof of the problematic nature of the thesis of African evolutionary retardation is the fact that subjugated African populations refused to accept their status as biologically inferior beings. Frequent revolts both individually and in groups were the order of the day. The successful revolts in the Americas, such as those of Brazil and Haiti together with the colonial revolts in Africa, militated against this prevailing thesis. What is significant here is that African opposition to differential treatment according to some presumed evolutionary thesis actually advanced the argument of the unity of humankind in terms of human rights.

A further erosion of the conventional thesis occurred when scientific evidence demonstrated that humankind has its origins in East and Southern Africa some 160KYA to 200KYA and that migration from the continent took place only some 50KYA to 60KYA. Thus the time for evolutionary differentials, especially in the cognitive areas, was just too short to establish any meaningful differences. This theory has met with opposition on two levels. The OOA (Out of Africa) hypothesis is opposed by the Multiregional Hypothesis which claims that the three

major human populations designated as African, European, and Asian evolved separately, not at the sapiens level but at that of Homo Erectus (Wolpoff, *Race and Human Evolution*, 1997). The other thesis forwarded by Klein (1989) is that homo sapiens, though anatomically modern since approximately 165KYA, evolved further at the cognitive level to become 'behaviourally modern' only some 40-50KYA, but not in Africa. This time period is seen to coincide with the already concluded migration of homo sapiens into other parts of the globe. The response to Klein proposed by McBrearty and Brooks (2000) was that the human transition to the cognitive status of 'behaviourally modern' already took place in Africa and was, therefore, social rather than biological. The purpose of both theories (Klein and Wolpoff) is to offer continuing support to the orthodox, but challenged Eurocentric model about the evolutionary stages of the world's geographically different populations. Yet, the OOA hypothesis still stands firm on the basis of continuing research (Stringer 1997). Here we have an instance of an Africa-centred knowledge being empirically confirmed.

The biological theories of human evolution first established in Eurocentric discourse to chart the course of human development were eventually used as the template on which modern physical and cultural anthropology was structured. The discipline of anthropology began, therefore, as the cultural and biological study of the non-European 'other'. This enterprise required above all a specialised vocabulary with its specific references. Non-European humans from Africa and pre-Columbian America were seen as inhabitants of the woods and forests, hence the coining of the terms 'savage' (from the Latin 'silva'), 'primitive' (signifying 'early stages of humanity'), 'tribe' (as opposed to 'people' or 'ethnic group', both terms reserved for the 'civilised' people of Europe). Thus, for example, warfare between different non-European groups was inevitably described as 'tribal warfare' between groups implicitly understood as 'uncivilized'.

In the case of Africa, anthropology as a research enterprise met with no opposition as its peoples were classified into 'tribes' with peculiar cultures that were doomed to be replaced by the superior ones of Europe. But in order to reinforce

the antipodal idea of a natural superiority of the European over the African – and other non-Europeans – the sub-discipline of physical anthropology was developed. Thus based on phenotypical observation, most often founded on frivolous considerations of a dubious scientific nature, Africans were variously described as 'negroes', 'true negroes', 'negroid but not negro', 'Hamitic', 'Bantu' (often mistakenly used as a racial term), 'Semitic' (a linguistic term but often used erroneously as a racial term), 'bushmen', etc. The point here is that the racial categories employed to categorise Africans anthropologically were for the most part founded on criteria that were unscientific. First of all, the term 'negro' was the term casually used by Portuguese seamen to describe the people they met on the West African coast during the fifteenth century. The term itself was defined only in very broad terms referring principally to pigmentation. It was also later imported into the other languages of Europe, as in the case of English, and was used interchangeably with 'black'. We note parenthetically that in the sixteenth century the preferred terms for Africans in England, for example, were 'blackamoor' and 'tawnymoor' (see, for example, Shakespeare's *Othello*).

The scientifically dubious classification of Africa's populations into pseudo-racial types eventually became standardized in the anthropological literature. And in order to explain away what were seen as instances of 'civilisation' the term 'caucasoid' was also coined. This conceptual move was also coupled with a physical anthropology by gradation. African groups that did not fit the arbitrarily selected ideal-type criteria of the 'negro' and in the direction of the Eurocentric phenotypical ideal, and were deemed to have developed cultures of some note, were explained as having been influenced positively by 'caucasoid genetics'. This was the basis for the 'Hamitic hypothesis' expounded by G. Seligman in his classic Eurocentric text on African anthropology, *The Races of Africa* (1930). This was the age of the linguistic truncation of Africa into 'negro' and 'Hamito-Semitic' language families. General critiques of such classifications have led to the more objective classification of 'African languages' with the replacement of 'Hamito-Semitic' by the euphemistic term 'Afro-Asiatic'.

Scientific advances in the area of genetics have demonstrated that the indigenous populations of Africa are more inter-related than was claimed by the more simplistic theories of orthodox Eurocentric anthropology (Tishkoff 2009). Genetic studies of the populations of Africa demonstrate that two major haplogroups dominate the African continent: E1b1a and E1b1b. E1b1a is found mainly in West Africa and parts of Southern Africa, while E1b1b, with its origins in East Africa (Tanzania and the Horn of Africa) is dominant in East and North Africa. Thus, the current anthropological, archaeological, cultural, and political truncation of the African continent into 'black Africa' – now euphemistically referred to as 'sub-Saharan Africa' – and North Africa, described in Eurocentric discourse as part of 'the Middle East', is easily exposed as being founded on dubious cultural and anthropological assumptions.

### African Archaeology and History Reconfigured

The research area of African archaeology has been a major area in which Eurocentric ideology exercised much academic influence over the years, but which has witnessed a number of challenges in recent times. Popular ideology had it that African tool technology had not progressed beyond the level of the Neolithic until more advanced metal technologies such as copper and iron were introduced from outside the continent. The most egregious example of such assertions concerns iron smelting and its usages. Research data now confirm the counter-thesis that not only was iron smelting in almost universal usage in Africa from 1000 BCE to 500CE, but also that its origins were mainly indigenous (Miller 1997).

But more important in the ongoing research debates is the assumption that the archaeology of Africa includes only the so-called 'sub-Saharan' areas. This is purely an instance of Eurocentric ideology.

What this arbitrary truncation of the continent in terms of its archaeological history does is to reinforce pseudo-racial Eurocentric notions concerning the concepts of race and 'civilisation'. The archaeological history of Ancient Egypt and Kush (Nubia) has been deemed to be so impressive that Eurocentric archaeology – given its unquestioning sub-

scription to orthodox Eurocentric ideology on Africa – does not include these research areas in the matrix of African archaeology. The standard thesis of early Egyptologists such as Breasted (1905) was that the archaeological structures and relatively advanced level of the civilization of Ancient Egypt was due to some 'dynastic race' that invaded Egypt from West Asia and brought with it the ingredients of civilisation. But objectively derived scientific knowledge has shown that the archaeology of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, Axum, and so on are all properly designated as sites for African anthropological research (Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, 1981). One recalls in this regard similar considerations applied in the appraisals of the Benin, Ife, and Nok archaeologies of West Africa, and the Zimbabwe stone structures of Southern Africa. More generally, the same principle applies to other aspects of Africa's archaeology such as its architecture and urban structures. The empirical fact is that the pre-colonial architecture of Africa is much more varied than is normally claimed. In the urban areas of the coastal regions – East Africa especially – and the savannah regions of West Africa the pre-colonial architecture is quite varied as in towns such as Kano, Mopti, Timbuktoo, Ibadan, etc. Of course, the underlying *a priori* assumption at work here is the notion that the cognitive resources of Africa's populations were not sufficiently adequate to create the basic elements of 'civilisation'.

All this leads up to the issue of African history which has been wrestled over contentiously in some quarters. The history of Africa has been a central research area where Eurocentric thought held sway for many years. The standard Eurocentric thesis was that human rationality was not at play in past events on the African continent. There were certainly historical events that took place on the continent but they were seen as unstructured and not susceptible to explanation in terms of behavioural cause and effect. An early prototypical statement in this regard is that of Hegel's. In his *Philosophy of History* (1826, 1858) Hegel maximally discounts the idea of rational history as applicable to that of Africa. Hegel's conception of world history is one according to which 'universal spirit' (*Geist*) moves from the East to the West imbuing civilisations with a rational historical destiny, the telos of which is increasing hu-

man freedom at each temporal juncture. But for Hegel this rational dialectical movement completely bypasses Africa, except for Ancient Egypt which he described as a puzzling paradox. Hegel's view of an ahistorical Africa was supported by European historians throughout the colonial era. The basic assumption was that the history of Africa did not really begin until the encounter between Africa and Europe. The dates in question were from the fifteenth century onwards. The argument advanced in support of this was that a necessary condition for historical movement and explanation is that events be understood as resulting from rational and purposive behaviour. And that they be recorded by the written word and stored for posterity. British historian, Hugh Trevor-Roper (1969), for example, advanced just this thesis with respect to African history.

One post-colonial counter-argument has been that history as oral literature should be recognised. Regardless of the merits of this argument, it is a fact that there was written history in parts of Africa and there was historical movement in terms of cause and effect. Reference is made here to the histories of the medieval African nations of Ghana, Mali and Songhay. One recognises here historical works such as *Tariq es-Soudan* by Mahmoud Kati and *Tariq al-Fettach* by Abderrahman Sadi. In fact, it was Kati who described so movingly the fall of Songhay at the Battle of Tondibi in 1591 at the hands of Moroccan mercenaries. It is also a fact that written historical records concerning Ghana, Mali and Songhay exist in old family libraries in Mali. There are also extensive written records of the history of Northern Nigeria concerning the Hausa peoples. Thus, it was the force of strict empirical fact that led to the falsification of the old Eurocentric model of African history. This is the explanation for the revisions that well known joint historians of Africa such as Oliver and Fage (1963) had to undertake in more recent editions of their long-standing histories of Africa. In sum, on the definitive refutation of the old Eurocentric model of African history we also note Cheikh Anta Diop's *L'Afrique noire precoloniale* and *L'unité culturelle de l'Afrique noire*. UNESCO and Cambridge University Press many-volume publications also demonstrate that the argument that African history was unstructured and that it suffered from not

being written can be easily refuted. We have also had some well structured histories of West Africa by Jacob Ajayi and Michael Crowder (1972) and Joseph Ki-Zerbo (1972). Further developments too have been the linking of the post-fifteenth century history of West Africa with that of the trans-Atlantic truck in humans and the peopling of Southern Africa in post-archaeological times.

### **The Eurocentric Paradigm: Contemporary Politics and Economics**

The Eurocentric intellectual paradigm regarding Africa is not just limited to areas such as archaeology, history and anthropology, it extends to other important research areas such as political science and political economy. This is so because the idea of Africa as expounded by Eurocentrism extends to all areas of knowledge. In this final section, I propose to examine the structures of certain aspects of political science and economics to determine how they have configured discourse on contemporary Africa. Again, the influence of Eurocentrism is such that its impositions on the African world in terms of political and economic theory have been thoroughly reified and usually taken for fact in orthodox discourse.

One evident example of the political structuring of the African world is that concerning the geopolitical compartmentalisation of the physically continuous African continent into sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the Middle East-North Africa (MENA). The basis for this distinction is explained by this paper's analysis of Eurocentric anthropology in terms of its racial classification of the peoples of Africa into diverse racial groups such as 'negroes', 'Hamites', 'Semites', 'Bantus', and the like. Thus the idea of 'negro Africa' was concocted with its interchangeable cognate 'black Africa'. The Northern part of Africa was thus excised from the rest of Africa and linked with West Asia under the rubric of the so-called 'Middle East'. African political theorists, of course, had no say in these configurations. The result is that over time such configurations became embedded in linguistic and official discourse.

Yet the facts are that the indigenous peoples of Africa have always lived in all parts of Africa and, as a result, all peoples living north of the equator share certain cultural and linguistic characteristics.

On this basis, the fact is that the Sahara desert has never been a barrier to trade, communication and travel for the peoples of Africa. Eurocentric orthodoxy argues for just the opposite. The point made here is amply supported by the genetic analysis of the peoples of North Africa and neighbouring parts of the continent. The haplogroup E1b1b is found extensively not only in North Africa but also in East and Saharan Africa. On the other hand the dominant haplogroup for West Asia is J which, when found in Africa, derives from settlers arriving during the period of Islamic expansion. Yet again, the political analysis of populations based on the dubious concept of race is hardly illuminating for scientific discourse. It is on the basis of objective analysis, therefore, that the Pan-African concept of a single geographical unit known as Africa is more rational than the arbitrary impositions of Eurocentric geopolitical theory. Institutions such as the now defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor the African Union (AU), both created by African initiative, bear this out.

One other important area in which Eurocentric thought has been dominant yet needs to be challenged is that concerning the post-colonial political institutions of Africa. In the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, one key argument in Western political discourse was that democratic institutions were a necessary requirement for African development. But there are form and content issues involved here. It is assumed in orthodox Western political discourse that 'free and fair elections' are to be seen as sufficient to confer democratic credentials on some particular nation. But the fact is that mere elections are not adequate for genuine democracy. The 'rule of the people' as the term democracy signifies is not at all to be inferred from the holding of 'free and fair' elections. This, of course, is not to imply that less than transparent voting exercises afford a preferable option. What is required is that theoretical consideration be granted to possible new forms of political arrangements. The presidential system of government adopted by most African governments has shown itself to be unviable just on practical grounds. There is always the risk of violence – provoked by the politicians themselves who operate on principles of sheer opportunism as they appeal to the concepts of ethnic-

ity and regionalism – and the risk also of voting irregularities in nations where technological levels and literacy rates are low. There is certainly room for novel ways of establishing principles according to which Africa's populations could exercise their democratic prerogatives. The point being made here is that there are all kinds of electoral permutations that could be explored for optimality and efficiency according to particular contexts. One might consider in this regard variants of the parliamentary system. And more importantly, government could be structured in such a way that state power be reduced to a minimum with most power accruing to the populace by way of pre-set welfare considerations. For example, education and human welfare portions could be set constitutionally at 30 percent and 60 percent respectively. These are issues that Eurocentric political discourse, so dominant in the African academic arena, hardly ever countenances. In this connection, it should be noted that the vast literature on African political structures, though developed in the West, exercises a pervasive influence on African political discourse. Similar considerations apply to African economic life which is normally conjoined in real terms with African political discourse. A discussion on this issue follows.

In pre-colonial times the economic systems in Africa were of a very varied nature, but they were mainly of two or three interlocking types. African economic life was of the pastoral, agricultural or feudal type – with much overlap within the same linguistic communities. These three forms were often complemented with different levels of market trading often restricted to meeting places in towns and cities (for example, Kano in Northern Nigeria, Ibadan, Timbuktu, Khartoum, etc.). These economic systems were of purely sociological origins and owed nothing to essentialist considerations. There is nothing natural about the traditional political economy of Africa as is implicitly intimated in some orthodox circles. Thus, the economic solution for Africa would not be a return to such pre-colonial forms.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and China's dilution of Maoist economics in favour of market capitalism has lent much ideological support to a triumphant economic liberalism, at least until the recent world economic recession. But even so, the dominant economic paradigm of neoclassical economics, although chal-

lenged, is not seriously being threatened because alternative theories of economics are not being vigorously promoted. In fact, the only economic theory that offered any real challenge to the market capitalism of the West was Marxist socialism. The socialist argument was that there was nothing intrinsic in human nature that suggested that human behaviour was motivated only by individual gain. This was the argument promoted first by early socialists such as Saint-Simon and Robert Owen, then later by theorists such as Marx. But the foundational principle of modern market economics was provided by none other than Adam Smith (1776, 1991) who argued in *The Wealth of Nations* that the source of economic activity and progress was a 'certain propensity in human nature ... to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another' (1991:19). According to Smith, this behavioural trait was unique to humans and was prompted not by benevolence but by self-interest. This human trait was certainly quite different from what prevailed in pre-capitalist times. The pre-capitalist subsistence economy was not based on the maximisation of self-interest but rather on communal reciprocity and redistribution (Polanyi 1944, 2001). Polanyi writes that in cases where there is some catastrophe, 'interests are again threatened collectively, not individually' (Polanyi 2001:48). The key point here is that in non-market societies individual economic interests are hardly countenanced; it is the group's economic interests as a single unit that determine economic life (Polanyi 2001:48).

This model of economic behaviour is quite clearly the opposite of what modern-day neoclassical economics argues. The central thesis of neoclassical economics is that rational economic behaviour requires that humans as economic agents always seek to maximise their expected utility according to the rules of pure self-interest. The telos of human economic decision-making is pure efficiency with minimal considerations afforded to issues of equity. This is the basis for the construction of 'rational economic man' – that homunculus of human decision-making. It is this kind of decision-making that serves as the basis for what neoclassical economists call positive or scientific economics. Issues of equity are relegated to what is called normative economics, the evaluative branch of neoclassical theory. It is on this

basis that Eurocentric economic theory in the guise of neoclassical economics imposes itself by way of institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.

The generic term used to describe this kind of economic practice is 'market capitalism' which was initially challenged by Marxist theory, then by Leninism and Maoism. The general basis for the critique of market capitalism was that it was a pernicious economic system that transformed humans into the wage slaves of capital and robotic consumers of commodities. It was also seen as a relentless exploiter of African labour and resources from the days of the trans-Atlantic truck in humans to the charnel house of King Leopold's Congo. It was for these reasons that the idea of African socialism was developed as advocated by African intellectuals and political leaders such as Senghor of Senegal and Nyerere of Tanzania. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana also embraced socialism but the more orthodox variety. The point of all this is to make the argument that African economists would be remiss to passively embrace the ideas of neoclassical economics and its practice of economic neoliberalism as they seek solutions for Africa's economic problems.

One point of departure would be to recognize that economics as the proper husbanding of scarce resources should be pursued with the general goal of collective human welfare, as was the case with pre-capitalist economies, as amply demonstrated by Karl Polanyi (1944). In this regard a critical approach to the discipline of economics would be to view the presently dominant neoclassical economics and its anti-humanist prescriptions and practices as a form of Eurocentric social science. Thus, it is obvious that the key social scientific areas of political science and economics with regard to Africa largely reflect ideas, concepts and orientations developed and propagated in the West according to the dictates of Eurocentric ideology.

### Conclusion

In the above, I have attempted to show that there are valid epistemological grounds for the critique of the cognitive impositions that a technologically dominant Europe imposed on the world, including Africa from the sixteenth century onwards. But a critique of such impositions showed that they were of dubious

ontological content. At the cognitive level such Eurocentric impositions have become the normal discourse of the diverse forms of knowledge found in all research areas, especially those of the social sciences. It is in this regard that I have examined the different modes of knowledge as they have been ideologically configured to satisfy the dictates of Eurocentric discourse on Africa. But more than that, I have offered alternative analyses, statements and correctives. This should constitute the basis for the development of models of Africa-centred knowledge.

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## The Struggle to Convert Nationalism to Pan-Africanism: Taking Stock of 50 years of African Independence<sup>1</sup>

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The post-Vasco da Gama epoch of some five centuries, as Pannikar calls it, is a story of the 'West and the Rest'.<sup>2</sup> The West constructed its own story and the story of the Rest. It is a story of plunder, privation, invasion and destruction; it is a story of permanent wars and passing peace. It is a story of the annihilation of pre-European civilizations from the Incas of the Americas, so called after the European explorer Amerigo Vespucci, to the Swahili civilisation of the Eastern coast of Africa. The title of a book describing the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the near-extirmination of the Tasmanian Aborigines by the British, the white American dispossession of the Apache, and the German subjugation of the Herero and Nama of Namibia sums it all: *Rivers of Blood, Rivers of Gold* (Cocker 1999).

The tale of treasures at one end and tragedies at the other cannot be understood, I suggest, without locating it in the trajectory of worldwide capitalist accumulation. No doubt it is a complex story of construction and destruction of cultures and customs; a story of the exercise of brutal power and subtle politics; a story of spinning of epic mythologies and grand ideologies. No doubt it cannot be reduced mechanically to the capitalist mode of production nor be explained in a vulgar way by theories of conspiracy or

**Issa Shivji**  
University of Dar es Salaam  
Tanzania

processes of economics. I am suggesting none of these. Yet in this complexity and variability, in these major shifts and changing continuities – all of which we as scholars must study and have been studying – there is a pattern. There is a red thread running through it. That red thread is the process of capitalist accumulation seen in a *longue durée*. While we must, by all means, resist linear trajectories essentializing the march of progress of the so-called Western civilization, including the stagiest periodisation of vulgar Marxists, we cannot surrender to agnosticism or eclecticism – that the world is not knowable and explainable, however approximately.

It is in the context of the trajectory of capitalist accumulation that I want to locate the genesis of the grand narrative of nationalism and Pan-Africanism. To facilitate my presentation, I would resort to some periodisation of the process of accumulation. As we all know, all periodisation has its hazards – processes overlap and intermingle; the new is born in the garbs of the old and takes time

before it is recognised as such, while the old persists beyond its usefulness. Keeping that in mind, I would categorize the first four centuries (roughly from the last quarter of the 15th century to the first quarter of the 19th century) of the African encounter with Europe as the period of primitive accumulation, or to use the more recent and generic term, accumulation by appropriation (it should become clear later why this term is preferable). Within this period, we have two sub-periods – the period of looting of treasures, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, under the name of trade, based on unequal, rather than mutual exchange. This is the period of European powers pursuing their singular mission of destroying the pre-European long distance trade – the trans-Saharan trade on the West Coast and the Indian Ocean trade on the East Coast of Africa – in order to establish their mercantile and maritime hegemony. The pre-European trade systems, both on the West and the East Coasts, were governed by Islamic precepts. The gold trade passed through Timbuktu on the West and through Kilwa on the East, both of which became centers of great Islamic civilization and learning. Timbuktu and Kilwa were brutally destroyed by Portuguese privateers. The expeditions had specific instructions to Christianize the "natives" and eliminate Muslim traders.

As the Portuguese privateers were devastating the African coast in the last quarter of the 15th century, so Spanish conquerors were discovering the “New World”. Vasco da Gama laid the foundation of the European invasion of Africa. Christopher Columbus inaugurated the extermination of the indigenous populations of the Americas and the Caribbean – the first genocide and holocaust in the history of humankind. One led to the white hegemony, the other to white settlement. From then on, the fate of the three continents was inextricably linked and found its immediate expression in the triangular slave trade.

The second sub-period of some three centuries (from 16th to 19th centuries) witnesses the gruesome Atlantic slave trade, the so-called triangular trade. Half of the slaves were transported to the “new world” in the 18th century. Millions – 50 million one estimate says (Zinn 2001:29) – of men, women and children torn from their continent worked the sugar plantations of the Caribbean and cotton plantations of the southern states of America to provide the raw material for Lancashire mills, the pioneer of the industrial revolution. The African continent was looted of its treasures in the first sub-period, which also ruined its established mercantile routes; in the second sub-period the continent was looted of its people, devastating its social fabric and robbing it of its most important resource. This was accumulation by appropriation *par excellence* – accumulating by appropriating wealth in the first instance and accumulating by appropriating people in the second.

Meanwhile, on the European stage, capitalism is bursting its containers (to use Prem Shaker Jha’s term, Jha 2006:17) and re-constructing them. Jha argues that in its 700 years of development, capitalism has gone through three cycles of accumulation. At the beginning of each cycle it has expanded the size of its container – from the maritime city-states of Venice, Genoa, Florence, Milan, and Amsterdam, to nation states of England, Holland, and France. The quintessential of the second cycle was from the nation state to the colonising state<sup>3</sup> as European powers colonized much of the rest of the world. The third was from the Island territory of the small nation state, Britain, to the continental nation state of North America. Now, in the era of globalization, on the eve of the fourth cycle, it is poised to burst the very system of hierarchically organ-

ised nation states. Whatever the merit of this thesis, for our purposes two points can be made – one, that the capitalist container was never self-contained. Arteries penetrating deep into the wealth and treasures of other continents fed the process of capital accumulation in the heart of Europe. Africa was the theatre of the most devastating kinds of appropriation.

Second, the ideologies, religions, cultures and customs constructed to rationalize, legitimize and explain the processes of accumulation were centrally premised on the construction of race, in which ‘the Self’ was White and ‘the Other’ Black, the two also being the referents for the in-betweens. Geography itself was constructed as such – Europe being the land of the White and Africa being the land of the Black. The racist construct found its typical expression in the Other, Slave – a soulless, depersonalized and dehumanized object. For planters and slavers, ‘The Negroes are unjust, cruel barbarous, half-human, treacherous, deceitful, thieves, drunkards, proud, lazy, unclean, shameless, jealous to fury, and cowards.’ (James 1938, 1989:) The Supreme Court of the civilised United States decided in 1857 that ‘Dred Scott could not sue for his freedom because he was not a person, but property’ (Zinn op.cit. 187). Fathers, bishops, learned priests and men of conscience found no fault in trading in and owning of slaves. ‘... we ... buy these slaves for our service without a scruple ...’, declared men of religion with conscience (ibid. 29-30). The bottom line was the enormous profits made from the slave trade and colossal surplus extracted from slave labour. James Madison, one of the ‘fathers’ of the American constitution, could boast to a British visitor that he could make 2000 per cent profit from a single slave in a year (ibid. 33). Thus were constructed the universal ideologies, the grand narratives and the totalizing outlooks of the Western civilisation, which we are living to this day.

Towards the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, capitalism entered the throes of the industrial revolution (1780-1840 by Hobsbawm’s reckoning, Hobsbawm 1968). It was also the period of primitive accumulation *within* the container. Indeed, the original meaning of primitive accumulation was confined to the process of appropriation of serfs and peasants from land

to work in factories. Marx called it the ‘pre-historic stage of capital’ (1887:668). He theorized the capitalist system as if it was self-contained. ‘Accumulate, accumulate! That is the Moses and the prophets!’ (ibid. 558), he argued, was the driving force of capitalism. By dissecting the appearances of the commodity society, Marx showed how surplus is appropriated from the working class and accumulated to make more surplus even when on the face of it, the exchange appears to be mutual and equivalent in which no one is cheated or short changed. (And if cheating does happen in practice it is only a deviation from the norm.) Accumulation based on equal exchange is what we call *accumulation by capitalization*. The notion of equivalent exchange forms the bedrock of bourgeois legal ideology and philosophical outlook. The edifice of the Western legal system is constructed on atomized individuals bearing equal rights (Pashukanis 1924, 1978). Atomist individuals of bourgeois society as carriers of commodity relations are all equal. This is also the basis of citizenship where to be a citizen means to have equal claims and entitlements, as against each other and in relation to the state.

Later day Marxists, beginning with Rosa Luxemburg, questioned the theorization of capitalist accumulation based on the assumption of a self-contained system. They argued that the so-called primitive accumulation was not simply the pre-history of capital, but an inherent part of its history. The capitalist centre always requires a non-capitalist periphery to appropriate from, which translates into invasions of non-capitalist spaces. Capital not only comes into the world ‘dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt’ (Marx op.cit. 712), but also throughout its life continues to drain the blood of the ‘Other’ interspersed by auguries of bloodshed called wars. Capitalism by nature is predatory and militarist. Lenin from a different point of departure argued that in the last quarter of the 19th century, capitalism had become imperialist as monopoly finance capital sought new spaces of profitable investment (Lenin 1917). With the Berlin conference of 1885, rapacious capitalist powers carved up the African continent and appropriated them as their exclusive possessions, hence heralding another 75 or so years of colonialism. The racist ideology of the White Self (master) and the

Black Other (slave) came in handy in the creation of colonies. It was reinforced in religion and anthropology and literature as droves of missionaries preceded and anthropologists followed armed soldiers, to pacify the soulless, indolent 'native'. The Self was now the White colonist and the Other was the 'native'. The 'colour line' thus constructed had its own internal logic and drive – it determined the very life-conditions of the colonist/settler and the 'native'. The settler's town, as Fanon said, is a 'strongly-built', 'brightly-lit' 'well-fed' town. It is a town of 'White people, the foreigners'. The native town is 'a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute.'

They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. ... It is a town of niggers, and dirty arabs.' (Fanon 1963, 1967: 30)

The racist construct of the slave period, assisted by colonial intellectuals, was extended and reconstructed. *Differences* of custom and cultures among the 'natives' became immutable *divisions* called 'tribes' (Magubane). Tribes were conveniently divided and separated in their ghettos, lest, as the colonial paternalism averred, they kill each other given their violent propensity. The separation was thus in the interest of the natives to maintain law and order, meaning to rule. ('Divide et impera' – divide and rule.) Institutions of indirect political rule and colonially constructed regimes of customary law were created. Colonial identities of race and tribe were formed, and to the extent that they were internalised, self-identification and perception followed suit.

The dual tendency of accumulation continued to operate – *accumulation by capitalization* being dominant in the metropole and *accumulation by appropriation* being dominant and pervasive in the colony. To be sure, it manifested in new forms, through new political, economic, cultural and social institutions. Politics and cultures were reconstructed, so were customs and ideologies. A lot changed. Capitalism of 1942 was not the same as the capitalism of 1492 nor is that of 2000s the same as that of 1900s. Yet in these sea changes the heart of the system lay where it had always lain – in ac-

cumulation. New forms of primitive accumulation were devised. Minerals were mined with migrant labour; plantations cultivated by bachelor labour. Women were turned into peasant cultivators. Children's hands were deployed to weed and harvest. None was paid the equivalent of his or her subsistence as the laws of commodity exchange prescribe. Bachelor wages were paid in cash and kind. The cash was just enough to pay the poll tax, buy cigarettes and the local brew. The other component was food ration. The colonial capitalist rationed every ounce of mealy meal and every grain of bean just to keep the body of the migrant labourer alive, but not his family. (that was the woman's responsibility.) Rations were meticulously calculated on the basis of expert opinion on the needs of the native's morphology. Prison and forced labour, with no wages, constructed the arteries of colonial infrastructure to transport raw materials and food – cotton, coffee, rubber, tea – to the coast and thence to the metropole to satisfy the voracious appetite of the master's industries and the luxurious tastes of its aristocracy and the middle classes. More often than not, prisoners were those who had failed to pay poll tax or wife tax. Flat rate tax was levied on every adult native above the apparent age of 18. He had to pay tax on each of his "apparent" wives.<sup>4</sup> In addition to flushing out the self-sufficient producer from land to work on plantations and mines to get cash for tax, taxation raised the revenue to run the colonial machinery of administration and repression.

Political economists of the West, who are wont to theorize for the Rest, argued interminably on theories of unequal exchange and uncaptured peasantry to explain colonially created poverty and underdevelopment. Few would see that cutting into the necessary consumption of the 'native' crippled the conditions of human existence and its reproduction, resulting in chronic undernourishment, high infant mortality, deprivation and disease. It was nothing short of primitive accumulation of the most primitive kind, which even Marx did not foresee. Instead, he thought that the march of capitalism would bring the backward and tradition bound natives into the fold of civilisation by integrating them into capitalism. Thence, they would benefit from the proletarian revolution, which would usher humanity to the next stage of civilisation,

socialism. His twentieth century followers even postulated imperialism as the pioneer of capitalism and, therefore, progress (Warren 1980).

To be sure, colonial capital by the very nature of capital did introduce commodity relations, thus planting the seeds of accumulation by capitalization. The post-independence development theorists, again of course of the West, considered these pockets of capitalist relations the driver of modernization. It required a few and minority scholars of the Rest to theorize on the development of underdevelopment, the relationship between two tendencies of capitalist accumulation and its contradictions. The modern was neither modern, they said, nor the traditional backward; rather both were part of the capitalist whole in a symbiotic relation which ensured the drainage of wealth and surplus from the continent to be capitalized in the West. In short then, accumulation by appropriation dominated colonial capitalism under the hegemony of imperialism. If it produced indigenous capitalists, they were compradorial or semi-feudal in alliance with, and under the shadow of imperial bourgeoisies.

We don't have to be told that wherever there is oppression, there is bound to be resistance (Mao). As CLR James says, 'one does not need education or encouragement to cherish a dream of freedom.' (James op. cit. 18). As happens so often in history, ideologies of resistance are constructed from the elements borrowed from the ideologies of domination.

Pan-Africanism was such an ideology of resistance born in the throes of imperialism. Just as the dominant racist construct went back centuries to the slave trade, so did the resistance. For two hundred years the slaves in Haiti, originally named Hispaniola by Columbus, sang their freedom song (James op. cit. 18):

Eh! Eh! Heu! Heu!  
Canga, bafio té!  
Canga, mouné de lé!  
Canga, do ki la!  
Canga, li!

We swear to destroy the whites,  
And all that they possess;  
Let us die  
Rather than fail to keep our vow".

This was the pre-history of one strand of pan-Africanism, racial nationalism. The pre-history of the other strand, territorial nationalism, found expression in the Hai-

tian revolution of 1791. None of it at the time, of course, was called by that name. If I may jump the gun, the Haitian revolution was in advance of its times. It was the forerunner of both the logical conclusion of territorial nationalism and citizenship, and their crisis under imperialism, all of which we see in post-independence African states.

The racial construct in the Haitian freedom song is palpable. It could not be otherwise. On the launching of his 1903 book *The Souls of the Black Folk* Du Bois said that the 'problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line'. Pan-Africanism was born at the turn of the century as a racial, anti-racist ideology. Its founders came from the West Indies, the confluence of the slave trade, from where slaves were transported to the Americas. It is in the so-called 'New World' of North America that the White supremacist ideology found expression in its most brutal and dehumanizing forms. It is also here that the roots of Pan-Africanism are to be traced. Two names stand out, Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Du Bois' father and grandfather came from the West Indies. Garvey came from Jamaica. The two men stood in contrast, in their conception and methods. They represented – between them and within them – the two poles of nationalism within Pan-Africanism; one defined by race and culture, the other by geography. Garvey opposed accommodation within the White structures and spear-headed 'back-to-Africa movement'. He thus stood for a *territorial* home. Du Bois demanded equal racial treatment within the US. He thus stood for equal treatment or citizenship. Needless to say, both positions were a political construct, even if they did not present themselves as such. Paradoxically, but understandably, the boundaries of both were set by the dominant political and social constructs – White supremacy in one case, colonially carved borders in the other.

In his 93 years, Du Bois lived through and embodied the 60 odd years of the evolution of Pan-Africanist ideology and movement. Between the wars, Du Bois' Pan-Africanist congresses were essentially small gatherings of African-Americans and African-Caribbean with a sprinkling of Africans from French colonies. Demands centered on racial equality, equal treatment and accommodation in existing structures. To the extent that

colonialism and imperialist oppression itself was ideologised in terms of White supremacy, the anti-racist, racial constructs and demands of pan-Africanists were anti-imperialist. It is important to keep this dimension of Pan-Africanism in mind – that in its genesis and evolution the ideology and movement was primarily political and essentially anti-imperialist. No doubt, it drew upon the victim's cultural resources as the Negritude construct originally developed by the West Indian Aimé Césaire clearly demonstrates.

The turning point was the 1945 Fifth Congress at Manchester. The moving spirits behind that Congress were George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah. The demand was unambiguous – Africa for Africans, liberation from colonialism. It ushered in the national liberation movement. Pan-Africanism thus gave birth to nationalism. The main question was: would this be territorial nationalism premised on separate colonially created borders or Pan-Africanist nationalism; which in turn gave rise to two sets of sub-questions. If territorial, what would be the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, race or citizenship? And if Pan-Africanist: would it be global including the African Diaspora or continental excluding the Diaspora? Even if continental, would it be racial/cultural including only Black Africans while excluding Arabs? These became hot issues of debates and contentions a few years before and a few years after the independence of African countries. In one sense, the bifurcation between racial and territorial nationalism symbolized by Du Bois and Marcus Garvey between the wars seemed to re-appear. But the context had changed. There were two new factors, independence on the African continent and the Caribbean, and the civil rights movement in the US. One introduced state sovereignty in the territorial equation, the other citizenship in the global equation, both setting apparently "new" boundaries of exclusion/inclusion, identity and belonging. In a nutshell, the triangular contestation between citizenship, racialism and territorial nationalism defined the parameters of the pan-Africanist discourse. But at this stage we must return to the trajectory of capitalist accumulation and explore it in the post-independence period in Africa, for that matter even globally.

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Independence of Ghana in 1957 was an earthshaking event. CLR James described Ghana's independence as a revolution. For a people who had been humiliated for five centuries, independence was indeed a revolution. For Nkrumah, though, independence of Ghana was incomplete without the liberation of the whole continent and the liberation was incomplete without the unity of the continent. These two became his passion. With the advice and help of George Padmore, Nkrumah set in motion two sets of conferences – the conference of African independent states – eight in all at the time, and All Africa People's Conferences, a meeting of national liberation movements, trade unions and other leaders. The resolutions of these two conferences are a forerunner of the "new" bifurcation of the Pan-Africanist ideology – the statist Pan-Africanism and its concomitant state-based nationalism and people's pan-Africanism based on solidarity and African identity. Statist pan-Africanism culminated in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.) underpinned by the discourse on the unity of African States while 'All-Africa-People's' pan-Africanism was increasingly eclipsed by territorial nationalism. Each one of these, in its own way, reproduced the triangular tension between racialism, nationalism and citizenship. The tension between the two was well described by a leading pan-Africanist, Julius Nyerere, as the dilemma of the pan-Africanist (Nyerere 1966, 1968). When Nyerere was writing in 1966, there were 36 independent African states. Each of these was involved in the consolidation and development of its nation state. 'Can the vision of Pan-Africanism survive these realities? Can African unity be built on this foundation of existing and growing nationalism?' Nyerere agonized. His answer was unambiguous.

I do not believe the answer is easy. Indeed, I believe that a real dilemma faces the Pan-Africanist. On the one hand is the fact that Pan-Africanism demands an African consciousness and an African loyalty; on the other hand is the fact that each Pan-Africanist must also concern himself with the freedom and development of one of the nations of Africa. These things can conflict. Let us be honest and admit that they have already conflicted. (ibid. 208)

They have more than conflicted. The vision of Pan-Africanism was buried in the

statist discourse of African unity and regional integration/disintegration. More astute nationalists like Nyerere defined the two-fold task of the independent government as nation-building and development. In absence of a local bourgeois class worth the name, the agency to build the nation and bring about development would be the state. Meanwhile, imperialism continued to cast its long shadow and at times more than a shadow. Assassinations and coups engineered by one or other imperialist power became the order of the day. Patrice Lumumba was brutally murdered and Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown by the machinations of the CIA. Survival became Nyerere's pre-occupation.

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Half a century of independent Africa neatly divides into two halves, the first twenty-five years of nationalism and the second of neo-liberalism. Underlying the ideologies of development and nation building, of identities and politics, from Nyerere's Socialism and Self-reliance to Senghor's Negritude, lay the contention between accumulation by capitalization and accumulation by appropriation. Programs and policies undertaken in the nationalist period, whether under the ideology of modernization or socialism (essentially a variant of state capitalism), were meant to bolster the tendency for accumulation by capitalization. But under the hegemony of imperialism, accumulation by appropriation continued to assert and reassert itself. Using local state or private merchant capital as the intermediary, and trade, aid and debt as the means, natural resources were rapaciously exploited and working people cajoled or coerced into yielding surpluses that inevitably found their way into the capital circuits of imperialist centers. Just as looting, plundering, and the triangular slave trade of the previous centuries, called primitive accumulation, had primed the wheels of the industrial revolution, so the appropriation of resources and surpluses of the working people of Africa fuelled the Golden Age of Capitalism (1945-1971). Nationalist attempts to construct a self-reliant economy and inaugurate what Samir Amin calls autocentric development were sternly opposed or accommodated and absorbed in the imperialist system.

Nonetheless, imperialism during the nationalist period was morally and ideologi-

cally on the defensive. Educated in the theories of the master and borrowing from the cultures and history of the colonizer, African nationalists attempted to reconstruct their identities and politics in the idiom of nationalism, sovereignty, self-determination and citizenship, the philosophical underpinning of which, as we have seen, is the notion of the atomist individual with equal rights. It was a valiant struggle, but it was ultimately defeated, as the onslaught of neo-liberalism amply proved. The nationalist, labelled 'ethnic' by the West, either failed or lacked the means and the historical time and opportunity to master the driving force of the construction of the 'Self' of the West – accumulation. Accumulation by capitalization required a relatively autonomous economic space to operate and political self-determination to master. In other words, paraphrasing Cabral, national liberation meant people reclaiming their right to make their own history whose objective was 'to reclaim the right, usurped by imperialist domination' of liberating 'the process of development of national productive forces'. This called for nothing less than a structural reconstruction of the economy and reorganisation of the state. None could be successfully done under the Western capitalist domination of the economy and the political hegemony of imperialist ideologies and policies transmitted by local proto-bourgeoisies, so well caricatured by Fanon. The few who attempted were assassinated, overthrown or forcibly removed. The rest had to accommodate and compromise to survive. The problem was that the ideology of resistance and anti-hegemony – and their institutions of operationalisation – was constructed drawing on the intellectual and cultural resources of the dominant and dominating West. African nationalists failed to construct alternative ideologies and institutions. In the course of the struggle, again, a few tried, but they were nipped in the bud in the nick of time. Amílcar Cabral postulated that 'there are only two possible paths for an independent nation: to return to imperialist domination (neo-colonialism, capitalism, state capitalism), or to take the way of socialism' (Cabral 1966, 1969: 87). He did not live to see either the independence of his country or practice his position. Agents of Portuguese colonialism assassinated him as his country was approaching independence. Chris Hani who envisaged a new democratic and socialist South Africa was killed

on the eve of the transfer of power. Steve Biko who redefined Black as a positive identity of the oppressed beyond the colour line, was tortured to death by the henchmen of apartheid. John Garang who postulated a united New Sudan beyond colour, cultural and linguistic lines infuriated racial and secessionist elements both in the North and the South and their imperialist backers. We are told he was killed in a helicopter crash. The truth lies buried somewhere in the debris.

The nationalist project was thus defeated and its building blocks shattered. The neo-liberal attack was foremost an ideological attack on radical nationalism. Imperialism went on the offensive – economically, culturally, politically and intellectually. Within a period of two decades, Africa has undergone three generations of structural adjustment programmes in an orgy of liberalization, marketisation, privatisation, commodification and financialisation. Pockets of capitalist development based on accumulation by capitalization have been destroyed as country after country in Africa has been deindustrialized. The few achievements of social services in education, health, water, old age pensions and other public services are commodified under such policies as cost sharing and outsourcing. Fiscal instruments and institutions of policy making, like central banks, have been made autonomous and commercial banks privatised away from the public scrutiny of elected bodies. They make policies on the basis of prescriptions handed down by International Financial Institutions and donors. Policies are thrust down the throats of politicians and parliamentarians using the carrot of loans, aid and budget support whose withdrawal acts as the veritable stick. Meanwhile, voracious imperialist capitals backed by their states and the so-called "donor-community" is grabbing land, minerals, water, flora and fauna. I need not go into details because a few African scholars have amply documented these facts – I say few, because many have succumbed to consultancies in the service of "development partners".

Let me sum up by saying that the tension of the nationalist period between accumulation by capitalization and accumulation by appropriation has been resolved in favour of the neo-liberal primitive accumulation. To be sure, there are new forms in which the process of expropriation is constituted and manifested,

but the essence remains. The projected identity of the 'Self' in the West is that of a benefactor, humanitarian, investor, advisor, entrepreneur and donor while the 'Other' is the poor and helpless victim of the corrupt, unaccountable ethnic ruler. No doubt, capitalism at the centre is not the same either. Prem Shankar Jha argues that capitalism is on the verge of bursting its nation-state container and is going global in the process wreaking havoc and destruction on a global scale. One does not have to accept Jha's thesis to agree with him that the destruction is real and palpable, whose implications are felt not only in Africa, but also in the West. Yet Africa suffers the most. There have been more wars after the end of the so-called Cold War than during its existence. Most of these have been fought on the African continent. Within a period of two decades, four countries have been destroyed and the fifth about to be devastated. Two of these are on the African continent. The continent is being militarized as American imperialism spreads its tentacles through the AFRICOM and seeks more and more naval bases on the Indian Ocean rim.

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The continent is in crisis as is the capitalist-imperialist system constructed by the West over the last five centuries. Some have argued that the fall of Lehman Brothers and the financial crisis following it, marks the beginning of the end of capitalism as we know it. Others are taking the position that the centre of gravity and hegemony is shifting from the West to the East; that capitalism is poised to reconstitute itself in new centers. The debate rages on. Most, at least most African scholars, agree that the national project in Africa has failed and national liberation has been aborted. Some locate the failure of the national project in the crisis of citizenship; others in the failure to liberate the continent from the clutches of imperialism. In my view, the two are connected. Underlying the crisis of citizenship is the failure to master the process of accumulation by capitalization, which in turn is due to imperialist domination in alliance with local comprador classes. Whatever the case, African scholars, intellectuals and activists have been compelled to re-visit the Pan-Africanist project. Some of the old debates on racial and territorial nationalisms are re-appearing. Who is an African for the purposes of Pan-Africanism? And,

therefore, who constitutes the nation for purposes of national liberation? For Kwesi Prah, Bankie Bankie, Chiweizu and others, 'African' is defined by colour, culture and custom. For Archie Mafeje, Steve Biko, Walter Rodney, Tajudeen Abdel Rahman and others, African or Black is not a function of colour, race, biology or morphology but a social and political construct, which ought to be historicized. Mafeje affirms, '...Africanness could not possibly mean the same thing to succeeding generations of African intellectuals'. And the fact that the first and second generation of Pan-Africanists may have borrowed from racial and cultural categories to deal with the problematique of white racism in a colonial setting 'does not commit later generations of Pan-Africanists to the same conflation between race/colour and culture.' In the view of many African scholars, intellectuals and activists, we need to revisit and re-construct the Pan-African project to address the unfinished task of national liberation from imperialism and take us beyond to the emancipation of the working people of Africa from the hegemony of capitalism. In doing so, we would of course borrow from the intellectual and cultural resources of humankind as well as the experiences of the struggles of the people of the continent. In constructing a "new pan-Africanism" which would go beyond colour and national lines, we need fundamental paradigmatic shifts. The African intellectual community is deeply involved in these debates and I need not go into details. Suffice it to say that the insurrection of pan-Africanist ideas has begun, hesitatingly, but definitely.

### Conclusion

I have given the story of pan-Africanism as a grand narrative of nationalism and national liberation. I have shown its internal contradictions and movements. I have tried to locate my narrative in the trajectory of capitalist accumulation and imperialist domination, without, hopefully, making it mechanist and deductive. And I have called for a reconstruction of a new pan-Africanist grand narrative to face the unfinished tasks of national liberation and move forward to the tasks of social emancipation. Throughout the history of humankind, masses have been moved by the grand narrative of liberty, freedom, justice and emancipation to bring about change – sometimes revolutionary changes, at other times not so

revolutionary. Humanity stands at a cross-roads. It is crying out for fundamental change. We need an alternative utopia to live by and fight for if we are not to be consumed by the death and destruction wrought by the barbaric system of the last five centuries. The worst of that barbarism has been felt and continues to be endured in Africa. In a reconstructed Pan-Africanism, Africa is calling all 'at the rendez vous of victory ...'. With Aimé Césaire, we can all sing:

(and) no race possesses the monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, and there is a place for all at the rendez vous of victory ....

### Notes

1. This article was first presented as keynote address to the 4<sup>th</sup> European conference on African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden, 15 June 2011.
2. The sub-title of Niall Ferguson's book, *Civilization* (2011). The book itself is an excellent example of how a right-wing Western historian tells the story of the "west and the rest".
3. Here, I am slightly modifying Jha's thesis.
4. "Apparent" because in different circumstances (for example, when applying the rule that a spouse is not a compellable witness against a fellow spouse) "native" wives wedded under "native" law were not recognised by colonial courts as wives while for the purposes of tax any one who *appeared* to be a 'wife' was so recognised.

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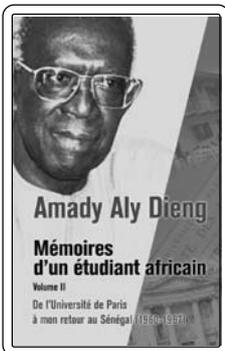
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**Mémoires d'un étudiant africain – Volume II  
De l'Université de Paris à mon retour au Sénégal (1960-1967)**

Amady Aly Dieng

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Avec les indépendances formelles des anciennes colonies françaises d'Afrique noire, s'ouvre l'ère de la lutte contre le néocolonialisme. Les étudiants africains, mobilisés autour de cette lutte, étaient désormais devenus des étrangers qu'on pouvait facilement expulser de la France. Le gouvernement français d'alors n'hésitait pas à procéder à des expulsions massives pour réprimer leurs organisations syndicales ou politiques. La liquidation des deux grandes fédérations d'AOF et d'AEF et la suppression des commissions fédérales des bourses – consécutives à la mise en application de la Loi-cadre Gaston Defferre de 1956 destinée à balkaniser l'Afrique noire sous domination française – vont considérablement affaiblir la Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France (FEANF) au profit de ses sections territoriales. Les gouvernements africains, par le biais de leurs ambassades et de leurs commissions territoriales de bourses, vont eux-mêmes prendre en charge leurs étudiants et se donner à leur tour les moyens de réprimer les organisations d'étudiants hostiles à leur politique de collaboration avec les autorités françaises. Parmi les divers procédés utilisés, il y avait la suppression des bourses et des subventions aux hôtels et résidences habités par les ressortissants de leurs territoires (La Maison de la Côte d'Ivoire, du Gabon, de la Haute Volta, du Congo, d'AOF), la création d'associations progouvernementales telles que celle des étudiants de l'Union progressiste sénégalaise (UPS), le Mouvement des étudiants de l'organisation commune africaine et malgache (MEOCAM), l'Union nationale des étudiants de la Côte d'Ivoire (UNECI). La Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France entre alors dans une phase de déclin, le ver est dans le fruit de l'Unité avec l'application de la Loi-Cadre.

# Speaking Truth to Power

## Academic Freedom in Uganda

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### Uganda - What Needs Undoing: No Democracy Relies so Much on the Military<sup>1</sup>

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Today my first message to you is: Pray for Uganda!

But as you pray, I urge you not only to think of matters spiritual. Rather, I ask you to think of religion today as a means through which we can correct the many ailments that afflict us, and for you to go back to the manner in which the founders of the world's great religions used their power: not as a means to guarantee that their flock grow in number, but as a mechanism for enlightenment and caution.

Today, I want to urge you to face the main challenges of governance confronting the country and to step out from your mosques, churches and temples and confront the evils we are facing head on. In other words, as you pray, please keep one eye open!

I have been asked to examine the key governance challenges we face in Uganda today. I want to focus on what needs to be undone. In other words, what things do we need to rid ourselves of in order to improve the state of governance as we approach the swearing-in ceremony of a new/old government and move into the next five years of NRM rule? In order to answer that question, it is necessary for us to take a small step back in history.

When 42-year-old guerilla leader Yoweri Kaguta Museveni emerged from the five-year bush war to claim the presidency of Uganda in 1986, he was proclaimed as a great redeemer. Although there were many questions as to whether he had the credentials to lead such a decimated and demoralized population out of the doldrums, there can be little doubt that Uganda has done fairly well under his steerage.

**Joe Oloka-Onyango<sup>2</sup>**  
Makerere University  
Uganda

It is not for me to sing the praises of the government, but even the most ardent critic must admit that Uganda is no longer "the Sick Man of Africa" that it used to be in the 1980s. Twenty five years later, Museveni remains at the helm of Ugandan politics, and on February 18, 2011, he received yet another endorsement in an election that extends his term in power until 2016.

He has already entered the record books as East Africa's longest-serving leader, outstripping both the late Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenyan ex-President Daniel arap Moi. By the end of this 6th term, Museveni will be 72 years old, and at 30 years in power will join the ranks of Africa's longest, among them, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Angolan president Eduardo dos Santos and the beleaguered Muammar el Gaddafi.

But it will also be the time to ask whether Museveni's legacy will be that of the former Tanzanian president, who left office still loved and revered, or a figure of tragedy and hatred like Moi? Indeed, as North Africa witnesses the nine-pin like collapse of long-term dictatorships starting with Tunisia and spreading like wildfire, it is necessary to inquire how it is that Museveni won the February 18 election, and what lessons this has for political struggle and freedom in Uganda.

Drawing on Libya for comparison is particularly apt since Museveni has long been an ally of Muammar Abu Minyar al

Gaddafi. You will recall that on one of many trips to Kampala, the eccentric leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya urged Museveni to stay in office for life, arguing that revolutionaries are not like company Managing Directors.

The former do not retire from office! It is a lesson Museveni took to heart, removing presidential term limits from the constitution in 2005, and setting himself well on the way to a de facto life presidency.

But before we look to the future, we need to return to the past, especially to understand the recent election. What explains Museveni's February victory, especially given that while largely predicted, the margin by which he won (68% of the presidential vote and 75% for his National Resistance Movement in the parliamentary poll) stunned many!

We need to compare this margin with the three previous elections in 1996 (when he won with 75%), in 2001 (69%) and in 2006 (59%). According to the pundits who filled the radio airwaves before the poll, while still popular and dominant and thus likely to win, the downward trend would continue. Some even predicted that there would be a run-off because the 50.1% margin would not be scaled in the first round. The other issue of surprise was the relative calm and lack of violence that attended the election.

Most foreign observers, from the European Union to the US government, described the vote as generally peaceful, free of bloodshed and largely a "free and genuine" expression of the wishes of the Ugandan people. It was only the African Union (AU) that declined outright to describe the poll as "free and fair".

The local media described it as the “most boring” poll in recent history, lacking as it did much of the drama, intrigue and confrontation that Ugandans had become accustomed to. It is thus not surprising that Museveni’s rap ditty, ‘Give Me My Stick/You Want Another Rap?’ garnered more attention than the substantive issues at stake.

### **Not Yet Multi-party**

To fully comprehend the outcome of Uganda’s recent poll, it is necessary to understand a number of basic facts. The first is that Uganda is yet to become a functioning multiparty democracy. For the first nineteen years of Museveni rule, we operated under a “no-party” or “movement” system of government, which was little better than a single-party state.

Under that system, government and party institutions overlapped right from the lowest level (resistance or local councils) through to Parliament. Indeed, in many respects Museveni took a leaf from Gaddafi’s popular councils, creating these LCs as supposedly representative of grassroots democracy, but essentially a cover for single-party dominance.

Today, many of the no-party structures remain intact and operative. They function as the main conduits of political mobilisation and for the channeling of state resources, buttressed by a massive local bureaucracy of government agents and spies.

These include the Local Councils (especially 1 and 2), and although they may appear insignificant, they in fact play a crucial role in governance in the country. Indeed, that system remains intact, and only this week we were advised by the Electoral Commission that elections for the lower levels of local government would be postponed, yet again.

It is clear that not only is the postponement illegal, it also reflects a reluctance on the part of the ruling party to make the final necessary transition from the movement to a multi-party political system of governance.

### **Power of Incumbency**

We also need to recall that in most countries it is very difficult to remove incumbent governments through an electoral process. In the history of African electoral democracy, only a handful of ruling parties have lost a poll.

In Uganda, the fact of incumbency guaranteed President Museveni unfettered access to state coffers, such that the NRM reportedly spent \$350 million in the campaign. Whether or not this is true, we have not yet received a proper accounting of how much the NRM [or indeed any other party] spent and from where they received this money; already, this means that we are being held hostage to the lack of transparency and the underhand nature of politics that we thought we had long left behind.

Indeed, the enduring image of the past several months has been that of the President handing out brown envelopes stashed with cash for various women, youth and other types of civic groupings. I don’t know if religious leaders were also beneficiaries of this largesse. If you were, then you must acknowledge that you have become part of the problem. For in those envelopes lies a key aspect of the problem: the phenomenon of institutionalized corruption that has become the hallmark of this regime.

### **Militarised Context**

The other reason for Museveni’s victory lies in the highly-militarised context within which politics and governance in Uganda is executed. We know that after five years of civil war (1981 to 1986), and twenty-plus years of insurgency in the north of the country, Uganda has virtually never been free from conflict. Unsurprisingly, the idea of peace and security occupy a very significant position within the national psyche.

For older Ugandans, there is some fear of a reversion to earlier more chaotic times, while for the younger generation who have only experienced Museveni, the claim that he has restored peace has a particular resonance. Ironically, both groups also fear that if Museveni lost an election, he would never accept the result, and instead would either return to the bush or cause such great instability that it is not worth it to even think about an alternative candidate.

This explains what to many is the most surprising outcome of the election: Museveni’s victory in northern Uganda despite facing two sons-of-the-soil in ex-diplomat Olara Otunnu and the youthful Norbert Mao.

I believe that the looming presence of the military also explains why the turnout for

the election at 59% was much lower than any of the previous three polls, where figures were closer to 70%. Many people simply stayed at home, partly out of apathy, but more on account of the fact that the streets of Kampala and other parts of the country were swamped with military personnel.

Any visitor to Uganda over the election period would not be wrong to question whether the country was not a military dictatorship. Moreover, and unfortunately, the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) is more akin to the army in Libya than the one in Egypt.

UPDF is not well known for exercising restraint when dealing with civilian insurrection or politically-motivated opposition. Indeed, when the red berets and the green uniforms come out on the streets you know that there will be correspondingly higher casualties. That is why we should condemn the increased militarisation of the political context.

It is why we should demand that instead of spending on jets, tear gas and APCs, we need more [money] to be spent on roads, hospitals and our UPE schools.

### **No Opposition Parties**

Museveni’s performance in the north reflects the other side to the story, and that is the fact that Museveni is only as good as the opposition he faces. The dismal performance of the opposition is attributable to a host of factors, not least of which is the fact that there are really no opposition parties in Uganda.

Rather, there are only opposition personalities epitomized by three-time presidential contender, Col. (rtd) Kizza Besigye of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) who have constructed around themselves weak or non-existent party structures that only come to life in the run up to the election.

During the election, Uganda’s opposition seemed to lack a firm ideological position, and while the death of ideology is an ailment affecting the ruling NRM too, its absence among the opposition has proven particularly harmful as there is a lack of a central organizing message around which the opposition can translate obvious disgust and support against Museveni into electoral victory.

Thus, at the start of the election season, the opposition wavered between a united front against Museveni or a boycott, cit-

ing the bias of the Electoral Commission and the non-level playing field.

As we are all aware, neither option was adopted, and at the end of the day all major opposition parties decided to field candidates in both the presidential and parliamentary elections, while decrying the inequality in the contest.

It is important and ironic to note that the opposition may have found a more united voice after the election. This is in the Walk-to-Work (W2W) protests. The fact that the government has failed to find a suitable response to this opposition unity speaks volumes of the foundations on which the February 18 victory rest.

Most importantly, the W2W protests demonstrate that Ugandans can be mobilized around issues as opposed to the mobilization of fear (“we brought you peace”), the mobilization of money (brown envelopes), or the mobilization of elite benefits (the promise of new ministries and the creation of more unviable districts).

At the end of the day, while President Museveni’s victory is not much of a surprise, and in the short run ensures the continued charade of economic and political stability that has characterized the last two decades, I would like to suggest that it portends considerable apprehension for the future of the country.

### Museveni character

While the President has dismissed comparisons with the fallen dictators of north Africa, there are indeed many parallels. First of all, the state in Uganda has assumed what can only be described as a ‘Musevenist’ character, such that an election such as the recent one can only be an exercise in endorsement of the incumbent, complete with his iconized symbolic hat.

This is because the leadership of the state was afflicted with the disease I have described as ‘stayism’ for which the antidote has never been an election. Secondly, the Ugandan state has also devolved to a situation in which there is little to distinguish between the personal and the political, and where it is increasingly being marked by the growth of what can only be described as family or personal rule.

Thirdly, we are in very real danger of beginning an era of dynastic politics. While President Museveni has only one son (in

comparison to Gaddafi’s seven), Muhoozi Kainerugaba is clearly being groomed for greater things. Thus, he has taken charge of the Presidential Guard Brigade, the elite force designed to guarantee his father’s personal security, and he recently wrote a book about the bush war, to burnish his credentials as an intellectual-cum-soldier able to fit into his father’s rather large shoes.

This is clearly the same path that Ben Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi pursued, only to find themselves thwarted by the movement of the people. While it may be true that revolutionaries don’t retire, if there is no other lesson of the recent northern African upheavals, it is that revolutionaries can be forced to resign. It is all simply a matter of time.

It is important for us to underscore a number of lessons [from North Africa] that cannot be ignored:

1. Regardless of the size of the military apparatus one constructs, even the most powerful of regimes can be brought down;
2. Resistance and reaction to poor governance can come from anywhere, even from those who are the weakest or the most marginalized; it is not necessarily the elite or opposition political forces who lead movements for change, and
3. The terrorism of hunger is much more dangerous than the terrorism of the so-called terrorists.

Finally, given all that we have seen above, how do we go about undoing the political damage and rebuilding Uganda’s democracy?

1. We need to begin by undoing the tendency towards political monopoly, and to tackle the desire to absolutely dominate the political arena to the exclusion of any contending force, and particularly the burning desire to try to eliminate all forms of opposition to the existing system of governance. In this regard we need to undo unlimited presidential terms and end the phenomenon of longevity in office;
2. We need to force the ruling party to accept that opposition in a multiparty system is a fact of life; the sooner the NRM learns to live with it the better; it thus needs to adapt its methods of response from coercion and abuse, to dialogue and compromise.

We need to undo the detention-without-trial of political opponents like Besigye and Mao and of all the other political activists who have been detained as a result of the W2W strikes, and of earlier events such as the September 2009 (pro-Kabaka) uprising.

3. We need to undo the links between the state and the ruling (NRM) party, first by undertaking a full audit of where and how the NRM raised the resources to finance the last election and secondly through establishing a permanent Political Party Oversight Commission made up of civil society actors, academicians, peasants, religious leaders, and other individuals and groups from all walks of life, with the goal of ensuring that all political parties adhere to the constitution and work towards the expansion of democratic space, rather than its contraction.
4. We need to undo the legal manipulation and the misuse and abuse of law and of the constitution in order to achieve sectarian political objectives. In particular, we need to condemn and combat the constant shifting of the goalposts when the existing ones do not suit the achievement of a particular political objective. We also need to undo the infrastructure of intolerance and exclusion that is manifest in the following laws:
  - (a) The Institution of Cultural and Traditional Leaders Bill;
  - (b) The NGO Act, HIV/AIDS Act, The Equal Opportunities Commission Act, The Anti-Homosexuality Bill, etc.
5. We need to undo the use of coercive (particularly militaristic) methods to achieve political objectives, of which we have seen numerous examples, culminating with the W2W shootings last week.
 

There is no other country in the world that lays claim to being a democracy which so extensively relies on the military. We are fed up of the notoriety of the Rapid Response Unit (RRU), the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) and of para-military shadow militias like the Black Mamba; the PGB and the many Generals who have invaded political life. We need to remove the UPDF from directly involving itself in politics as is normally the case in a functioning multiparty system.

6. We need to undo the hypocrisy that claims the high moral ground when we are mired in CORRUPTION, a corruption which has become institutionalized and 'normal', and which begins and ends in state house.
7. We need to stop ignoring the youth and treating them like they are the 'leaders of tomorrow' or else they will take up arms against us today.
8. We need to undo the monopoly of political power that is exercised only by political actors. All of us have to become politicians; hence while the

President's call for talks with the opposition is welcome, it cannot be a discussion only between the NRM and opposition parties; we also want to be heard and to make sure that no deals are made behind our backs.

Hence, there is a need for a national convention of all civil and social groupings to decide on the future course of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to stop being complacent about our country. We will wake up and find it gone!

## Notes

1. This is a slightly edited version of a paper that Prof. Oloka Onyango presented at the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) Post-election Conference' in Kampala, 27 April 2011.
2. Makerere University law professor, Joe Oloka-Onyango, made a presentation at the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) post-election 2011 conference in Kampala on April 27, 2011.

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President Museveni, who closed the conference, was very critical of Prof Oloka's presentation, accusing him of poisoning the minds of "our children". Below is his reaction as captured by a Kampala newspaper, *The Observer*.

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## Angry Museveni Tells Off His Critics\*

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On the day Dr Kizza Besigye was arrested, President Museveni officiated at the closing of the two-day post-election conference of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda at Hotel Africana.

The President was in a combative mood, telling off his critics on several issues. The slightly abridged article below, sent to us by the President's press unit, captures his take on various subjects.

President Museveni has said the real problem of Africa is lack of basic infrastructure such as electricity which is a major cure for poverty, saying no country can modernise and create jobs without energy.

"One of the things Africans should have done, including yourselves, is to think about electricity. You cannot modernise unless you have electricity," he said.

**Observer Media Limited**  
Kampala, Uganda

The President was chief guest at the closure of the two-day post – election 2011 conference organised by the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) at Hotel Africana held under the theme, 'Working together for a sustainable peace, national building and national reconciliation.'

The conference brought together key stakeholders, including senior religious and political leaders, academicians, media experts, heads of security agencies, development partners, civil society organisations and cultural leaders from around the country.

The President was irked by what he described as lies spread by some academicians.

"I hear you had a professor here called Oloka Onyango. This is a gentleman who has been feeding poison to our children at the university – lies, lies, lies. He is teaching in a public university, paid for by the government, he is always telling lies.

Yet he calls this a dictatorship. As if he has never heard of dictatorships. If this government was a dictatorship, that professor would not be in that university, not even for one day. But the lies continue and we continue telling the truth," he said.

\* This article was first published in *Observer*, a Kampala newspaper, 30 April 2011.

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## Mr President, Here is Why Brown Envelopes are Dirty\*

I am reliably informed that on news broadcasts aired on the night of April 28, President Museveni verbally assaulted the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda for adopting a resolution calling for an end to the giving out of brown cash-filled envelopes and other gifts by the President to religious leaders at public functions. I am also told that the President attacked me personally, asserting that I was a liar and should (or could), "Go to Hell!" I am not exactly sure why.

I did not see the newscast, but I received dozens of calls and sms messages expressing concern for my safety. Perhaps it is because I gave the keynote address at the conference and told the participants that the culture of 'envelope-giving' must end. Or maybe it is because I also called for the reinstatement of presidential term limits. Whatever it is that raised the President's anger towards me, if the IRCU did indeed adopt a resolution supporting the eradication of the culture of envelope-giving, then I can only add my voice in endorsement of such a measure. I also hope they adopted a resolution on term limits because I believe that the two are intricately connected.

Corruption has many different faces, but a single goal. It can take the form of a commission given to somebody to influence the award of a contract. Or it can be a small chai to the policeman who you want to 'persuade' to ignore the fact that your driving license has expired.

It can also be in the inducements given to an opposition leader to cross to the ruling party, or to religious leaders to turn a blind eye to the mismanagement of public funds. Whatever form it takes, the goal of any of these kinds of transactions is to gain favour or to confer advantage by the giver from the 'givee'.

**J. Oloka-Onyango**  
Makerere University  
Kampala, Uganda

The benefit to the 'givee' or recipient is much less than the gains for the person giving the bribe, the 'giver.' Secondly, it is not unusual for such inducements to be described as something different from the bribes they really are. *Kasiimo* in our Bantu languages, while in Luo it is called *mich*, which is exactly how the President describes the envelopes he gives out.

By whichever name called, such gestures are simply euphemisms for what can only be described as a means to a sinister goal. Either it is given to secure favour, to stifle dissent or to silence and seal one's lips. My short point at the IRCU conference was that those envelopes represent what I called 'institutionalised corruption,' a fact borne out by the President's insistence that there is nothing wrong with the practice. What about the law?

Under Article 98 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, the President is the "Fountain of Honour." Thirty years ago, a young Minister of Defence condemned then-President Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa, QC for allegedly turning State House into a "market" for all kinds of shady dealers seeking favours from the President. The name of that minister was Yoweri K. Museveni.

Whether or not the Binaisa State House had in fact been turned into a marketplace, I do not know since I was not there. But the point being made by a younger President Museveni relates directly to the brown envelopes issues. In the first instance, the money the President gives

- whether it is to an association of boda boda riders, or to a religious leader - is public money.

It is not personal. Secondly, when, where, why and how this money is given is very significant. Usually, it is at a public function, after a mass or service, or at a mauledi, or following the handing over of cycles or other physical gifts. It is also important to note that the number of envelope-giving events multiplied in the run-up to the election. Was this just a coincidence?

All the above leave the impression that the gift has strings attached to it: Why? Because were it to be simply a gift, there would be no need to make it public. Indeed, it has now become commonplace for religious leaders and others who host the President to make the demand for a 'gift' the main part of their welcoming speech. And the President always obliges.

But the most disturbing thing about these 'gifts' is the criteria used to determine who gets them and why. Since this is public money, there should be a more public manner in which the process for determining who gets them, when they get them and what the gift consists of. This is because public money is a matter of public concern. In sum, it cannot be regarded as a personal presidential gift.

Hence, the IRCU is fully entitled to question its motive and to call for an end to them. As was the case with the Binaisa State House, the issue is as much about perception as it is about fact: the actions of the Fountain of Honour must be seen to be above all suspicion of impropriety.

\* This article was first published in *Daily Monitor*, a Kampala newspaper, 4 May 2011.

# Report on an International Conference on South Sudan: Consequences of the Birth of Africa's Newest State for the East and Horn of Africa Regions

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An international conference on the 'Consequences of the Referendum on Sudan, the East and Horn of Africa Regions', organized by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Africa Research and Resource Forum (ARRF), with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Trust Africa, was held in Nairobi, from 28 February through 1 March 2011. The conference was an outcome of a series of discussions which started with a CODESRIA executive level mission to Sudan in August 2009. The mission was followed by a CODESRIA workshop organized in partnership with the University of Juba, University of Khartoum and Ahfad University from 17 to 18 May 2010 in Juba, South Sudan.

CODESRIA's executive leadership organised the conferences and workshops to encourage open dialogue on the intricate political situation in Sudan. Consistent with the dispositions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), a referendum was conducted in January 2011 and South Sudan effectively voted to secede from Sudan. The new nation in the south was inaugurated on 9 July 2011. The conference in Nairobi was organized to discuss the consequences of the post-referendum situation in South Sudan. The meeting brought together leading scholars from north and south Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Senegal, Zambia, South Africa, Chad, and the United States. It also involved researchers, government officials, members of the international community, and legal practitioners whose combined views generated a successful, stimulating and productive discussion.

## Value of Research

Professor Michael Chege, Chairman of the Board of Africa Research and Resource Forum (ARRF), in his welcome address thanked CODESRIA, UNECA,

**Tesfaye Tafesse**  
CODESRIA  
and  
**Christopher Zambakari**  
Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

and ARRF for jointly organizing this conference. He pointed out that the conference was very important mainly because it demonstrated the importance that the organisers have attached to knowledge in the management of society. He explained that research is the centre piece of knowledge production and therefore in finding solutions to problems that plague Africa. It was in this context that he pointed out that the research community in Africa always values CODESRIA's work.

Professor Chege's speech was followed by opening remarks by members of the organising committee who, after underlining the timeliness of the conference for the region in general and the Sudan in particular, stated that the ideas and views generated during the conference and the conclusions and recommendations arrived at would be of great importance in shaping institution building and political orientation in the new state of South Sudan.

Professor Al Tayeb Alabadin, Advisor to the Vice Chancellor, Khartoum University, stated that the outcome of the conference would demonstrate how African countries should manage their diversity, while Ms Njeri Karuru from IDRC explained that her organisation had partnered with research institutions in Africa for the purpose of strengthening their research capacities. She stated that since events in Sudan can have an impact on the region as a whole, it was important to engage the research community to think through the pressing issues.

Dr Ebrima Sall, CODESRIA's Executive Secretary, after acknowledging IDRC and Trust Africa's financial support for the conference, pointed out that the right to self-determination is a sacred right and its exercise in South Sudan had led to one of the most important political developments in Africa since the end of apartheid. He commended Sudan for conducting the referendum peacefully and noted that it has presented a possibility for both countries to live together as neighbours, and brothers and sisters. He observed that lessons learned from the experience of fifty years of independence across Africa should be shared and applied in southern Sudan. He emphasized that African intellectuals have a unique role to play as researchers by engaging themselves with real world situations. He called on South Sudan to encourage academic freedom and respect the rights of researchers. According to Dr Sall, CODESRIA did not take side with any of the parties; it rather raised relevant and pertinent issues for discussion and understanding. He concluded by noting that there is a great need to create space for southern Sudanese intellectuals to undertake research without any inhibitions.

## When Unity Contradicted Peace

The Guest Keynote Speaker, H. E. Dr Peter Adwok Nyaba, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Government of Sudan, began his speech by narrating the long and complicated history of the Sudan since it came into existence as a colonial construct in 1821, a case of unity without peace. When Sudan gained its independence in 1956, no attempt was made to understand the implications of pursuing goals of a unified state without due consideration of the country's diversity. Put in another way, the political elites failed to build a nation, with the central governments in Khartoum behaving as if territorial unity was an end in itself and thus had to be imposed by force. The post-referendum reality testified to the failure of successive Sudanese governments. The case for separation became imperative after all doors for accommodation had been closed.

Dr Nyaba underlined the crucial importance of democratic governance in development because it guarantees proper management of diversity. If the leaders in the Sudan continue as in the past, there is a likelihood that the problem will exacerbate and some regions may degenerate into ungovernability. He also scrutinized the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and observed that it had failed to promote liberation ideology over the past six years. As a result of the paradigm shift from liberation movement to power politics by SPLA, corruption had become rife and ethnic conflict surfaced in many places. The elites in South Sudan should learn from the past and change their *modus operandi* if they want to save their country from becoming a failed state. The success of the referendum should be reflected in the establishment of a good system of government. The vote for independence should also serve as a tool for some soul searching by the National Congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum and reflect on the reasons why the southerners voted overwhelmingly for separation.

Borders and boundaries in Africa are artificial; they were created by colonialists who disregarded the ethnic and cultural diversity of the peoples. As a result, one finds different ethnic groups in different countries. For instance, the Annuak and the Nuer are in Sudan and Ethiopia. There is however an opportunity to use the communities found in different countries as bridges for social, economic and political transformation. South Sudan should therefore build good relations with all its neighbours. He noted that since the African Union (AU) does not promote dismemberment in its charter, it needs to take a leadership role in resolving conflicts that are likely to lead to dismemberment, which is always the natural route when unity contradicts peace.

Dr Nyaba further observed that higher education has a special role to play in shaping policy through national debates. Higher education in Sudan has always operated under one integrated system which he hoped would continue as the South had not developed the necessary academic and technical capacity. Currently, the University for Women and the Universities of Nyala and Darfur offer the earliest opportunities for joint scientific research with the older universities in the Sudan. In total, there are five functioning and three declared universities in South Sudan.

In terms of the way forward, Dr Nyaba proposed the following: (i) the war raging in Darfur needs a comprehensive political solution similar to what had been achieved in South Sudan; (ii) grievances in the disputed regions of Abyei, the Nuba Mountains and Southern Kordofan must be heeded, analysed and resolved before secession becomes the only alternative; (iii) the African Union should take a proactive role in resolving conflicts; (iv) peace and conflict resolution should take centre stage in dealings between Sudan and South Sudan; and (v) peace studies should be prioritized in South Sudan as well as in Sudan in order to create a proper understanding of the history of the two countries. Currently, centres offering peace studies exist at the Universities of Khartoum, Juba and Ahfad. Lastly, Dr Nyaba called upon CODESRIA to establish an annual forum at which scholars would analyze and reflect on Sudanese issues and its neighbours.

#### **SPLA: A Shift from Unity to Secession**

The second keynote address was delivered by Mahmood Mamdani, Professor and Director of Makerere Institute of Social Research and Herbert Lehman Professor of Government at Columbia University. He spoke on the theme 'Self-determination and State Making in the Twenty-first Century'. He began with a reflection on self-determination, considering it as a sacred cow, such as democracy, and posed a fundamental question: who is the 'self' in self-determination? According to him, the 'self' is a political self that was constituted and re-constituted over time. It is not permanent – in 1956 the self was Sudan and now, after the result of the referendum, the self has become South Sudan. He proceeded to ask several questions, which he said have no clear straight forward answers:

- (i) How have pan-Africanists perceived and understood this self-determination of South Sudan? What could it teach us?
- (ii) How and when did the SPLA (champion of unity) change its mind from calls for the unity of Sudan to secession and independence for the South?
- (iii) What will it take for the South to establish a new political order instead of reproducing a version of the old one?
- (iv) Would independence lead to peace? Or would peace merely be an interlude? What other things could lead to peace?

Professor Mamdani argued that independence in itself would not necessarily lead to peace. The new state carried within itself seeds of its own disintegration. In Africa, the unification of smaller entities into larger bodies came with colonialism during the creation of states. Hence, Africa's independence of the 1950s and 60s had to be understood as a particular kind of unity which was imposed by force. Since union and separation were self-sustaining, the AU should change its provisions to allow for divorce. That is, 'in order to safeguard marriage, one has to protect the right to divorce'.

He cited two cases (types) of disintegration – Eritrea was born out of old Ethiopia and South Sudan out of Sudan. In the former case, it was the end of the Cold War and military victory by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) that led to the birth of a new nation, while in the latter it was the stalemate in the conflict and the post 9/11 situation that led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) by the Khartoum Government. Lastly, Professor Mamdani advised African governments to address issues of multi-ethnicity and tribal questions if they desire to avoid conflicts with those who are disenfranchised.

Some of the participants challenged Professor Mamdani's statement that SPLM/A is a champion of unity. They said that Sudan had never been united and challenged those who made such an assertion to show evidence, if any. They further argued that since South Sudan had lived with repression since 1820, their fight all along had been for independence. Submission to a unity thesis, according to some of the participants, is tantamount to discrediting the southerners' struggle for self-determination; the CPA was a by-product of that struggle. They concluded by stating that the real culprits in the dismemberment of Sudan were the northern elites, who tried to Arabize and Islamize the South. One of the participants was of the view that since the South is at the beginning of a new chapter, it is important to get the record straight, otherwise the new country risks repeating mistakes made in the past.

In response, Professor Mamdani said that the analysis of the SPLA was unsatisfactory and the importance of Dr

John Garang's vision of a new Sudan was not adequately appreciated. According to him, there had been an internal struggle within the SPLA over the issues of unity and independence, albeit the minority view triumphed in the end. All these issues require close scrutiny and historically sensitive explanations. Unlike some of the participants, Professor Mamdani did not believe in the existence of SPLM but rather in SPLA. To him, the former has been in the making. To explain this point, he drew an analogy with his own country, Uganda, where the National Resistance Army (NRA) that was led by Yoweri Museveni had been replaced by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) after it had seized power.

After the keynote addresses, presentations were made on post-referendum priorities; politics and governance in South Sudan; development policies, priority programmes and projects; North-South relations and regional issues; making independence attractive through good neighbourliness, and challenges and priorities for Sudan, South Sudan and the region.

### Post-referendum Priorities

Professors Taban lo Liyong and George Nyombe from the University of Juba, and Al-Tayeb Alabdin from Khartoum University, and Dr Melha Biel from Juba, South Sudan, reflected on post-referendum priorities for South Sudan. The following is a list that summarizes the priorities that were identified by the four speakers:

- (i) peace and security;
- (ii) institution building;
- (iii) nationalization of the economy;
- (iv) the creation of new conditions for socio-political transformation in Sudan and the South;
- (v) management of the transition into a new state;
- (vi) transforming the ideology of resistance and liberation to an ideology of socio-political transformation and the reality of government;
- (vi) managing diversity and social cohesion;
- (vii) attracting investment and job creation; and
- (viii) the nationalization of education.

### Politics and Governance in a new State

Professor Aggrey Abate and Dr Alfred Lokuji – both from the University of Juba, Professor Gassim Badri, President, Ahfad University for Women, and Ms Sara Hassan, Human Rights Activist, Khartoum, spoke on politics and governance in South Sudan. Professor Abate made reference to the developments that have taken place in South Sudan, in the past six years, in terms of infrastructure, education and power supply. These, according to him, were made possible because of the devolution of power to the south in terms of decision making, prioritization, and implementation of programmes. He noted that a lot more remains to be done to engage the general population in meaningful participation in the economy and in the development of a free press.

Ms Hassan emphasized the importance of the respect that must be accorded to diversity if the unity of the state is to be preserved. She noted that language as a national issue should be carefully examined in a multi-lingual society such as South Sudan. She also observed that the state must be restructured in such a way that a new constitution underlining the role of multi-partyism should be put in place. The new constitution should contain clauses on the respect and protection of human rights; not forgetting that rights for women and children are human rights too.

Dr Lokuji noted that the major failure of African states has been the failure to learn from the past. The African past was rooted in imperial precedence, it promoted self-interest, sycophancy and a tendency towards centralization, which stripped people and states of political integrity and values in the process. Dr Lokuji proposed a way out through constitutionalism that would support checks and balances in institutions of governance and provide a power sharing mechanism.

Prof Badri, on his part, observed that South Sudan would develop the 'African diseases' of dictatorship, *coup d'états* and violence unless it prioritizes democracy, the rule of law and transparency. He added that the new nation should assign a larger share of its budget to education.

The participants agreed that since the new state has come about as a result of the action of a liberation struggle, it should learn from other African countries

that went through a similar process, including, among others, Eritrea, Zimbabwe and Uganda. South Sudan should also draw lessons from the South African experience in the area of reconciliation and peace building.

In order to avoid the reproduction of past African experiences, SPLM should not allow itself to turn into a single party and should avoid centralization of power. South Sudan offers a new hope and opportunity. It is time for the people of South Sudan to enjoy the dividends of the independence struggle. The new state should also undertake a national debate to define the type of government it wishes to have. The participants recommended that the new nation needs a system of government with a leadership that listens; in which everybody counts. Both South Sudan and Sudan need to go through a healing process to be able to recover from dictatorial tendencies that have plagued them for a long time.

### Development Policies, Priority Programmes and Projects

Professors Yongo Bure from Kettering University, Flint, Michigan, USA and Isaak Riak, Senior Development Consultant, Juba, and Mr Christopher Zambakari, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA addressed themselves to the kind of development policies, priority programmes and projects that South Sudan should focus on immediately. Professor Bure reminded the meeting that there was a need to manage high expectations arising out of independence. In the short term, the government should focus on agriculture; the country has ample fertile land that can be utilised for extensive agricultural production. This could be managed to develop agro-processing industries. In addition, since about two-thirds of the South Sudanese populations are pastoralists; the new government should build and maintain watering points and reservoirs for the animals. There is also an immediate need to focus attention on the provision of adequate education and health services.

Professor Riak noted that South Sudan's natural resources should be harnessed to build a foundation and catalyse development. Of the many natural resources, he singled out oil, which should be managed to spur development by creating transparency and accountability mechanisms. This

is the only sure way to avoid a 'resource curse' or the so called 'Dutch Disease'.

Mr Zambakari, spoke about the dangers inherent in following ethnicity in the creation of state administrative divisions, as these might lead to fragmentation. He cautioned against the claim that cultural boundaries need to reflect political ones. He also looked at the 2009 South Sudan Local Government Act, which created a hybrid system that incorporated customary laws into local government structures. He reminded participants that this mode of mass organization was reminiscent of British indirect rule, which had a dual system, one specifically meant to manage the urban dwellers, and the other for the rural people living in the countryside.

One of the key issues that affected Sudan has been ethnic violence. It currently manifests itself in the form of a disputed border region pending consultation and resolution, with the attendant millions of internally displaced people scattered throughout the country and over half a million refugees stranded in search of a permanent home. He concluded his arguments by underpinning the urgency of problematizing democracy and decentralization in South Sudan and drawing relevant lessons from especially the South African transition model from apartheid to a democratic country.

During the discussion that followed these presentations, some participants observed that an economy that depends on oil for 98 per cent of all its revenue remains in danger of the resource curse. On top of a transparent management of the oil revenues, South Sudan needs to diversify its income into agriculture and other areas.

### Regional Issues

Professor Samson Wassara, the Vice Chancellor of Western Equatoria University, in a keynote on regional issues reflected on two major questions brought about by the independence of South Sudan. These are: (i) how is South Sudan to co-exist with Sudan; and (ii) how is the AU going to ensure the stability of the region.

Physically, South Sudan is a land-locked country with poor internal and external transport infrastructure that will inhibit movement of goods and services. Professor Wassara also observed that the country has a number of unresolved issues to contend with, including but not

restricted to Abyei; and security concerns, including the proliferation of armed groups, some of which are not attached to the known parties or groups in the country. He then put the following three challenges on the table for examination:

(i) *Citizenship and nationality*: South Sudan authorities should ensure that there is no room for politically excluded groups or individuals, especially those who live in the border regions. This challenge could be taken care of by considering dual nationality.

(ii) *Water resources*: It is not yet clear as to how South Sudan is to be classified as a Nile Riparian State. Will it be categorised as an upstream or downstream state? While that is yet to be known, the River Nile is crucial for South Sudan in terms of hydro-power generation and irrigation agriculture. It is also an important resource for water transport.

(iii) *The border with Sudan*: It could become dangerous if it is militarized and there is no political goodwill from Sudan. It needs special attention and consideration. This border area should also be considered in the context of its pastoralist inhabitants who move from place to place in search of water and pasture as though there are no borders.

Professor Wassara concluded his contributions by calling on the AU and the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) to ensure that there is a peaceful Sudan for the benefit of the region in particular and Africa in general.

### North-South Relations and Regional Issues

Short presentations were made at a roundtable discussion on the north-south relationships and regional issues by Dr Hamad Hawi, a lecturer at the University of Juba, Dr Kassahun Berhanu, lecturer at Addis Ababa University, Dr Alex Ratebaye, Chadian Diplomat and Researcher, and Dr Tesfaye Tafesse from CODESRIA Secretariat.

Dr Hawi started with a critical assessment of the CPA. He observed that the CPA, in spite of its name, lacked comprehensiveness, excluded the majority of the Sudanese people and political parties, created more problems than it had attempted to solve and was a creation by elites from the two contending sides. He noted that human rights, democracy, the

Abyei question, interaction between the north and south, citizenship, cross-border communities and oil would remain thorny issues because the CPA has no clear answers to them. The NCP might even be forced to have other CPAs in Darfur and other contested regions, a sign that there is nothing comprehensive in the CPA signed with the SPLM/A. The kind of relationship that the newly independent South Sudan establishes and maintains with Sudan and all its neighbours, and the policies it will adopt, will determine its prospect and that of its neighbours.

Dr Berhanu on his part, talked about the implications of South Sudan's independence for the Horn of Africa Region and beyond. He observed that the CPA was exclusive and is characterized by major flaws. It focused more on power and wealth sharing than on other pertinent national issues. Some of the issues that had either been deferred or are still pending include:

- (i) the north-south border;
- (ii) the boundaries of Abiyei, South Kordofan and the Blue Nile regions;
- (iii) security;
- (iv) negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan for the movement of goods and services;
- (v) integration of militias with the regular armed forces; and
- (vi) Nile water allocation.

Dr Ratebaye talked about the implications of South Sudan's independence for Chad. He cautioned that if Darfurians follow the self-determination path taken by South Sudan, Chad would face major instability and security problems.

Dr Tafesse focused on the possible scenarios in relation to the River Nile water utilization. In his opinion, these scenarios have to be understood in the context of the 1959 Agreement between Egypt and Sudan, the suspended Jonglei Canal, and the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). There is a strong possibility that the new state will question or even reject the 1959 Agreement, claiming half of the share of the quota that was allotted to Sudan. When it comes to the CFA, for various reasons, South Sudan might align with upstream states in terms of its ratification. Lastly, he said that due to environmental, political and historical reasons, it is unlikely that South Sudan will resurrect the suspended Jonglei Canal project.

In the discussion that followed these presentations, most of the participants observed that internal factors, most particularly the events in Abyei, pushed both parties (SPLM and NCP) to sign the CPA. The general position was that the CPA, imperfect as it is, was both time- and face-saving tool for the two negotiating parties that seemed to have reached the end of the rope.

### **Making Independence Attractive and Good Neighbourliness**

Dr Nureldin Satti, Secretary General, National Library of Sudan, Khartoum; Dr Kimo Adiebo and Dr Sirisio Oromo both from the University of Juba, as well as Mrs Entisar Hamadein, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum made brief introductory presentations on the theme. Dr Satti underlined the urgency required to examine mistakes made in the attempt to make unity of Sudan less attractive and the independence of South Sudan more appealing. He advised that more work should be put into improving relations between the two countries. He also noted that there is a need to build and reinforce the shared social, human, economic and political resources. Similarly, he suggested identification of the sources of mistrust between the two with a view to addressing or dispelling them. Lastly, Dr Satti recommended the strengthening of civil society organizations that can reinforce inter-dependency between the two. He further identified some of the key elements that would make good neighbourliness attractive between the two countries, including but not restricted to, maintenance of security, resolution of Abyei, halting the proliferation of small arms, and regulation of free movement of people, goods and services.

Mrs Hamadein observed that there is a need to revitalize the people-to-people relations that were ignored by the CPA. Such a move would ensure the free movement of people in the region, including pastoralists who never seem to get restricted by borders.

Dr Oromo underlined the importance of peace and security in the region. He said that the new state should respect the territorial integrity of all its neighbours, fight corruption and promote human rights and the rule of law.

The participants, while in a discussion after the presentations, advised that any

temptation to relapse into conflict should be avoided. The impact and spill-over effects of any instability in any one of the two countries would have far-reaching consequences in the region and beyond. The role of higher education as a bridge to future relations between the two countries was emphasized. It was recommended that the countries should consider building joint institutions of higher learning in the two countries.

### **Challenges and Priorities**

Ms Sara Hassan, Prof Isaak Riak, Dr Alfred Lokuji and Dr Nureldin Satti made brief presentations on the theme. Mrs Hassan underlined the need to establish democratic constitutions both in Sudan and South Sudan. She also said that both countries should ratify international conventions, work on issue of the youth and resolve inherent mistrusts.

Professor Riak presented a list of measures which he said need to be addressed by both countries if any meaningful progress is to be realized. They included:

- (i) building unity of purpose and people;
- (ii) resolving the Darfur, South Kordofan, Eastern Kassala and the Blue Nile issues;
- (iii) focusing on issues that can unite both countries, including wealth-sharing, human rights, development etc;
- (iv) using oil as a means to development;
- (v) fighting corruption;
- (vi) reducing youth unemployment; and
- (vii) creating democratic space for people to express their ideas.

Dr Lokuji on his part reiterated the importance of cooperation that leads to win-win situations. He went on to say that both countries should refocus on measures that will ensure the well-being of the people, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They should also jointly combat human trafficking in the border areas and resettle IDPs and refugees.

Dr Satti called for a common vision by both countries. He observed that South Sudan should move nearer to East Africa to benefit from the advantages of a larger economic unit. He also called upon the new state to learn from the mistakes made by Sudan and other African countries in the process of building an

independent state. Higher education, social science research, governance and regional economic integration attracted most attention in the discussion that followed after the presentations. A consensus was built around the necessity of re-focusing and re-directing higher education in both Sudans by injecting in a dose of innovation and ingenuity. The participants called for inter-university exchange of scholars and students in the region. It was observed that since research budgets are too small, there is a need to work together with decision makers to increase funding. Lastly, it was noted that African intellectuals have a lot more to do, with regard to South Sudan. They should interrogate issues related to borders that divide communities, higher education and development, and regional economic integration.

### **Lessons Learnt**

Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, Convener of the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CODA), gave some concluding remarks and important observation at the end of the conference. He congratulated CODESRIA for taking the initiative to organize the Post-Referendum Conference on Sudan and observed that the fifty years of independence of most African countries had been reflected in the two-day conference. The emergence of South Sudan as a new state did not represent a new phenomenon in Africa. The new state has to learn relevant lessons, not only from Africa, but also from other countries around the world that have lived under occupation and domination. By so doing, it will take its proper place on the continent.

The post-independence generation of Africans thought that scientific socialism constituted an alternative to capitalism. This approach did not work. The neo-liberal system imposed on Africa since the 1990s, exemplified by structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), had also collapsed, this time starting from the centre. The system has created few very rich people and a majority of poor populations. The recent and on-going waves of revolt in the Maghreb region and Middle East countries could be seen as further testimony to the rejection of neo-liberalism. There is therefore a need for a new people-centred alternative economic model that suits African realities.

Professor Bathily noted that nobody should expect a blueprint or a one-size-fits-all model; it will take hard work. He concluded his observations by making the following recommendations: (i) South Sudan should learn from Africa's empires of old, such as the Songhai, Bornu and Mali, to solve problems related to diversity; (ii) the new state should move cautiously and learn from other African countries in the context of what had transpired in the course of the past fifty years; (iii) the liberation of the people of South Sudan should be followed by the liberation of the people in Sudan; (iv) conditions must be created to enable African leaders to listen to possible alternatives on Africa's future as proposed by scholars and intellectuals; and (v) South Sudan needs to assert itself as a country, both regionally and globally.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

By way of conclusion, some of the participants observed that countries in the region should work towards maintaining peace and cohesion; the Sudanese do not have too many choices other than learning how to co-exist as good neighbours in the same region. Interdependence should be the guiding principle in the dealings between Sudan and South Sudan. This could be galvanized if the two countries establish a common market; cooperate in the maintenance of regional security, human security and people-to-people relationships; broaden the definition of citizenship; foster development of local businesses and industries, promote trade, and develop infrastructure (roads, railways, ports, etc.). The participants noted that there is need to replace the too many NGOs and multi-lateral organizations in South Su-

dan by establishing local institutions such as a National Planning Commission.

Participants called on the government in South Sudan to manage carefully the euphoria and high expectations of independence; noting that the resources and means required in the struggle for independence are very different from those required to run a country. Attempts should be made to organize and develop the economy to ensure that it will create jobs for the people. In addition, there is a need to foster civil society organisations (business associations, trade unions, student unions, faith based organizations, traditional associations, etc.) to exert pressure upon the new government to engage in reforms and transformative activities. In sum, South Sudan has to build its own image to become part of the club of nations.

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## Africa must Make its own Images The Third CODESRIA-FESPACO Workshop on African Cinema

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The CODESRIA-FESPACO Workshop has become one of the major scientific rendez vous of the Pan-African Film and Television Festival in Ouagadougou. This CODESRIA event is now included in FESPACO's official agenda. During the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of FESPACO, African researchers and academics in the area of film studies joined in a workshop under the aegis of CODESRIA on the theme of 'African Cinema, and Markets'. The Festival offered a wide range of activities, including travelling exhibits on various years of FESPACO and African cinema, film showings, conferences, and so on. The researchers of the CODESRIA community, under the moderation of Professor Manthia Diawara, a US-based African film-maker, and Kofi Anyidoho from the University of Legon, Accra, chose to focus for two days on 'African film, video & the social impact of new technologies'. Initiated for the first time in 2007, it was the third meeting of its kind organized by

**Abdon Kouassivi Sofonnou**  
CODESRIA

the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa. This African campaign was also attended by the community of researchers from the Diaspora. The initiative was born of a will to contribute to capacity building and produce scientific research findings able to promote African film and the advancement of African societies.

At the latest edition of FESPACO, the goal of the workshop was to draw attention to the new creative visions and directions in contemporary African film. CODESRIA believes that in Africa today, critical positions and new cinematographic languages that oppose and often contradict each other have remained for the most

part invisible due to the monolithic and politically correct definition of African cinema laid down by artistic firms and Western festivals. The focus was on discussing and analysing the economic, aesthetic and social impacts of the video film phenomenon in Africa, then examining the relationship between new technologies, contemporary African literature and film in order to determine what video-makers could learn from their predecessors in literature and film, and vice versa. Result of a study were on the reception of video films by African audiences as constituting new spaces for democracy, new subjective formations and social and economic desires that had thus far been absent from film and literature.

Several questions linked to the theme were addressed during the workshop, through various sub-themes, such as: (i) Video and film production and distribution in Africa including the issue of the formation of a new generation of video-makers, (ii) Aesthetic considerations in

African literature, film and video, presenting Teshome Gabriel and critical paradigms in African film and video as well as new theories of production, distribution and reception, and (iii) The story and popular culture: representations of religion, mythology and the star system in African film and video. In all, some twenty papers were presented over five working sessions. Certain questions relating to the image of women were the subject of a far-ranging debate that came up repeatedly in different sessions.

Africa faces many challenges, two of which are essential: the market issue, particularly in countries with low levels of literacy, and the problem of training. It is impossible to discuss film without referring to images and video. Making beautiful images requires expensive cameras, not to mention production equipment and the impressive number of technicians involved. Film, according to the experts, is a screenplay plus images. It is an art that touches people, that translates human feelings. The advent of digital technology was supposed to help reduce financial constraints, but this technology still poses enormous problems due to the specificities that characterize Africa. Despite its many successes, digital technology does not yet handle contrasts well enough, whereas Africa is a continent of contrasts. However, it remains obvious that the technology is a necessity, so thought needs to be given to its limitations.

Due to the poverty affecting African audiences, the market remains limited given the demands of production. Film, therefore, appears as a luxury in the light of the problems of education, health, and poverty in general. In Nigeria, for example, 180,000 people lack access to water and electricity, whilst others have access to the Internet and films on their laptop computers. A revolution in African cinema is imminent. The question that remains is how to reconcile the challenge and new technologies when we know that people are living in extreme poverty. How can we enter into competition with the West to meet these challenges? Africa needs to find a way to produce its own images, and the need to educate its youth through film is so obvious that its importance no longer needs to be demonstrated. Film and sports stars are models for African youth. The examples of African stars such as Cameroonian sports-

man Samuel Eto'o, who plays in Europe, or Senegalese artist Akon in the USA, along with many others, demonstrate the influence and the image of these celebrities for our youth.

Several other issues also dominated the discussion, including the image of women in film, video as an alternative to film, women's exploitation, sex, the merchandizing of stars, sponsoring, ways of meeting the challenges of film and the huge gap between French-speaking and English-speaking countries where film is concerned. According to Idrissa Ouedraogo, an eminent film-maker from Burkina Faso, French-speaking and English-speaking Africans experienced two different types of colonization. English-speakers were fortunate in that the language of colonization undoubtedly promoted the development of their film industries. The refusal of French-speakers to go to Hollywood was due to the way French-speakers had been shaped and formatted since colonization by their heritage and the education they received.

The issue of means was brought up in a presentation by Judy Kibinge, a Kenyan film-maker, who took the opposite tack from the earlier presentations, stating that quality was not determined by budget alone, but also by the originality of the ideas, and the authenticity and originality of the approach and the screenplay. She added that it was also important to portray one's own vision, and to change what people thought about artists. Even though it was not yet possible to talk about a 'Kenyawood', numerous initiatives were being undertaken in Kenya, which showed that there was room for national training.

It is impossible to have a holistic understanding of African film without examining the problems of training. According to Prof Balufu B. Kanyinda, a Congolese film-maker, the issue of training was both ideological and pedagogical. Africans were not trained to be Africans. How, then, could African film-makers be trained? What tools could be used in their training? They could not be trained in technology alone. The new generation needed to be trained in cinephilia. This generation needed to learn how to read films. Many film-makers were trained by cinematic illiterates, and the audience liked them because it did not understand, was not cinematically literate, and because African film did not follow interna-

tional standards. According to Prof Kanyinda, African film could be defined as a genre (like westerns, pornography, etc). It showed poverty because it wanted to show it. Whereas Africa had a beautiful history, the struggle for independence alone was a very rich story. *It was self-evident that no one could tell our story better than we Africans ourselves.*

Africa needs to create its own logic to take ownership of its own reality. Programmes need institutional coverage, but they should also be anchored in tradition. According to Fatoumata Kandé Senghor of Senegal, Africans are strongly rooted in their continent, their country, their family. However, even if our youth does not go out into the world, the world comes to it through information and communication technologies. The question is how to train that youth in technology while keeping it solidly grounded in its culture.

To return to the problem of colonial heritage and imperialism, Jihan El Tahri of Egypt viewed the issue of training as another way of regulating unemployment through European funding. The usual training through workshops was not productive; young people needed practical and complete support to help them produce films. In her view, colonization was not merely a matter of content; it was also a matter of mentalities. She preferred documentary films and wondered why that type of film did not attract many film-makers. We missed a lot by failing to commit ourselves, she added.

A panel focused on the work of a great promoter of African culture: Gabriel Teshome (1939-2010), founder of the Third Cinema aesthetic, theoretician, author, educator, Ethiopian but a citizen of the world, and a great humanist. The panellists had the opportunity to review his theories regarding Nollywood, or Third World cinema. Prof Onookome Okome of Nigeria tried to conceptualize Third Cinema by presenting it as film, imperfect cinema, African cinema. He perceived that form of cinema as a popular project rather than a political one. South African researcher Lindiwe Dovey also stressed that African cinema and Hollywood were two different things. Hollywood focused on aesthetics and not on the audience, like African cinema. Based on an excerpt from a film, she showed how a small neighbourhood movie theatre could become the lifeblood of a whole neighbour-

hood and, using other excerpts as examples, she showed that Hollywood, despite its aesthetics, could remain distant from its audience, with empty theatres.

Discussions of the image of women in Hollywood came up several times as a paradigm to be changed. According to Prof Manthia Diawara, this image could affect everyone, and it was wrong to leave the status quo in place because producers had the means. Contrary to the analysis presented by Okome, Prof Salem Mekuria said she could not imagine Nollywood without ideology or politics and that, in her view, such projects always existed one way or another. In the end, based on the different presentations and discussions, how could African cinema be defined and described today? The question remained open.

The final panel of the meeting focused on the impact of film on society. Various approaches to the analysis of films were presented by the participants in their presentations. These included reviews from the standpoint of producers, the

'intimist' approach, i.e. from the inside, and analysis from an outside viewpoint. Whatever the approach, criticism of Nollywood cinema obliges us to review African film production with a greater distance and clarity. As for the image of women in films, the responsibility lay in the hands of training institutions. It was well known that many people enjoyed films on sex in private but spoke out against them in public. The challenge was even greater in the light of the fact that, like music, film was an art form that knew no borders. What should be done in relation to the issue of the debate on images, of which we did not know all of the parameters, and what film model should Africa promote? What were the alternatives to Nollywood? The issue of audience reception of films remained equally important. For the time being, the important thing was not to adopt a pessimistic attitude. Nollywood's transnationality was undoubtedly due to the linearity of the language.

Today, FESPACO incontestably remains one of the most important cultural events

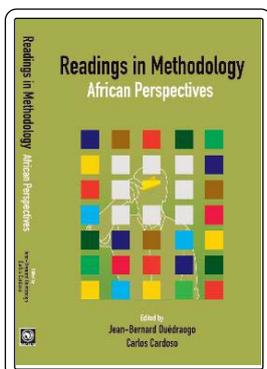
in Africa. The research programme on African film developed by CODESRIA is an interesting initiative that ought to be encouraged by governments and stakeholders. The idea of owning our own history also remains fundamental. Despite their beauty, their colours and their splendour, images are highly complex. Europeans have their own ideologies and their own ways of perceiving things and seizing things which are sometimes surprising. Africans must also create their own logic to bring about real change. Africa's development will depend on the production of its own images. But this, in turn, implies that Africa has its own means. How can we tell our own story through cinema – taking account, of course, of the evolution of technology and the socioeconomic and cultural environment? In addition to the format, the authenticity and originality of African cinema, research should also consider the audience. The question of what sort of cinema we hope to achieve remains important: national or Pan-African?

### Readings in Methodology: African Perspectives

Edited by

Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo & Carlos Cardoso

Dakar, CODESRIA, 2011, 272 p.



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One of the weaknesses of research in Africa is the little consideration that is given to questions of epistemology and methodology. What we see is the trivialization of research protocols which, consequently, are reduced to fantasy prescriptions that detach social studies from universal debates over the validity of science rather than an interrogation of research procedures induced by the complexity of social dynamics. As a result, social sciences have become an imitative discourse and a recital of exotic anecdotes without perspectives. Knowledge production therefore loses any heuristic bearing. It is on the basis of this reality that attempts to correct this tendency have been made in this book by discussing the methodological foundation of social science knowledge.

This volume is a collection of papers presented during methodological workshops organized by CODESRIA. Its objective is to revitalize theory and methodology in field work in Africa while contributing to the creation of a critical space hinged upon the mastery of epistemological bases which are indispensable to any scientific imagination.

Far from being a collection of technical certainties and certified methods, this book interrogates the uncertain itinerary of the process of social logics discovery. In that sense, it is a decisive step towards a critical systemization of ongoing theories and practices within the African scientific community. The reader can, therefore, identify the philosophical, historical, sociological and anthropological foundations of object construction, field data exploitation and research results delivery. This book explains the importance of the philosophical and social modalities of scientific practice, the influence of local historical contexts, the different usages of new investigative tools, including the audiovisual tools. Finally, the book, backed by classical theories, serves as an invitation toward considering scientific commitment to African field research from a reflective perspective.

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