

TINABANTU

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Annette Groth

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Eugene Godfried

Reflections on Afro-Cubans

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Akwasi Aidoo

Encountering Death

The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS)
P.O. Box 352
Plumstead
Cape Town
7800 South Africa

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The Editor (Sales)

TINABANTU

P.O. Box 352

Plumstead, 7800

Cape Town, South Africa

E-mail: casas@casas.co.za

Fax no. +27-21-762-4452

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Editorial

We are in the third year of the appearance of *Tinabantu* and are in a position to look back and reflect on the initial steps we have taken, on hopefully, a long journey. Initially, the intention had been to appear twice a year. This has so far been difficult to achieve largely because of the paucity of the articles and papers we have received from prospective authors. As we said in the Editorial of our maiden volume, the intention of the Editor is to produce a journal which is serious, if you like highbrow, without being esoteric, snooty or academic. The journal is supposed to present a mix of topics reflected from totally independent philosophical dispositions, of the authors. As we have indicated in the verso page, the views expressed in *Tinabantu* are strictly for the account of the authors. The fact that we are still coming out in print, after two years, is particularly cheerful because there is a popular view that African journals based on the continent, like this one, appear only once. We have broken this understanding, or if you prefer, misunderstanding.

Our articles are intended to intellectually reach a wide audience. This particular issue has a number of very interesting considerations for the reader. *Annette Groth's* contribution represents a sharply critical view of globalization and related issues from the north. Groth's candid perceptions and insights usefully elucidate a topic which has become the talk of all concerned about the socio-economic future of humanity in our times. *Eugene Godfried's* "Reflections on Afro-Cubans" shows us a face of Cuba which we usually do not see from outside, a face which almost half the population of Cuba shares and which points to the African roots of the Cuban population. *Humberto Márquez's* piece on Venezuela draws attention to a reality which is not easily acknowledged in South America. All over the continent pockets of people of African descent exists in sometimes, sizeable numbers and with considerable historical depth. Márquez tells the story of this reality in contemporary Venezuela.

Halima Mwinsheikhe and *Mwajuma Vuzo* summarize two research studies on the medium of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools. The objective of these studies was to find out how the use of Kiswahili affects students' understanding, participation and performance in classrooms. Data was collected by means of interviews, questionnaires, classroom observation and a cartoon comprehension test. Generally, the studies showed that when Kiswahili was used as a medium of instruction, students understood better, explained themselves better and participated much more enthusiastically in class. Performance was likewise improved. The paper is the first example of our intention to include papers in the larger African languages in the output of *Tinabantu*. We hope in the future, we will quickly reach a stage where at least half our output is in African languages.

John Adebayo Afolabi goes on the trail of the Rastafarians and weaves a delicate balance in his consideration of the arts, life and aesthetics of Rastafarians. He argues that the perpetual inextricability of art and social reality (which is natural) ensures that art encapsulates the totality of human experiences in society and projects, in varying forms and nuances, the ascendant moods, conflicts, yearnings and aspirations of humans at particular periods of history. This is why bondage is a *leitmotif* in Rastafarian arts, life and aesthetics.

Rastafarian reactions to bondage are, in his view, multifarious – revolutionary violence in art, exile in more affluent countries, and the adoption of messianic religiosity, marijuana and a psychedelic route through life.

Hong Yongyong, who is currently a visiting professor at the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) throws some light on a matter which is little known of outside China. We have consistently published in each of the issues we have so far produced, a paper which links Africa and China. In a period when China is rapidly becoming the engine for economic growth in the world, there are some of us who are anxious that Africa forges useful linkages with China for the mutual benefit of our peoples.

Peter Adwok Nyaba draws attention to a real fear which needs to be articulated as the Southern Sudan moves from a period of war to peace. We need to be careful about handing over the Southern Sudan to a network of NGOs. The Sudanese will have to take charge of their own future. Two other papers are presented in this section on Sudanese issues. Both of them are from *Eric Reeves*. It is ten years since the world closed its eyes and ears whilst the genocide in Rwanda took place. The powers of the world decided that they were not sufficiently interested to do anything about it, so in 100 days in 1994, 800 000 people were slaughtered. As I make these observations, it is a cruel irony to note that, a similar danger has emerged in the Sudan, in Darfur, where the Arabist regime in Khartoum is carrying out ethnic cleansing in a ferocious way. Eric Reeves has provided an insightful expose of the crisis in Darfur. He also has a powerful description of what is going on in the Shilluk area of the same country. Africans need to wake up to the crisis in the Afro-Arab borderlands. After the demise of apartheid in South Africa, the next major flashpoint, with potentially difficult long-term implications are the tensions between Arab and African interests in the Afro-Arab borderlands.

Monika Firla, who is an authority on African figures in European history makes an interesting presentation of a personage who is relatively little known, Angelo Soliman. I attempt a portrait of Walter Sisulu, “the man who put the African National Congress (ANC) together”. *Dieudonne Gnamankou* presents us with a figure out of the history of the Ottoman slavery of Africans, in present-day Turkey; and *Yvonne King* draws our attention to the case of Omar Askia, one of the many African-Americans who are spending a good part of their lives in prisons, in the land of milk and honey. *Akwasi Aidoo* takes us to the psychological edge of life and death.

The Editor
Cape Town
May 2004

The Evils of Globalization

Annette Groth

“Everybody talks about globalization, but hardly anybody knows what globalization really means.” These were the words of a Ugandan church leader during a discussion on globalization. This paper aims to explain globalization-related issues, using quotations as illustration and referring to the most important international agreements.

“I would define globalization as the freedom for my group of companies to invest where it wants, when it wants, to produce what it wants, to buy and sell where it wants, and support the fewest restrictions possible coming from labour laws and social conventions” (former chairman of the ABB Industrial Group). This definition of globalization reflects the drive behind the World Trade Organization (WTO) and all WTO agreements which aim at the total liberalization of the global trade in capital, goods and services.

The recent WTO negotiations in Cancun received good media coverage. Many NGOs celebrated the failure of the negotiations, as for the first time the developing countries were united against the dominant superpowers, particularly the EU. Despite the firm opposition of more than 100 countries to any discussion of the so-called New Issues or Singapore Issues (trade facilitation, public procurement, investment and competition), the EU insisted on discussing these issues; this led to the failure of the Cancun conference.

After the failure of the WTO negotiations the EU will now push for liberalization in the framework of the **Cotonou Agreement**. The Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000 between the EU and 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, covers aid, trade and political cooperation. In September 2002 negotiations began on new trading arrangements, to be called “Economic Partnership Agreements” (EPAs).

According to the main Cotonou Agreement the overall objective of EPAs is “concluding new WTO-compatible trading arrangements, progressively removing barriers to trade and enhancing cooperation in all areas relevant to trade”.¹

Those who were pushing for the “new issues” to be included in Cancun were only arguing for *transparency* in public procurement, but now the EU suggests *liberalization* of public procurement as part of EPA.

EPAs will aim to ensure full transparency in procurement rules and methods at all government levels. In addition the parties will seek progressive

liberalisation of their procurement markets on the basis of the principle of non-discrimination, and taking into account their development levels.²

Despite the reference to levels of development, there is concern that, if agreed to, this could take away the fundamental right of sovereign countries to determine their own domestic economic priorities. Governments may be forced to advertise tenders widely throughout the EU and ACP regions and may no longer be able to support or prioritize local companies for domestic contracts, which could have devastating longer-term consequences. This offers an enormous number of opportunities to European companies and consultants, as well as threatening to squeeze out domestic firms. The implications of such an agreement could be disastrous.

Furthermore, the EU intends to negotiate the controversial issues of investment, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the trade in intellectual property rights.

Liberalization of the public-service sector has been implemented in GATS. GATS was signed in 1994 by the members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the predecessor to the World Trade Organization, and has been in force since January 1995.

Decades of negotiations under GATT have reduced tariffs on goods to low levels. Western governments now want to free up trade in services. Already in 1999 the service sector amounted to 1.35 trillion US dollars, which was then a quarter of the global trade in goods. Western countries and Western-based corporations account for about 80% of world total service exports. Africa, in comparison, gets about 2%, mostly in tourism.

The GATS agreement is a document comprising 600 pages and 20 000 attachments, and hardly any politician or MP has ever read it all. Even former WTO Secretary-General Ruggiero publicly expressed doubts that the governments were fully aware of the implications of the GATS agreement they had signed. GATS is a corporate boot sale of essential services, from water to electricity to the media. It is an attack on democracy that will lock the world into privatization and deregulation of essential services ad infinitum.

The significance of GATS is relatively easy to grasp. "All human activities are to become, in the fullness of time, profit-oriented commodities that can be invested in and traded." And GATS will make this irreversible.

GATS is not a finished treaty but an open-ended framework agreement that mandates "successive rounds of negotiations". The goal of these negotiations is to "achieve progressively higher" levels of liberalisation. What's not opened up today will be dealt with tomorrow until, presumably, all services are opened to all consumers by all countries in all "modes" of delivery.³

On its website the EU Commission stated that GATS was "first and foremost an instrument for the benefit of business". This note was removed from the webpage a few months ago. According to David Hartridge, former director of the WTO services division, "without the enormous pressure generated by the American financial services sector, particularly companies like American Express and Citicorp, there would have been no services agreement".

GATS is a serious attack on our democratic systems, as parliaments do not have a voice

in these negotiations; and as GATS is international law, it is practicable irreversible.

It is not only the WTO that is pushing for privatization, but also the World Bank, the IMF and other “development institutions” such as USAID. They force developing countries to privatize their public commodities, and threaten to withhold credit that has already been approved if the countries refuse to comply with these requests. This is pure blackmail.

The international water market is of particular interest to the EU. This market is worth billions of dollars and most of the global players in it are European companies. In many countries the “liberalization” or privatization of the water market has been debated and is still a hot issue.

Privatization is praised as *the* panacea for corrupt and inefficient management by the public sector but its broad negative implications are not well known.

In the UK and Canada the quality of water declined drastically after privatization. Compensation for serious health problems due to the bad quality of water is being sought in numerous court cases. In addition to this, water prices went up considerably.

A notable example comes from a small town in Ontario, Canada, where seven people died and more than 2000 fell ill as a result of *E. coli* contamination of the drinking water. The private company contracted to test the water knew about the contamination, but under regulations intended to encourage privatization, it was not required to alert government officials about a public health crisis in the making.

In South Africa millions of people have been cut off from water after privatization because they cannot afford to pay water bills that often make up 30% of their incomes. As many as 10 million South Africans have had their water cut off for various periods of time, and two million people have been evicted from their homes for not paying utility bills. Many poor families pay up to 40% of their monthly income for water and electricity.

The water cut-offs have forced thousands of poor people to seek water from polluted rivers and lakes. This has led to one of South Africa’s worst outbreak of cholera, in which thousands of people fell ill and hundreds died. In the end, the government spent millions of rands to control the spread of the disease and to truck clean water to the stricken areas.

“The cost recovery program sounds good, but ... it forced people to go back to the original sources of water, polluted streams and rivers and the like,” stated a researcher working for South Africa’s Human Sciences Research Council, Africa’s largest and most respected social science research organization. “That was the direct cause of the cholera epidemic,” he said. “There is no doubt about that. People are saying: I have to choose between water and food – or between electricity and sending my child to school.”⁴

The UK has the longest history of privatization. This policy was introduced by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s and the effects have all been negative: privatization of the public transport systems led to a series of train accidents with many casualties and injuries; the partial privatization of the public health sector led to long waiting lists for urgent operations for people who cannot afford the expensive private clinics. The result is the development of a “health tourism” to other European countries where British patients receive treatment at a much lower price than they would pay in Britain. These are only a few examples: the list of the negative effects of the privatization of public services is long.

Considering the negative impacts of privatization, the question arises why governments

privatize their valuable public commodities. A reason could be the media's constant reiteration of the claim that public services are completely inefficient and that the customers will only get good service if governments hand over their services to the private sector. This allegation is widely believed but it is just a myth. Arundhati Roy, a famous Indian activist and writer comments: "Privatization is presented as being the only alternative to an inefficient, corrupt state. In fact, it's not a choice at all... it's a mutually profitable business contract between the private company (preferably foreign) and the ruling élite of the Third World." This applies not only to the elites of developing countries but equally to elites in the so-called industrialized world. In fact, executives of Vivendi, Suez and other water companies have been convicted for bribing government officials to obtain contracts.

The World Trade Organization

The WTO is the only international organization which has a legal system that gives the members the right to challenge the laws and regulations of another country on the grounds that they violate WTO rules. This is the WTO's Dispute Resolution Body (DRB) and its Dispute Settlement Panel (DSP).

The DSP is comprised of appointed "experts" who hear the case behind closed doors. If the DSP decides on sanctions the only way to escape them is if every member opposes them – a virtual impossibility. Environmental laws, labour standards, human rights legislation, public health policies, cultural protection, food self-reliance or any other policies held to be in the "national interest" can be attacked as unfair "impediments" to free trade.⁵

There have already been cases where the WTO Dispute Settlement Panel has forced governments to comply with WTO regulations. A fairly well-known case is that of the banana trade. Under the terms of the Lomé Convention the EU had promised to give preference to bananas from former European colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The Europeans stressed that this was a matter of sovereign foreign policy in relation to former colonies, while the US argued that EU tariffs prohibited American banana companies in Central America from reaching lucrative markets in Europe. The WTO decided in favour of the US, ruling that the European preference was unfair. This decision will have a disastrous impact on the small banana producers in many countries.

The US also took the EU to the WTO's dispute settlement panel because the EU prohibits the import of hormone-fed beef. The EU launched 17 studies on the hormones, which found that one of the six artificial hormones fed to cattle "was 'complete' carcinogen, meaning that it had both tumor initiation and tumor promotion properties". In the cases of the other five hormones, the researchers came to the conclusion that "there was identifiable risk to the consumer of those products, especially pre-pubescent children." Despite the result of this research the US still feeds its population with this kind of beef and most likely also exports it to other countries outside the EU.

The Dispute Settlement Panel decided in favour of the US and ordered the EU to remove its import controls. When it refused, the DSP authorized trade sanctions worth more than US

\$125 million annually.

The most recent case concerns genetically modified food (GM food) which until now has been banned in the EU. Recently the US took the EU to the dispute settlement panel to force it to import GM food from the US. The panel has not yet taken a decision on this complaint but it is very likely that the EU will soon lift this ban.

Currently the EU is developing a system of labelling GM food in order to enable the consumers to make a choice between GM food and non-GM Food. The US has already stated that this labelling system is a barrier to "free trade" and hence against WTO law.

During the past months there has been a real media campaign in some British and US magazines such as *The Economist*, *Newsweek* and *Time* promoting GM food. An article in *The Economist* was entitled "The latest research suggests that, even for Europeans, GM food is safe". However, the article does not mention the dangers that GM seeds may have for the environment, for food security and the maintenance of the diversity of local crops.

In fact, recent research on the importation of genetically modified maize into Mexico found that some maize was contaminated with STARLINK, a variety of corn prohibited for human consumption in the United States.

Since the establishment of NAFTA, the Free Trade Zone comprising Mexico, Canada and the US, floods of cheap, subsidized US corn have entered the Mexican market, sold at prices below the cost of production, with which small local maize farmers cannot compete. This has led to massive displacement, poverty and hunger, pushing people into the cities and *maquiladoras* (sweatshop factories), and forcing many to risk their lives crossing the increasingly militarized border into the USA in search of work.

An estimated 30–40% of this corn is genetically modified, although Mexican law prohibits the cultivation of GM corn. The result: deformed plants with GM traits have been found in Oaxaca and other Mexican states. Mendoza, an indigenous farmer, says: "We have seen many deformities in corn, but never like this. One deformed plant in Oaxaca that we saved tested positive for three different transgenes. The old people of the communities say they have never seen these kinds of deformities." He also stated that government representatives came to his community to tell him not to worry about contamination, because GM crops have been available in some countries for five or six years and there is no evidence that they are harmful to health. "But we have our own evidence," asserts Mendoza. "We have 10 000 years of evidence that our maize is good for our health. To contaminate it with genetically modified maize is a crime against all indigenous peoples and farming communities who have been cultivating and improving maize over millennia for the benefit of humankind."⁶

The evidence of STARLINK is proof that GM food is *not* safe. It is noteworthy that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which safeguards the health standards in food and drugs, *never* states that a product is safe in its letters of approval to biotech companies. According to FDA regulator James Maryanski, "Foods are not required to undergo pre-market approval by the FDA. So new varieties of corn, for example, or soybeans, do not necessarily, do not come [sic] to the FDA for approval." Instead, according to Maryanski, the legislative authority for the FDA, "places the legal responsibility for the safety of these products on the developer ... of the product." The transnational biotechnology company

Monsanto denies this responsibility. Its director of corporate communications states, "Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food . . . Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring [*sic*] its safety is the FDA's job."⁷

Hence, it is evident that nobody knows whether GM food is really safe. Despite this undeniable uncertainty about the safety of GM food, the US has launched a campaign to promote GM food in Europe and Africa.

In a mid-May speech, US President George Bush said, "By widening the use of new high-yield bio-crops, and unleashing the power of markets, we can dramatically increase agricultural productivity and feed more people across the continent [of Africa]. Yet our partners in Europe have impeded this effort. They have blocked all new bio-crops because of unfounded, unscientific fears. This has caused many African nations to avoid investing in biotechnologies, for fear their products will be shut out of European markets."⁸

US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick blamed the EU for the refusal of US food aid by African countries, and claims that in promoting GM food, the US wants to help feed the world. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman (a former director of the biotechnology company Calgene) is more upfront. "With this case, we are fighting for the interests of American agriculture." The US is using other people's misery as a marketing tool for US agribusiness.

Amadou Kanoute, African regional director of Consumers International, states that the Bush administration's main concern in launching the WTO case is not African food production and hunger but the export of US corn to the EU. It is estimated that US corn producers have lost US \$300 million because of the GM ban.

A Consumers Union scientist maintains that GM foods have not been proven safe in the United States as they have been consumed there for only the past ten years, which is a very short period for conducting serious research on the effects of GM food on people's health and the environment. This scientist stressed that the concerns about the safety of GM corn may be greater in Africa, because US consumers eat only tiny amounts of corn, mostly in highly processed foods like corn chips and tacos, while some Africans may get 75–80% of their food intake from corn.

Through its "food aid" policies and using the WTO, regional and bilateral trade agreements, the US Administration, backed by American biotech and agribusiness corporations, intends to force genetically modified seed, grain and foodstuffs into all the world's markets, fields and stomachs through deliberate genetic contamination, and by targeting countries which have taken principled stands against GM food.

In order to promote new technologies among Africa's farmers, the Rockefeller Foundation, together with DuPont, DowAgroSciences, Syngenta and Monsanto and the US Agency for International Development have set up the Africa Agricultural Technology Foundation in Nairobi.

In June the Ugandan newspaper *The Monitor* published an article about genetically modified fish ("Biotech fish to hit market"). The author of the article refers to a report published in the US and says,

despite lowered costs, the economic benefit of global supply and demand combined with consumer acceptance will determine the success of this science

.... There is fear of what could happen when the new fish species, which could be more aggressive, predatory or breed faster, escape into the ecosystem.

Genetically modified plants or animals may have disastrous middle-term and long-term effects. Some research points to the danger of GM food and plants, e.g. one researcher found out that a genetically modified potato destroyed the immune system of rats. This researcher was put under heavy pressure by other scientists not to publish this finding. It is a fact that critical researchers are often blamed for falsifying their research or for not following scientific research procedures, and some researchers have already given up publishing their results in order to avoid professional suicide.

Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

Like GATS, the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is one of the WTO's very powerful agreements. TRIPS guarantees the property rights of a company which "invents" a genetically modified crop. This means that such a company has the exclusive right to sell this crop to consumers, who have to pay for its use. For example, US scientists have genetically modified the famous jasmine rice from Thailand in order to adjust its production to the American climate. If the US produces this rice under a patent, five million Thai farmers may be driven out of business as they will not be allowed to produce their own jasmine basmati rice because it has been patented.

Currently one multinational company is trying to get patents on the *mwarobaini* (neem) and *omukombera* trees, which Kenyans use for herbal medicine and other purposes. If the company gets the patent, Kenyans will not only lose their right to use their plants but Kenya will also lose millions of shillings. "It is feared that the patenting will kill traditional technology and make Africa entirely dependent on the West, in particular on the wealthy multinationals."⁹

The TRIPS Agreement globalizes patents as every WTO member must have a patent system covering products and processes, which until now has not been the case in many developing countries. It allows the owner of a patented product to prevent third parties from making, using, offering for sale or importing it without its consent.

It is not only products that can be patented, but also processes of production. Thus, if a process for producing a plant (e.g. a genetically modified plant) is patented, the owner of the patent has exclusive rights over the plants obtained using the process. Farmers are not allowed to use any seeds coming from such a plant.

TRIPS goes hand in hand with WTO commitments to liberalize agricultural trade, further expanding agribusiness control over food systems and biodiversity. Genetic modification is now providing radically new ways of manipulating biological resources, thus giving rise to immensely profitable industrial processes. In principle, genes can now be exchanged among plants, animals and microorganisms regardless of their sexual compatibility. The number of patents on transgenic plants and animals has increased considerably during the past few years.

Some churches have raised their voices against the patenting of plants and animals as they consider experiments with genes as an intervention into God's own domain. The Church

of Scotland puts its opposition to patenting living organisms as follows:

Living organisms themselves should therefore not be patentable, whether genetically modified or not. It is wrong in principle. An animal, plant or micro-organism owes its creation ultimately to God, not human endeavour. It cannot be interpreted as an invention or a process, in the normal sense of either word. It has a life of its own, which inanimate matter does not. In genetic engineering, moreover, only a tiny fraction of the makeup of the organism can be said to be a product of the scientists. The organism is still essentially a living entity, not an invention. A genetically modified mouse is in a completely different category from a mouse trap.

CIDSE, a network of Catholic development agencies in Europe, stresses that:

the Gospels require us never to overlook the poorest and most vulnerable members of society, telling us again and again that they are our sisters and brothers, and more, to ask not only what impact any particular measure will have on them but to discern what they have to contribute in insight, learning and inventiveness.

If granting patents on biological material leads to further disadvantage and vulnerability for the poor of the developing world, then patenting, which was once a response to potential injustice against the person of the inventor, now represents a real threat of injustice against the world's poor. This can happen:

- by privatising genetic material to which they would otherwise have free access;
- by failing to recognise the collective achievement of previous generations of mainly poor farmers in identifying and isolating plant varieties and thus contributing to the sum of human knowledge and well-being; and
- by denying them access to biological inventions which could mean the difference between hunger and an adequate livelihood.¹⁰

Vandana Shiva, a famous Indian scientist and activist concludes:

Sustainability and science are being sacrificed for a reckless experiment with our biodiversity and food systems which is pushing species and peasants to extinction. We need to re-imbed technology in ecology and ethics to ensure that the full ecological and social costs are taken into account.

What is at stake is the evolution of nature and survival of people, our food sovereignty and food freedom, integrity of creation and our food systems based on the evolutionary freedom of nature and democratic freedoms of farmers and consumers. The choice before us is bio-imperialism or bio-democracy. Will a few corporations have a dictatorship over our governments, our knowledge and information, our lives and all life on the planet or will we as members of the Earth family liberate ourselves and all species from the prison of patents and genetic engineering?¹¹

Notes

1. European Union. Recommendations authorising the Commission to negotiate Economic Partnership Agreements with the ACP countries and regions. Agreed by the EU General Affairs Council, 17 June 2002.
2. Ibid.
3. Susan George. How GATS could affect your life. *Red Pepper*, 2003.
4. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. Metered to death: How a water experiment caused riots and a cholera epidemic. 6 February 2003.
5. Wayne Ellwood. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*. London: New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2001.
6. Press Release. Indigenous and farming communities in Oaxaca, Puebla, Chihuahua, Veracruz, Mexico City, 9 October 2003.
7. Cited in Kathleen Hart. *Eating in the Dark: America's Experiment with Genetically Engineered Food*. Pantheon Books, 2002.
8. Ibid, p. 85.
9. *Daily National*, Kenya, 10 July 2003.
10. CIDSE. *Biopatenting and the Threat to Food Security, Part 1: Biopatents: A Christian and Development Perspective*, 2000.
11. *Biotech Wars: Food Freedom vs Food Slavery*, 2003.

Reflections on Afro-Cubans

Eugene Godfried

Dr Fidel Castro's speech at the Riverside Church on 8 September 2000 provided the leader of the Cuban revolution with the opportunity once more publicly to take an official stand on the question of race in revolutionary Cuba. He spoke about the current social conditions of the people of African descent living in that country.

I have been observing official Cuban policies and positions with regards to blacks in that country for over 30 years. I say that Dr Castro again took a stand because this was not the first time: he has done so on several occasions, including the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in 1985, in which I personally participated as an official guest. There he openly admitted that racial discrimination still existed in his country and that measures needed to be taken against it. Unfortunately, his speech was not published in the final report. This is contrary to the practice of other Congresses before and after this one, where the reports were published in booklet form. I do not know what conclusion should be drawn from this omission. This type of carelessness could strengthen the position of some critics, who say that the leader of the revolution is occasionally censored by certain retrograde elements who serve him as advisors.

Marginality

In September 2000, the President of Cuba again raised the topic of racial discrimination and marginalization, admitting that the revolutionary process is not a perfect model that has solved all problems of inequality and injustice. In itself this was a victory for Fidel Castro over those tendencies surrounding him that seem to wish to silence the dialogue on this issue. His words were as follows:

I am not claiming that our country is a perfect model of equality and justice. We believed at the beginning that when we established the fullest equality before the law and complete intolerance for any demonstration of sexual discrimination in the case of women, or racial discrimination in the case of *ethnic minorities*, these phenomena would vanish from our society. It was some time before we discovered that marginality and racial discrimination with it are not something that one gets rid of with a law or even with ten laws, and we have not managed to eliminate them completely in 40 years ...

When the Cuban President speaks of *ethnic minorities*, he is referring to people of African

descent and perhaps to the remnants of the indigenous Tainos, the Chinese, Japanese, Jews, Arabs, etc. On the other hand, there must be a so-called *ethnic majority*, presumably the descendants of the Iberian Spanish immigrants.

There is much to be said concerning this categorization in terms of numbers, and the use of the terms “majority” and “minority”. The very first question that should be raised is: by what criteria can one determine that the Iberian Spanish element, in racial terms otherwise classified as “whites”, are in the majority in Cuba? Vague concepts like this create tensions before any discussion gets underway and obstruct a positive evolution of the assessment and definition of official policies on existing ethnicities in Cuba. Emphatically, I want to say that the official circles responsible for setting out the guidelines on social and political practice in Cuba need to take this matter very seriously and reflect on this matter of the percentages. This is especially true of commonly employed classifications such as “whites”, “mulattos”, and “blacks”.

Some official documents consider “mulattos” to be “white”. Other documents sometimes define Chinese as “white”, though on other occasions they are defined as “black”. One can find still other sources, such as the Ministry of External Affairs, that include blacks and mulattos on the same side of the list, resulting in a figure of 63% for the sector of African descent, an estimate one also finds in American sources, both governmental and scholarly.

Statistics that are sometimes officially cited, for example that the population is 70% white, 19% black, and 11% mulattos, are clearly inadequate. These very likely come from the 1980–1981 census, in which people were asked to identify themselves in ethnic terms, and are disregarded by most scholars of Cuba. Such percentages necessarily lead to partial policies followed by inequality in proportional social relations as a result. Consequently, the directors of major policy-making bodies need to accommodate themselves to these patterns of visions and should adopt a critical and self-critical attitude when considering the position, participation, and mobility of people of African descent in Cuban society.

Dr Fidel Castro goes on to say:

There has never been nor will there ever be a case where the law is applied according to ethnic criteria. However, we did discover that the descendents of those slaves who had lived in the slave quarters were the poorest and continued to live, after the supposed abolition of slavery, in the poorest housing. There are marginal neighborhoods; there are hundreds of thousand of people who live in marginal neighborhoods, and not only blacks and people of mixed race, but whites as well. There are marginal whites, too, and all this we inherited from the previous social system

Certainly, blacks and whites co-exist in marginal neighborhoods under difficult material conditions such as deficient housing, limited urban infrastructure, and unreliable transportation. President Castro has made a bold statement and has exposed the matter with openness and frankness. It is clear that people of African descent still face marginalization in housing conditions in the traditional urban quarters of the capital, Havana – in areas such as Jesus María, Belén, Colón, Canal, Los Sitios, Pueblo Nuevo, Cayo Hueso, San Leopoldo, Pogolotti, Romerio, to mention just a few – or in others across Cuba such as La Marina in

Matanzas, La Loma del Chivo in Guantánamo, or Los Hoyos and La Maya in Santiago de Cuba.

Cultural Marginality

But housing is just one part of the story. At present the most burning question remains *cultural marginality* as a consequence of the supremacy of the Iberian-Hispanic values and norms in education, culture, economics and politics. At the Pedagógica 99 Congress that took place in Havana in February 1999, Dr Castro stated:

We thought that to decree absolute equality and civil rights would have been sufficient to wipe out these traces. However, today we still observe that the poorest sectors are still those descendants of slaves. Before the triumph of the revolution, there existed on the island a culture of poverty and wealth, where the middle class was fundamentally white and were better prepared and had better material conditions. People with a better educational level influenced their children because they taught them, they supervised their homework, and they made demands of them. In the same way, poverty was transmitted [from one generation to the next]. For all that everyone was made equal under the law, for all that assistance was rendered, the best grades came from those families headed by professionals. This does not mean there were no advances in these years, but that, despite the equality in opportunities for all, it is difficult to carry out a revolution because it implies a change in society.

President Castro is indicating that the results of students of African descent are less favourable than those of students of Iberian-Hispanic origin. In several discussions with professionals on this topic, in which I asked why students of African descent obtained such results, I was told that “*será porque los negros son más brutos*” (“maybe because the blacks are more stupid”). I sincerely believe that expressions of this type are a consequence of a lack of awareness in those who have expressed them. A broader look at the Caribbean area shows us that extensive studies sponsored by UNESCO have been carried out to address the typically “Eurocentric” character of the content, aims and objective of the educational system in various countries. The same situation has been looked at in anglophone, francophone, and germanophone countries, where language differences and a focus on European cultural values and norms have caused serious lags in the education of youths of African descent, with consequent high dropout rates.

To tackle this problem we must admit to ourselves that Eurocentrism exists in education in Cuba, and define policies directed at acknowledging the multiculturalism of the society as a whole. Efforts ought to be made to meet the student of African descent from within his or her own life experience. This applies to both intramural and extramural education programmes, and also to adult education.

Socioeconomic marginalization has to do with the fact that people of African descent do not participate fully in all economic sectors, especially in the recent reorganization of the economic system which has created new job opportunities in the privileged “dollar market”. When speaking of the dollar market, I am referring to the hotel sector and the commercial

sector, which depend on foreign currency for their operation, and all other work sites that legally handle foreign currencies. These will deliver some economic interest to the worker who is active in that sector and who thus will either directly or indirectly have access to revenues in foreign currencies. Naturally, this situation is creating social tensions and disgust among broad sections of the Cuban population, but especially among those of African descent, as they feel excluded. It is also the visual part of the problem with which foreigners and friends of Cuba from abroad are confronted when they visit the country and notice that the representation of blacks in hotels and business corporations is extraordinarily low. This is the case even in provinces like Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo, where the African portion of the population is larger than in any of the other provinces. I will illustrate this with one example out of many.

In the summer of 2000, I had the pleasure of leading a Carnival Group from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe to Santiago de Cuba's Carnival. The major criticism of the Caribbean and North American visitors, who were lodged at Hotel Santiago, was that the only Cuban worker of sub-Saharan African descent that they had seen that day in the lobby of the hotel was a uniformed young woman sweeping the floor. The group asked question after question and I as the host had the difficult task of answering them!

Another concern for many is the fact that it is plain to see that people of Iberian-Hispanic descent have greater access to the now free dollar market, which gives them a remarkably privileged position. This is partly explained by taking into account the fact that they receive financial support from relatives abroad.

As far as financial support on an organizational level goes, it is worthwhile mentioning that those organizations and institutions that clearly represent aspects of the culture of the Iberian-Hispanic segment of the Cuban society, for example, the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, can easily count on donations from Spain. On the other hand, organizations of people of African descent, such as the Ballet Folklorico Nacional, are facing dire financial circumstances owing to lack of resources.

As we continue our discussion of cultural marginality it is necessary to point out that the constant struggle between Europe and the Africa that we find in all societies that have had plantation economies is also manifest in Cuban society. The method used to find a solution to this conflict has been the assimilation of the African component to the values and norms of the European component. This has meant that manifestations of African culture have either had to make way for new concepts or have come to be considered folkloric. This has been the case with African religions, the rumba manifestation, and the Son rhythm complex in popular dance music.

Religious rites of Yoruba, Bantu, Calabar and Arará origin have survived all adversity and are now openly performed. The Eurocentrism of official cultural policies meant that manifestations of African religions were regarded as "exotic", therefore folkloric, and so we witness these manifestations being used for tourist consumption in bars and nightclubs. Naturally, this is offensive to the religious sentiments of the people of African descent, who do not express their opinion, but nevertheless observe and reflect. This is a typical African way of responding to such social manifestations.

As the rumba complex, comprised of the genres yambu, Columbia and the guaguanco, is

lived out in popular quarters by dancers and musicians predominantly of African descent, it has constantly been threatened with extinction. It was not to the taste of the elite before the revolution or of certain sectors after the triumph of the revolution. At the same time, Theatre Rumba, which was already well developed before the revolution, continues to exist as entertainment in nightclubs, theaters, and tourist resorts. Whatever criteria there could be to justify the disappearance of popular rumba, nevertheless people of African descent have experienced another “no” to one of their authentic cultural manifestations.

The problem of cultural marginality is complex. For example, how can one explain why the Son rhythm complex was neglected or almost destroyed by measures taken early on by the revolution? The Cuban Son is one of the highest expressions of African rhythms fused with Hispanic melodies. What explanation could be given as to why the African sound and timbres had to disappear in the newly created musical styles, such as *nueva trova*, to accommodate Iberian-Hispanic tastes? How is it that certain music producers on radio stations, all of them of Iberian Spanish descent, could have gone so far in downgrading the musical styles of Arsenio Rodríguez, Chappottin, and Estrellas de Chocolate as being “*musica de negros*” (“*suena muy negro*” [“it sounds very black”]) and therefore to be eliminated from the air? The Son rhythm complex originated in the 19th century and comprises the genres *changüi*, *nengón*, *guiriba*, *guajira*, *guaracha*, *danzón*, *danzonette*, *mambo*, *son montuno*, *charanga*, and the *cha-cha-cha*. Its roots are in the War of Independence against Spain, one of the greatest slave revolts in the Western hemisphere.

Buena Vista Social Club and the international success of Son represent a triumph of African flavour with a sound and timbre that most authentically represents Cuba’s cultural identity. It is also an important warning to all those forces inside Cuba that once intended to falsify history by destroying the African component of the national cultural heritage of Cuba.

The Self-awareness of Blacks in Cuba

How do blacks in Cuba react to manifestations of Eurocentricity that hold back their culture? Cuba’s history is rich in the experiences of slave and maroon revolts in the Colonial period, of which Aponte’s uprising in 1810 was one of the more significant.

In the 20th century the rebellion of 1912, in which the leaders of the Partido Independiente de Color and 6000 other blacks were slaughtered, should never be forgotten. It had a determining effect on black self-esteem and on black–white relations.

Upon all these pages of struggle written by blacks in Cuba, the questions arise of whether Cubans of African descent are conscious of their African origin, and of how they see their society. This has been a question that many visiting friends have posed over and over again to black Cubans. They received astonishing responses, sometimes much to their annoyance.

Many individuals still agree with José Martí’s statement that “more than black and more than white, we are Cubans”. This statement intelligently bypasses the nationality question and leaves the Africans in Cuban society without an answer to 500 years of severe psychosocial problems caused by European colonialism. Today, a black Cuban can still tell you that he or she is neither black nor African. A black Cuban can easily say, “*nuestros antepasados, los españoles*”, [“our ancestors the Spaniards”]. Frequently a Cuban man or woman of African descent will think that it is logical and better to marry a white person in order to “*adelantar la*

raza” [“advance the race”]. Often, a black person will address another as “negro”, which anywhere else in the Caribbean, the United States, or Europe would immediately cause serious conflict. Naturally, the praise of European somatic features above African ones is still common among blacks in Cuba. Women straighten or process their hair and often blacks call each other or think of themselves as “feo”, ugly. Cuba’s borders have been closed to the influences of the Black Power movement and the entire Black Awareness Movement which was so active in the sixties. This is why it should come as no surprise to many observers to learn that while the problem of self-hatred and internalization of European values and norms by people of African descent has found a solution in other countries of the region, in revolutionary Cuba this problem has yet to be solved on a significant scale.

We need to be optimistic for there is a growing interest among Cubans of African descent in cultural matters connected with Africa and the African diaspora. The African survivals in Cuba are among the strongest in the hemisphere and have been taken up by the younger generation, though not always with the rigor that their elders might wish for. A significant number of youth are admirers of Bob Marley, the Rastafarians, and the reggae movement. Over the past two to three years, hip hop and rap music exchanges have been promoted between the USA and Cuba. The Minister of Culture, Abel Prieto, even declared that rap was part of the national patrimony, making evident what was already a major movement among Cuban youths.

Plastic artists are successful in promoting black consciousness but face resistance from certain sectors who even try to dismiss them by nicknaming them “black fundamentalists”. Their experience is of great interest as their exhibitions, like the *Queloides* exhibition in Havana in 1999, turn into group dialogues on race. One of their observations has to do with the difficulties of getting whites to discuss these issues and overcome their state of denial. As long as the discussion centred on white racism, no headway was made, but when a discussion of racism and self-hatred on the black side was engaged, then the situation became more fluid.

Ongoing Dialogue between Fidel Castro, Caribbeans, and Americans

President Fidel Castro Ruz has on numerous occasions successfully circumvented his own advisers and dealt directly with the problems of race and the status of Cubans of African descent when addressing foreigners, including Americans. Nevertheless, more attention needs to be given to this matter and more talks need to be held concerning the racial situation; such talks should be based on a cultural perspective of the whole of present-day Cuban society.

We need to take into account important historical factors such as the fact that Cuba was the second-last country in the Americas to abolish the system of enslavement of Africans in 1886. After Cuba became independent in 1898, the neocolonial era, introduced and supported by segregationist ruling cliques in the United States, saw several moments of racial tension and upheavals like the 1912 massacre which cost the lives of over 6000 Cubans of African descent. Around this time, the neocolonial Cuban governments, backed by transnational corporations such as the United Fruit Company and others, decided to import thousands of immigrants from the Caribbean islands as a further step against Cubans of African descent. These workers came in from Haiti, Jamaica, Tortola, Saint Thomas, Saint Croix, Saint John,

Jos Van Dyke, Anguilla, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Saint Martin, Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba. This process was initiated in around 1910 and lasted up to the early fifties. These immigrant workers were subjected to living in subhuman conditions worse than those in the days of slavery.

While listening to Dr Castro's September speech, it became clear to me that many friends and visitors from the United States have been talking with the leader of the Cuban revolution about the situation of blacks, people of colour or simply Cubans of African descent. We know that prestigious organizations of African Americans such as TransAfrica and the Grass Roots Malcolm X Movement, along with representatives of the Black Caucus in Congress, have met with the leader on several occasions, and that the topic of race has appeared on the agenda. As indicated above, I personally have had the pleasure of leading a significant number of visitors from the Caribbean and the United States to Cuba; these visitors were amazed at what they observed in terms of race relations. We have spent many hours discussing the race situation in revolutionary Cuba on many occasions, in Havana, Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo, Cienfuegos, Camaguey, Las Tunas, Sancti Spiritus, and Matanzas. The topic is of great interest to a wide range of friends of Cuba. Up to now there has been little official approach or answer to the question of race or of the social status of Cubans of African descent from a cultural perspective. So far, the official position has mostly been a denial of racism in Cuba and the insistence that there are no blacks or Africans in Cuba, but that "we are all Cubans". This position in itself has created more harm, and has contributed to raising the suspicions of analysts, scholars, and friends of the Cuban revolution from other countries with a great deal of experience in this matter, such as Jamaica, Haiti, Guadeloupe, Antigua and the United States itself, among others.

The policies of generalization aiming at unifying the society against outside political aggression, mainly the United States, have had serious consequences for the non-Iberian-Hispanic sectors of the population. This was possible since, from a cultural perspective, these policies were Eurocentric and Iberian-Hispanic in nature. I will give two examples to illustrate this statement. The first one is of an association of descendents of residents of the Canary Islands which is active in the province of Villa Clara. It so happened that in the summer of 1998, I was covering a yearly Caribbean Trade Fair in the eastern Cuban province of Santiago de Cuba. In a conversation with the leaders of a delegation representing the cultural heritage of the Canary Islands, these personalities asked to participate in my "Section on the Cultural Identity of the Caribbean", which is aired every Sunday on Radio Progreso. The reasons why they asked this were, firstly, according to them, they are considered as Spaniards in a crude way, and moreover their specific case as Canarians was neglected or subordinated in order to fit into the nation's general cultural plan. Indeed, the history of the Canary Islands is different from that of Spain, which colonized this archipelago off the northwestern coast of Africa.

The second example occurred on a working visit to Caimanera in Guantánamo, when a high-ranking cultural officer explained to me the harm that the imposed generalized unifying policies caused to residents of Portuguese origin, among others, who live in this once very active neighborhood. Many were ruthlessly considered to be Cuban and had to suppress or neglect their origin, in this case Portugal.

The official position, which over-emphasized “Cuban” citizenship, has estranged the “white” immigrants as well as “black” ones, as in the case of Haitian, Jamaican and other Caribbean and African nations.

In his September speech at Riverside Church, Dr Fidel Castro engaged in an open dialogue with the friends of Cuba who were concerned about these matters. This was a cordial gesture to those who had repeatedly expressed their sincere concern about racial matters in revolutionary Cuba. The wellbeing of the masses living in revolutionary Cuba is and should be a matter of concern to forces both inside and outside of Cuba. All doors should be opened for honest, frank, and sincere dialogue among those who want to promote peace, equality and social progress.

Yet I still would want to emphasize that this positive process of dialogue should be continued, only more rigorously. By this I mean that visitors, observers, and friends from abroad, on the one hand, and the leadership of the Cuban revolution on the other hand, ought to address this question with ever-increasing depth of vision. None of us should be too soft on our own history. There is no need for embarrassment, since we are not responsible for having created the problems that have been in evidence ever since the colonialists sowed their seeds on our lands and pastures.

With this knowledge of the historical processes that preceded and determined the revolutionary processes that started on 1 January 1959, it is right to insist that urgent attention should be paid to these matters, especially by the leader of the revolution. This cannot be the prerogative of any other sector of Cuban society without guidance similar to that which he has given on the changes in the economic realm to counteract the crisis that resulted from the US blockade and the disappearance of the entire European socialist bloc. The changes in the socio-economic profile of Cuba since 1990 have brought about the emergence of a new social group that has taken occupation of strategic positions in economic and political life. These descendants of Iberian-Hispanics are over-represented in the socio-economic, cultural and political profile of day-to-day life in contemporary Cuba.

Diligent attention to solving this problem is required before the result of the above changes lingers on too much and certain negative speculations about the future of Cuba become more evident. The future of Cuba has to be determined and tailored now, in the lifetime of Dr Fidel Castro, the sole uniting figure who has the confidence of the masses, in particular of the people of African descent in Cuba.

This process of change is urgently needed to safeguard the revolution in the long run. The economic blockade could be lifted and money could start to pour into the island again by the millions. There is no doubt about that, but the concern among the “wretched of the earth” is: will the conditions of quasi-slavery as they existed prior to 1959 ever be re-established in Cuba?

Dr Fidel Castro Ruz asks us to be hopeful when he concludes his speech by saying:

I told you that our country is on its way to a new era. I hope someday to be able to speak to you of the things we are doing today and how we are going to continue to do them. We do not have the money to build housing for all the people who live in what we could call marginal conditions. But we have lots

of other ideas which will not wait until the end of time and which our united and justice-loving people will implement to get rid of even the tiniest vestiges of marginality and discrimination. I have faith that we will succeed because that is the endeavour today of the leaders of our youth, our students and our people. I shall not say more, I am simply saying that we are aware that there is still marginality in our country. But there is a will to eradicate it with the proper methods for this task to bring more unity and equality to our society. On behalf of my Homeland, I promise to keep you informed about the progress of our efforts.

The dialogue on this matter must continue both inside and outside of Cuba. Other Caribbean countries, such as Curaçao in the Netherlands Antilles, also once had plantation economies, dating back to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Consequently, the number of people of African descent in these countries is significantly high. Talks on matters related to the history and social position of the people of African descent have encountered severe resistance from certain sectors in those societies which are intimately loyal to colonial and retrograde ideologies on both a cultural and political-economic level.

In this light, we should refer to the visit of Fidel Castro to Barbados in August 1998, at the invitation of Dr Owen Arthur, the Prime Minister. This visit coincided with the celebrations commemorating the abolition of slavery in the British territories. On this occasion, Barbadian officials, together with the Seraphine Cultural Center, called for an extension of the Pan-African movement and called on Fidel Castro to include Cuba in this movement. The call is appropriate as it takes into account the fact that Cuba is the home of a significant number of Africans of the diaspora.

Conclusion

We need to be hopeful and wait for the “other ideas” that the leadership of the revolution would want to put forward in the near future, with regards to the improvement of the material and non-material living conditions of the people in Cuba who are descended from Bantu, Yoruba, Benin, Calabar, Igbo, Mandinka, Wolof or Abyssinian peoples and other peoples of Mother Africa.

The history of these sons and daughters of the rich continent of Africa is the obverse of the history of the Eurocentric sectors of Cuban, and therefore Caribbean, society. History has blessed us with the shining example of Antonio Maceo y Grajales, who, in 1878, in his “Protest of Baragua” made clear to General Arsenio Martínez Campos, who represented Spanish rule and the Eurocentric sectors of Cuban society, that there would be **no independence without the total abolition of the system of enslavement of Africans**

The history of liberation in our continent has shown us that some elements among us have been and still are prepared to break some contact with colonial Spain, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany in particular, and colonial Europe in general, but not all contact, especially not cultural ties! And that is precisely why our nations, even though independent or semi-independent, have to persisting in reflecting on and talking about our situation along with Cuba so that we can find a way of dealing with the globalized world together.

Venezuela; Racism Persists: 150 Years After the Abolition of Slavery

Humberto Márquez

Racism continues to exist in Venezuela in different guises 150 years after slavery was abolished, according to the *Network of Afro-Venezuelan Organisations*, which wants the cultural contributions of black people to be recognised by the constitution.

On March 24, 1854, then-president General José Gregorio Monagas promulgated the law that abolished slavery in this South American country. The measure freed approximately 25,000 slaves, three percent of the population at that time. The Venezuelan state decided to indemnify slaveholders to the tune of 200 pesos for each of their former slaves, issuing debt papers that the slaveholders were never able to redeem, because civil war (1859-1864) broke out a few years later. The total value of the debt papers issued was five million pesos – and amount that exceeded the government's annual budget, which ran to three million pesos.

For years, March 24 has been celebrated in Venezuela's schools, and Monagas has been depicted as a liberator, "when all he did was formalise the dissolution of the bonds of submission by blacks to their masters, which had already occurred in practice," according to historian Federico Brito.

The number of slaves in Venezuela had already shrunk due to laws of manumission or formal emancipation from slavery approved by the legislatures that sanctioned Venezuela's independence from the Spanish crown between 1820 and 1830, mainly as a tribute to the participation of thousands of black and mulatto fighters in the struggle for independence.

But "what the state should really have done was to indemnify the blacks who had been slaves, and now what we are trying to do is de-romanticise that history, which did not contribute to improving the conditions faced by the descendants of those slaves," Jorge Guerrero, the head of the Network of Afro-Venezuelan Organisations, said in an interview with Inter Press Service (IPS).

Jesús García with the AfroAmerica Foundation told IPS that to commemorate the anniversary, the groups were holding activities aimed at promoting "a critical look at the past, overcoming the barriers that exist today, and building a future marked by equality."

The constitutional amendment that the groups are pressing for would "recognise this sector of the population in social, cultural, political and religious terms," said García, who pointed out that "we have historically been second-class citizens."

The constitution promoted by populist, left-leaning President Hugo Chávez and approved by voters in a 1999 referendum highlights the contribution made towards the creation of an independent nation by Simón Bolívar and the rest of the independence heroes. It also recognises the resistance put up by the country's indigenous peoples, who unlike blacks are specifically mentioned in the constitution. But "it does not reflect the contribution by the black population, and we accounted for around 400,000 of the one million inhabitants of the country at the time of independence," said García.

Social scientists agree that it is difficult if not impossible to reliably estimate the number of descendants of Africans in today's Venezuela, due to the intense process of cultural, ethnic and racial mixing. However, "talk of 'mestizaje' (racial mixing) tends to sweep under the rug the fact that racial prejudice is alive and well," filmmaker Oscar Lucien -- the director of the film "Memories", a story about fugitive slaves -- commented to IPS.

One of the Network's demands is that the census include questions that would help break down the population in terms of ethnicity, in order to provide special assistance to the communities with the greatest number of Afro-Venezuelans, most of which are located along the Caribbean coast or in specific poor neighbourhoods in the cities of Caracas, Maracay-Valencia (near the capital), and Maracaibo (to the west). In addition, the groups want the cultural contribution made by Afro-Venezuelans to be included in the country's educational curricula.

Although Venezuela's blacks "do not have a strong, highly differentiated presence, like the black populations of Brazil or Cuba, there is a 'campesino' (peasant), provincial vitality, a fortitude among women, a sense of rhythm, of democratic egalitarianism and persistent magical-realism beliefs that are unmistakably their contributions," writer Alfredo Chacón, a retired professor of anthropology, told IPS. The activists and experts interviewed by IPS agreed that racism remains a problem in Venezuela, "in the same way poverty persists: everything that is dark, tending towards black, is identified with negative values and with poverty," said Chacón.

Studies carried out by psychologist Freddy González in public and private high schools in the state of Aragua (60 kms west of Caracas) found that "discrimination is exercised in an indirect manner, through disdain, exclusion, restriction and preference." González noted, for example, that between teachers and students "there are external indications, including facial expression, glances, postures, verbal exchanges, location in the classroom and nicknames that demonstrate discrimination towards Afro-Venezuelans." Discrimination is observed, according to one of González's studies, "in terms of which students receive the compliments and praise, which are chosen for the main roles in cultural ceremonies and events, and even in who is selected as the school 'queen'."

Since Chávez, who comes from a poor family and is of mixed black and indigenous ancestry, took office in 1999, Venezuelan society has been sharply polarised and divided between the largely wealthy and middle-class opposition movement whose members tend to be mainly of European ancestry, and the president's followers, who are largely poor and darker-skinned. "One sector of the middle-class is annoyed that the president is of mixed-race descent," admitted Lucien, who is opposed to the government.

After visiting several poor communities in Venezuela and meeting with representatives of the government and the opposition movement in January, a delegation from the *TransAfrica* Forum – a U.S. organisation headed by Hollywood star Danny Glover (*Lethal Weapon*, *The Color Purple*) – warned that racism was still a problem in this country.

"Don't let yourselves be fooled by the idea that there is no racism in Venezuela," the head of *TransAfrica*, Bill Fletcher, told journalists. "We have received so much attention that I wonder how often Afro-Venezuelans appear in the press." "We are all coffee with cream" – a mix of white, black and Indian – is a popular adage in this country where few can state unequivocally that they are of unmixed European, African or indigenous ancestry. Pedro Alcántara, a lawmaker belonging to an opposition social democratic party, even told IPS that "In Venezuela, racism is not possible, this is a very mixed country." But one notorious recent case of racism was a spoof by the private Venezuelan TV news station *Globovisión* – a vociferously anti-Chávez channel – of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who visited Caracas in late February to attend the summit of the Group of 15 developing countries, which promotes South-South cooperation. Images of Mugabe, who appeared to nod off during a speech by Chávez, were accompanied by sounds of snoring and monkey-like screeches, followed by hilarious laughter by the programme's presenters. African ambassadors to Venezuela – representing Algeria, Egypt, Libya, the Saharawi Republic (Western Sahara), Nigeria and South Africa – issued a statement of protest against *Globovisión*, "whose viewers have been presented with an indecent spectacle, replete with unquestionably racist and rude sound-effects and gestures." But the TV station's managers justified the sketch saying the African ambassadors "do not understand Venezuelans' sense of humour."

Kiingereza kama Lugha ya Kufundishia na Kujifunzia Katika Shule za Sekondari Tanzania kinachangia Kuzorota kwa Elimu

Halima Mwinsheikhe na Mwajuma Vuzo

English Summary

This article summarizes two research studies on the medium of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools. The objective of these studies was to find out how the use of Kiswahili affected student understanding, participation and performance in classrooms. Data was collected by means of interviews, questionnaires, classroom observation and a cartoon comprehension test. Generally, the studies showed that when Kiswahili was used as a medium of instruction, students understood better, explained themselves better and participated much more in class. Performance was likewise improved.

Utangulizi

Lugha mbili zinazohusishwa katika utoaji wa elimu Tanzania ni Kiingereza na Kiswahili. Kwenye shule za awali na msingi, Kiswahili hutumika kama lugha ya kufundishia na kujifunzia. Kingereza hufundishwa kuanzia darasa la tatu kama somo la lazima. Katika shule za sekondari na vyuo Kingereza ndiyo lugha rasmi ya kufundishia na kijifunzia. Kiswahili hufundishwa kama somo la lazima hadi kidato cha nne.

Kiswahili ni lugha ya taifa, hali kadhalika ni lugha rasmi ya mawasiliano. Kiswahili kinazungumzwa na zaidi ya asilimia tisini na tano (95%) ya watanzania, huzungumzwa aidha kama lugha ya kwanza⁴ au ya pili⁵. Nje ya mipaka ya Tanzania Kiswahili, kimepata umaarufu katika nchi za Africa mashariki na kati, hususan, Kenya ambapo pia ina hadhi ya lugha ya taifa.

Lugha ya kufundishia na kujifunzia baada ya uhuru

Mwaka 1967, Sera ya Elimu ya Kujitegemea ilianzishwa na marehemu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, rais wa kwanza wa Tanzania. Sera hii ilitilia mkazo umuhimu wa Kiswahili kutumika kufundishia katika shule za msingi.

Umuhimu wa kutumia Kiswahili katika shule za sekondari ulizungumziwa kwa mara ya kwanza katika mpango wa maendeleo wa 1969-1974, (URT 1969). Katika kipindi hiki serekali ilihofia kuwa badiliko la lugha ya kufundishia kati ya shule za sekondari na msingi lingewaletea wanafunzi ugumu wa kuelewa masomo mapya kwa lugha mpya ya kujifunzia na kufundishia. Hivo umuhimu wa kutumia Kiswahili katika shule za sekondari ukaonekana kuwa ni muhimu hasa ikizingatiwa mpango wa serikali ulikiwa ni kutumia Kiswahili katika ngazi zote za elimu.

Mpango huu usingefanyika mara moja kwani muda wa maandalizi muhimu ulihitajika. Maandalizi muhimu yalianza kufanyika, kutafsiri kuandaa tamathali za kufundishia. Kwa sasa ukosefu wa istilahi za kitaalam sio tatizo, Mwansoko (1999), Mutasa (2003: 201).

Lugha inayotumika rasmi sasa kufundishia na kujifunzia katika shule za sekondari ni Kingereza, hii ni kwa mujibi wa sera ya Elimu ya mwaka 1995, MoEC (1995). Sera hii kutoka wizara ya elimu na Utamaduni inasema:

Lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia katika shule za awali iwe ni Kiswahili na Kingereza kiwe somo la lazima: 35

Lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia katika shule za msingi iwe ni Kiswahili, na kingereza kiwe somo la lazima: 39

Lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia katika shule za sekondari iendeleo kuwa Kingereza isipokuwa kwa masomo ya lugha. Kiswahili, kiwe ni somo la lazima hadi kidato cha nne: 45 (MoEC 1995, tafsiri yetu)

Hapo hapo Wizara ya Elimu na Utamaduni imetoa sera mpya ya utamaduni, MoEC (1997) ambayo inataja lugha ya kufundishia katika shule za sekondari kuwa ni Kiswahili. Hata hivyo sera hii mpaka sasa haijatekelezwa. Pamoja na kuwa Jones na Rubagumya (1998) walifanya utafiti wa jinsi wa kutekeleza mpango huu na kutoa mapendekezo, mpaka sasa hamna kilichofanyika kutekeleza suala hili. Sababu nyingi hutolewa hasa sababu kubwa ni suala la uchumi kama ilivyo katika ripoti ya maendeleo ya Elimu ya mwaka (1999) ambapo imesemekana kuwa maswala yote yaliyohusu fedha yalisitishwa mpaka hapo serikali itakapopata fedha, suala la lugha likiwemo (MoEC, 1999).

Tafiti nyingi zimeshafanyika katika shule za sekondari kuhusu suala la lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia ambazo kwa ujumla zinaonyesha kuwa hali ni mbaya sana. Nyingi ya tafiti hizi zimeonyesha kuwa wanafunzi wanashindwa kujifunza kwa kutumia lugha ya Kiingereza hali kadhalika waalimu nao hushindwa kufundisha kwa kutumia lugha hii. Mjadala huu wa lugha ya kufundishia na kujifunzia katika shule za sekondari Tanzania, sasa una zaidi ya miaka 30.

Madhumuni ya tafiti hizi

Umuhimu wa kufanya utafiti huu ni ili kuweza:

- Kuchunguza jinsi tatizo la lugha ya kufundishia linavyokwaza ufundishaji na ufundishaji wa masomo ya sayansi hususan Biologia
- Kuchunguza ni kwa kiwango gani na wakati gani Kiswahili hutumiwa na waalimu na wanafunzi wakati wa kujifunza masomo.
- Kuanagilia ni jinsi gani kushiriki kwa wanafunzi na matokeo ya wanafunzi ya majaribio

yanavyoathiriwa na utumiaji wa Kiswahili kama lugha ya kufundishia.

- Kutafuta maoni ya waalimu na wanafunzi kuhusu kutumia Kiswahili rasmi kama lugha ya kufundishia masomo shule za sekondari.
- Kupata mwangaza kuhusu hali halisi kama ilivyo sasa hivi katika hili suala zima la lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia.

Maswali yaliyoongoza tafiti hizi

Ni kwa kiasi gani wanafunzi katika vidato vya I, IV na VI wanaelewa na kuweza kujieleza kwa lugha ya Kiingereza?

Ni kwa kiasi gani wanafunzi na waalimu hutumia Kiswahili (kuchanganya na Kiingereza) kunaendelea katika ufundishaji madarasani katika shule za sekondari Tanzania?

Ni hali gani husababisha waalimu na wanafunzi kutumia Kiswahili zaidi wakati wa masomo?

Ni kwa jinsi gani kushiriki kwa wanafunzi katika vipindi na matokeo yao ya majaribio vinaathiriwa na utumiaji wa Kiswahili kama lugha ya kufundishia?

Waalimu wa sekondari wana maoni gani kuhusu kukifanya Kiswahili kama lugha rasmi ya kufundishia na kujifunzia katika sekondari na elimu ya juu?

Utaratibu wa tafiti tulizofanya

Tafiti nyingi zimefanyika kuhusu suala hili. Nyingi zimekuwa katika mwelekeo wa kutafuta maoni ya watu kuhusu kutumia au kutotumia Kiswahili kama lugha za kufundishia na kujifunzia.

Katika mwaka 2001 na 2002 Mwinsheikhe na Vuzo wamefanya tafiti mbili katika mwelekeo wa utekelezaji wa sera ya lugha madarasani. Waliohusika katika tafiti hizi ni waalimu wa sekondari, wanafunzi wa sekondari, maafisa elimu na wahadhiri wa Chuo Kikuu cha Dar es Salaam.

Washiriki wa Utafiti wa Mwinsheikhe (2001)

Katika utafiti aliofanya Mwinsheikhe (2001), alilenga katika masomo ya sayansi hususan Biologia, na iliwahusisha kidato cha kwanza na cha tatu katika shule tatu za Mkoani Dar es Salaam. Idadi ya waalimu waliohusika ni 92 na wanafunzi waliohusika ni 779 ambapo 505 walishiriki kujibu dodoso na 274 walishiriki kwenye jaribio la darasani. Waliohusika kwenye intavyuu ni maafisa elimu 7.

Utaratibu wa Jaribio la darasani

Katika kila kidato mikondo miwili ilichaguliwa, wanafunzi katika mikondo hii walipewa mtihani ya awali ambao ulikuwa katika lugha ya Kingereza. Kila kidato wakiwa na mtihani wao. Kwa kila kidato mkondo mmoja ulifundishwa kwa lugha ya Kiswahili na mkondo mwingine ulifundishwa kwa lugha ya Kingereza. Wakati masomo yakiendelea mtafiti alifanya uchunguzi madarasani kuangalia jinsi ambavyo ufundishaji unaendelea katika lugha hizi tofauti, ili kuweza kubaini tofauti ya jinsi wanafunzi wanavyoshiriki na kuelewa somo la Biologia kwa kutumia lugha hizi mbili tofauti. Jumla ya vipindi vinne kwa lugha ya Kiswahili vilifundishwa, viwili katika kidato cha kwanza na viwili katika kidato cha tatu. Hali kadhalika idadi kama hio ya vipindi ilifundishwa kwa lugha ya Kiingereza. Mara baada ya hapo

wanafunzi walipewa mtihani: waliofundishwa kwa Kiingereza mtihani ulikuwa kwa Kiingereza na waliofundishwa kwa Kiswahili mtihani ulikuwa kwa Kiswahili.

Matokeo ya hili jaribio la darasani

Katika vidato vyote viwili matokeo ya jaribio la awali ambalo lilikuwa katika lugha ya Kingereza yalikuwa ni hafifu. Katika kidato cha kwanza mtihani wa mwisho umeonyesha tofauti kubwa sana katika matokeo ukilinganisha na yale ya mtihani wa awali kwa darasa lililofundishwa kwa Kiswahili. Wakati darasa lililofundishwa kwa Kiingereza lilionyesha tofauti ndogo. Katika kidato cha tatu kulikuwa na tofauti ndogo kati ya mtihani wa awali na wa mwisho katika madarasa yote mawili, yaliyofundishwa katika Kiswahili na Kiingereza. Hata hivyo tofauti ilikuwa ni ndogo ikilinganisha na ile ya kidato cha kwanza.

Uchunguzi wa madarasani ulionyesha kuwa kiwango cha kushiriki wanafunzi wakati masomo yanaendelea mfano kujibu maswali, kuuliza maswali na kushiriki kwenye majadiliano katika vikundi na darasani kilikuwa ni cha juu zaidi katika madarasa yaliyofundishwa kwa Kiswahili kuliko katika madarasa yaliyofundishwa kwa Kiingereza.

Maelezo ya Matokeo ya Uchunguzi Madarasani

Sababu kuu zilizotolewa na waalimu na wanafunzi zinazosababisha kuchanganya lugha hizi mbili ni, kufafanua kwa kina vipengele muhimu vya mada; kutoa maelezo na maelekezo muhimu yahasuyo mafunzo kwa vitendo, kazi maalum na mazoezi; kuuliza na kujibu maswali na kujadiliana hususani katika katika vikundi. Mfano ya majibu yaliyoandikwa na waalimu katika dodoso ni kama inavyonukuliwa:

Nikisisitiza kutumia Kiingereza wakati wote ninapofundisha huwa ni sawa na kufundisha mawe na siyo wanafunzi. (Mwalimu wa shule CS2, Tafsiri yetu).

Uchunguzi wa madarasani wakati wa masomo ya jaribio kwa lugha ya Kiingereza ulithibitisha kuwa, ingawaje hawakutakiwa kufanya hivyo, wanafunzi walianza kuzungumza Kiswahili mara tu walipoanza shughuli za masomo katika vikundi. Pale walipojaribu kuzungumza Kiingereza, hawakueleweka vizuri. Baadhi ya maelezo ya wanafunzi kwenye dodoso yanaunga mkono matokeo haya. Hali hii ya udhaifu wa wanafunzi katika kushiriki kikamilifu wakati wa masomo yaliyofundishwa katika lugha ya Kiingereza iliwahi kuripotiwa pia katika chunguzi za Mlama na Mattered (1978), Roy Campbell na Qorro (1987, 1997), Osaki (1995) na Brock Utne (2000).

Matokeo ya Intavyuu

Wote waliohojiwa kwa njia ya intavyuu walisema kuwa wanajua kuwa kiwango kikubwa cha ufundishaji wa sayansi hufanyika kwa kutumia mchanganyiko wa lugha ya Kiswahili na Kiingereza, kwa jina la utani, Kiswenglish.

Alama za Wanafunzi katika majaribio

Majibu ya waalimu na wanafunzi katika dodoso na uchunguzi wa majaribio ya awali na ya mwisho yaliyotolewa kabla na baada ya masomo ya majaribio yameonyesha kuwa wakati

Kiingereza kilipotumika kama lugha ya kufundushia na kujifunzia wanafunzi wengi walishindwa kujibu maswali yanayohitaji maelezo marefu, hivyo wengi waliruka maswali au walipojaribu kujibu walishindwa kujieleza vizuri. Wakati Kiswahili kilipotumika kama lugha ya kufundishia, maswali ya namna ile ile katika kugha ya Kiswahili yalijibiwa vizuri zaidi na urukaji wa maswali ulikuwa nadra sana. Wanafunzi wote kwa ujumla walimudu maswali ya aina ya kuchagua jibu, au kutoa majibu mafupi sana. Kwa ujumla sababu kubwa ya kutoshiriki kikamilifu kwa wanafunzi katika masomo ya sayansi na kupata alama duni katika mitihani kama ilivyoripitiwa na asili mia 65 ya waalimu, ni tatizo la kutoimudu vyema lugha ya Kiingereza.

Utaratibu wa Utafiti wa Vuzo (2002)

Mahojiano ya Intavyuu yalifanywa na waalimu na maafisa elimu kuhusu suala zima la lugha ya kufundishia na kujifunzia. Wanafunzi walipewa Kibonzo (Tazama ukurasa wa 10). Walijieleza kwanza kwa Kiingereza ambayo ndio lugha rasmi ya kujifunzia na kufundishia, kisha wanafunzi hao hao wakapewa kibonzo hiki baada ya wiki mbili kukielezea kwa Kiswahili. Huu utafiti ni marudio ya jaribio ambalo lilifanywa na Desai, Z (2001), Afrika Kusini.

Walioshiriki katika utafiti

Katika utafiti huu walioshiriki ni waalim na wanafunzi katika shule za sekondari za serikali pamoja na maafisa elimu. Jumla ya walioshiriki kama sampuli ni watu 60. Wanafunzi 40 waliochnaguliwa kutoka kidato cha I, IV na VI, waalimu 15 na maafisa elimu 5. Vidato hivi vilichaguliwa kwa sababu maalum. Kidato cha kwanza ndio mwanzo wa kutumia Kiswahili kama lugha ya kufundishia na kujifunzia na kidato cha IV na VI ni madarasa ya mitihani ya kitaifa.

Matokeo ya Utafiti

Katika kila kidato cha I, IV na cha VI nilichagua hadithi moja nzuri na moja mbaya katika lugha ya Kiingereza pamoja na hadithi ya Kiswahili ya mwanafunzi mhusika. Kama kielelezo hapa nimetoa mfano mmoja katika kila kidato.

Mfano 1: Kidato cha I

Kingereza

One day is not mather is going to market. Balind of thit man student. I am father is going to charch and children too. the market are the Box, Beg, fotball, is money. father is big than children. one day father is going to football. cry when to shool.

Tafsiri yangu

Siku moja sio mama anakwenda kwa sokoni. Nyuma ya yule mtu mwanafunzi. Mimi ni baba nakwenda kwa kanisa na watoto pia. soko ni boksi, begi, futiboli, ni pesa. Baba ni mkubwa kuliko watoto. Siku moja baba anakwenda futiboli. Nalia niendapo kwa shule.

Kiswahili

Siku moja mzee mmoja alikwenda uwanja wa ndege akiwa na mizigo yake. *Akatokea* kijana mmoja akamuambia yule mzee kuwa angaria hire ndege. Kumbe alikuwa ni mwizi akachukua mizigo ya yule mzee. Akakimbia *vichakani* akafungua ule mizigo wa yule mzee akakuta nyoka kwenye ule mizigo. Yule mzee akaanza kutafuta mizigo wake. Akatokea kijana mmoja akamwambia panda gari langu nikupereke kwa yule kijana aliye kuchukulia mizigo wako. Akaenda mpaka kwa yule kijana akamkuta anafungua mizigo wake akamuonyesha ule mizigo wake yule mzee akakuta ameshafungua. Hakamuhuliza kwa nini humefungua mizigo wangu akamwambia hebu angaria ulicho kiweka kwenye mizigo wako. Akamwambia kwa nini ulihiba mizigo wangu. Akamwambia yule kijana kama hulikuwa hunalitaka sihunge sema nikupe sio kuhiba je hunge kuta mbwa hungesemaje. Akampereka polisi kufungwa.

Mfano wa 2 : Kidato cha IV

Kingereza

One day there was a man at the Air port whose name was Mr. ALI SAKU. MR ALI SAKU WAS there in order to wait transport from there to the certain place where he want to go/ travel. For a short time the thief was appear and then he can take Ali's bag and run away with it. After run away up to away from MR ALI, thieves was open's the bags. So as when they already open's, the snake was get outside the bag and then it can affect him. So as let me saying that (thief) to get things without permission is not good for us. When you want something try to communicate with your fellow in order to be helped with him/ her.

Tafsiri yangu

Siku mmoja kulikuwa na mwanaume mmoja kwenye sehemu ya hewa aliyeitwa Bwana ALI SAKU. Bwana Ali SAKU ALIKUWA hapo ili kusibiri usafiri kutoka hapo kwenda sehemu moja aliyotaka kwenda / kusafiri. Kwa mda mfupi yule mwizi akatokea na akachukua begi la Ali na kukimbia nalo. Baada ya kukimbia nalo mpaka mbali na BWANA ALI, wezi wezi wakafungua mabegi. Ili baada ya kufungua, nyoka akatoka nje ya begi na kumdhuru yeye. Ikaniacha nasema kuwa mwizi kuchukua vitu bila ruhusa sio vizuri kwetu. Ukitaka kitu jaribu kuwasiliana mwenzako ili akusaidie na yeye.

Kiswahili

Siku moja alitokea msafiri mmoja katika uwanja wa ndege, ambaye alikuwa akisubiri usafiri kuelekea alikotaka kwenda. Mtu huyo alijulikana kwa jina mzee ALLY SAKU.

Baada ya muda mfupi akiwa pale uwanja wa ndege, walitokea watu wawili ambao ni mtoto na mzee. Watu wale *walitabirika* kuwa ni wezi. Hapo yule mtoto alikwenda moja kwa moja kwa mzee Saku na kumsalimia huku yule mzee *alifanikiwa* kuiba sanduku la mzee Saku. Baada ya kuiba lile sanduku wote walikimbia. Polisi *alijitahidi* kupiga filimbi lakini hawakufanikiwa kuwakamata. Walipovuka barabara, mbali kidogo na eneo la uwanja wa ndege, ndipo walianza kufungua sanduku ili kugawana vitu vilivyokuwemo ndani. *Ghafla* walivyofungua, likatokea joka na *kumdhuru* yule mzee.

Kwa mujibu wa hii habari, tunaelimishwa kwamba tusiwe na tabia ya wizi katika maisha yetu yote. Kwani wizi sio jambo jema, bali mtu huweza kupoteza maisha yake shauri ya wizi.

Kwa hiyo basi, sote yatupasa kufanya kazi kwa bidii ili tuendeleze maisha yetu na siyo *kujishughulisha* na wizi. Kweli wizi ni hatari katika maisha yetu.

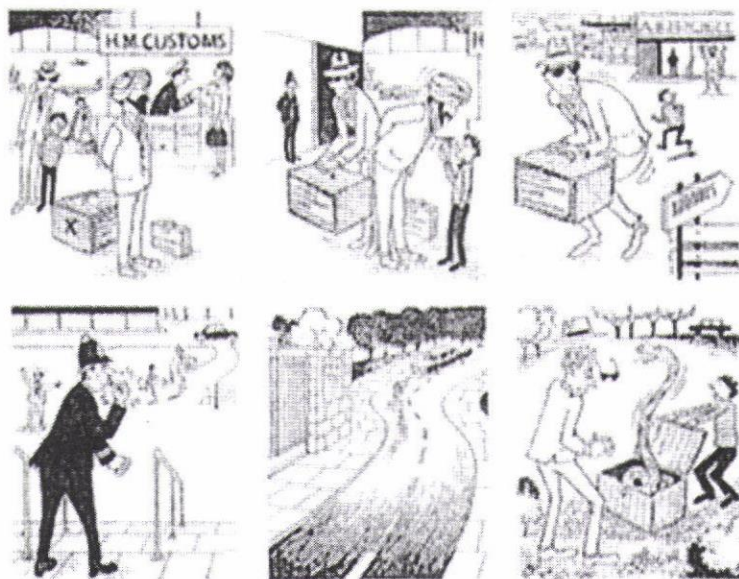
Hadithi hii inaonya watu wezi kuacha tabia hii, kwani huweza kusababisha *madhara* makubwa kwao. Kama tunavyoona wale wezi walioiba kapu na kukuta nyoka ambaye angeweza kuwazuru.

Mfano wa 3: Kidato cha VI

Kingereza

In this story there is a person come from another country and arrive at the airport. When he wait for his friends or his relatives two peoples comes and one start to talk with him while another steal or take his bags and thus start to run. The man and police man whirsteling thief. The two people run and take the car out of the airport building. They drive the car for a long distance and stop the car; they opens the bags and see the big snake.

26 A surprise



Tafsiri yangu

Katika hadithi hii kuna mtu kuja kutoka nchi nyingine na fika uwanja wa ndege. Akisubiri marafiki zake au ndugu zake watu wawili waja na mmoja anza kuongea naye wakati mwingine iba au chukua mabegi yake na alafu anza kukimbia. Mwanaume na polisi wakapiga mluzi mwizi mwizi. Hao watu wawili kimbia na chukua gari nje ya jengo la uwanja wa ndege. Wanaendesha gari kwa mwendo mrefu na kulisimamisha; wakafungua hayo mabegi na ona yule nyoka mkubwa.

Kiswahili

Kuna mtu ambaye *amewasili* kwenye uwanja wa ndege akisubiri ndugu zake kuja kumpokea. Wakati mtu huyo amesimama akingojea, mara kunaonekana wezi wawili wakipanga *mikakati* ya jinsi ya kumwibia huyu msafiri kwa hiyo hawa wezi wanapanga mkakati na yule mdogo anajifanya anamuuliza yule msafiri, wakati akiongea naye, yule mwizi mkubwa anachukua ile mizigo na kuanza kukimbia nayo, kwa hiyo wote wawili wanatimua mbio.

Mlinzi wa pale uwanjani anapuliza filimbi kuashiria ya kwamba kuna wezi wameiba mzigo wa mtu na kukimbia nao, kwa hiyo wale wezi *wamefanikiwa kutoweka* na lile boksi ambalo ni mzigo wa yule msafiri. Kwa kutumia teksi ya kwao na hivyo wakwenda na ile taksi mpaka sehemu iliyojificha na kupaki teksi yao na kutoa nje lile boksi ili waangalie kilichomo kwenye boksi lile. Wanafungua boksi lile *wakitarajia* watakuta mali yenye thamani na baadala yake wanakuta kule kwenye boksi kuna nyoka mkubwa aina ya chatu na hivyo wale wezi wanabaki *wakitahamaki* kuona nyoka mkubwa namna ile kwenye boksi lile

Maelezo ya Matokeo ya Zoezi hili la utafiti

Insha za wanafunzi zinaonyesha wazi tofauti katika kujieleza katika lugha hizi mbili; Kiswahili na Kiingereza. Kwa ujumla insha za wanafunzi kwa Kiingereza ni hafifu. Katika vidato vyote wanafunzi wamejieleza vema zaidi kwa Kiswahili ukilinganisha na kwa Kiingereza. Insha za wanafunzi katika lugha ya Kiingereza hazieleweki wakati insha za Kiswahili zinaeleza wazi mtiririko wa kibonzo. Insha za Kiingereza kwa kiasi kikubwa hazikufanikiwa kukieleza kibonzo ipaswavyo, hasa Kidato cha Kwanza ambao wana hali mbaya zaidi katika Kiingereza, (Tazama mfano wa kwanza). Insha za Kiingereza zina makosa mengi ya msamiati, sarufi maumbo na kuwakifisha na matumizi ya nyakati mbalimbali katika vidato vyote. Zinaonyesha wazi jinsi wanafunzi wanavyohangaika kujieleza. Insha za wanafunzi kwa Kiswahili ni ndefu zaidi na zinadhihirisha wazi utajiri wa msamiati walionao wanafunzi na hazina makosa madogo madogo kama za Kiingereza. Misamiati hii haipo kwenye insha za Kiingereza za wanafunzi. (Tazama misamiati imetiliwa mkazo katika mifano niliyotoa). Kuna tofauti ndogo sana kwenye insha za Kiingereza katika Kidato cha IV na cha VI. Hamna tofauti kubwa katika vidato vyote cha Kwanza, Nne na cha Sita katika insha za Kiswahili. Matokeo haya ya Tanzania yalifanana sana na matokeo ya Afrika Kusini japokuwa wanafunzi wa walioshiriki Afrika Kusini katika utafiti sawa na huu ni wa shule za msingi. Inaonekana kuwa wanafunzi wanajieleza vema kwa Kiswahili.

Maelezo ya Matokeo ya intavyuu

Jumla ya waalimu asilimia 60 waliafiki kuwa wanafunzi wana tatizo katika utumiaji wa Kiingereza. Hili tatizo ni kubwa zaidi kidato cha Kwanza ambacho ni cha Kwanza kutumia Kiingereza kama lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia. Wanafunzi huwa na kazi kubwa kwani hujifunza misamiati mipya pamoja na kujifunza masomo mapya kwa lugha ya Kiingereza. Matokeo yake wengi wa wanafunzi hawa hushindwa kumudu masomo. Wakati wanafunzi wengi wanashindwa kufuatilia masomo hawapati msaada wa aina yeyote kutoka kwa waalimu kuboresha uelewaji wa masomo. Suala hili lilisadikiwa na waalimu asilimia 73.

Waalimu asilimia 60 walikubali kuwa waalimu kama wanafunzi pia wana tatizo la lugha ya Kiingereza. Tatizo hili walisisitiza kuwa lipo zaidi kwa waalimu wa masomo ya sayansi

kwani semina za lugha ya Kiingereza huwa haziwalengi. Hali hii ya waalimu sasa inazidi kuzorota.

Sera ya lugha haitekelezwi ipaswavyo. Madarasani waalimu wanafundisha kwa kuchanganya Kiswahili pamoja na Kiingereza, na wanafunzi vile vile wanajifunza kwa kuchanganya lugha hizi mbili. Klaus (2001) anasisitiza kuwa wanafunzi hujifunza vema zaidi iwapo wanaelewa mwalimu anasema nini (Tafsiri yetu). Hivyo, kuchanganya Kiswahili na Kiingereza ni mbinu inayowasaidia wanafunzi kuelewa. Waalimu asilimia 80 walikubali kutumia mbinu hii.

Utafiti ulidhihirisha kuwa japo waalimu na wanafunzi hawamudu vyema lugha ya Kiingereza wengi wanasita kuafiki kuwa Kiswahili kitumike kama lugha rasmi ya kufundishia. Walisisitiza kuwa Kiswahili ni lugha ya sayansi na teknolojia na kuwa Kiswahili hakijawa tayari kuweza kufundishia, suala ambalo tumekanusha kwani vitabu ni vingi na kamusi nyingi zipo tayari kwa taaluma mbalimbali, hivo suala la istilahi sio tatizo (Mwansoko 1999).

Vilevile kuna baadhi ya maafisa wa wizara ya elimu waliohiriki katika utafiti huu ambao wanasita kusisitiza umuhimu wa kutekeleza sera ya Utamaduni ambayo inasema Kiswahili kitumike kama lugha rasmi ya kufundisha shule za sekondari. Watu hawa walitoa sababu zifuatazo zikiwemo sababu za kiuchumi, mitizamo ya watu katika jamii kuhusu Kiswahili pia ni potofu. Hakuna lugha isiyofaa kufundishia, Kiswahili kinafaa kufundishia, hata hivyo waalimu tayari wanafundishia kwa Kiswahili kwa asilimia kubwa madarasani. Hivo ujuzi wa kutumia Kiswahili kufundishia na kujifunzia upo wa kutosha. Kuhusu suala la gharama za kutumia Kiswahili ingefaa kama anavyosisitiza Brock-Utne (2000), kuwa kabla hatujatilia maanani suala la uchumi ni vema kuangalia ukubwa wa gharama tunayopata kwa kuendelea kutumia lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia ambayo ni kikwazo kikubwa kwa mamilioni ya wanafunzi.

Hitimisho

Tafiti hizi zimeonyesha kuwa wanafunzi na baadhi ya waalimu hawamudu vizuri lugha ya Kiingereza ambayo ni lugha rasmi ya kujifunzia na kufundishia. Hivo lugha imekuwa ni kikwazo kikubwa katika kufundisha na kujifunza katika shule za sekondari. Imeonekana kuwa wanafunzi na waalimu wanachanganya Kiswahili na Kiingereza madarasani. Kiwango ni kikubwa zaidi vidato vya mwanzo. Utafiti umeonyesha kuwa wanafunzi hawawezi kujieleza vizuri kwa Kiingereza kwa jinsi ambavyo wanaweza kujieleza kwa Kiswahili.

Utafiti umeonyesha kuwa baadhi ya waalimu bado wanashikilia mawazo potofu kuhusu Kiswahili kama lugha ya kufundishia na kujifunzia. Utafiti pia umeonyesha kuwa kuna baadhi ya maafisa elimu wanasita kutekeleza sera ya utamaduni ambayo inasisitiza utumiaji wa Kiswahili kama lugha ya kujifunzia na kufundishia shule za sekondari. Walitoa sababu mbali mbali kutetea mitizamo yao.

Mapendekeko

Kuna umuhimu wa kusisitiza Kiswahili kama lugha ya kufundishia na kujifunzia.

Ili utekelezaji wa sera ya Utamaduni uweze kufanikishwa, tutahijatika kufanya yafuatayo:

- Kuna haja ya kubadili mawazo potofu ya watu kuhusu lugha hizi mbili.
- Kuna umuhimu wa kutumia vyombo vya habari kuelimisha watu kuhusu lugha ya kufundishia na vile vile kusaidia kusambambaza misamiati mipya ya Kiswahili kwa jamii.
- Kiswahili kitapoanza kutumika iende sambamba na utaratibu wa kutunga mitihani ya taifa kwa lugha ya Kiswahili

Vilevile, Kiingereza kifundishwe kama lugha ya kigeni, ukizingatia umuhimu wa lugha hii katika mawasiliano ya kimataifa katika karne hii ya utandawazi.

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Notes

1. Lugha hii hapa ina maana sawa na lugha mama hasa kwa watu wengi wanaozaliwa mijini na katika familia nyingi ambapo watu wanaona kutoka makabila tofauti. Idadi ya wanaokizingumza Kiswahili kama lugha mama inaongezeka kwa kasi.
2. Hapa tunamaana kuwa watu hawa hukizingumza Kiswahili baada ya lugha zao za Kitamaduni. Inasadikika kuwa Tanzania ina lugha za kitamaduni takriban 120.

By the Rivers of Babylon: The Bondage Motif in the Performing Arts, Life and Aesthetics of Rastafarians

John Adebayo Afolabi

Introduction

Rastafarians (popularly called Rastas) are members of a black Caribbean cult, professing black supremacy and fighting for human rights and justice. Today, there are Rastas in many different parts of the world. Rastafarianism itself adopts the cultural aesthetics and revolutionary dimension of Pan-Africanism. The name is based on the name of Ras Tafari, a great-grandson of King Saheka Selassie of Shoa, and the cult derives many of its characteristics from Ethiopianism. Ras Tafari was crowned Negus of Ethiopia in 1930 at a coronation attended by leaders and dignitaries from all over the world. The ceremony, in Rasta conception, was a fulfilment of a spiritual revelation by God through Marcus Garvey. The latter (on the eve of his departure from the Caribbean to the United States of America in 1916) had told his people to look to Africa where a black king would be crowned who would redeem the black race from the shackles of oppression. The prestige of the never-colonized Kingdom of Ethiopia, Ethiopia's historic defeat of Italy at the battle of Adowa (1896), and biblical references to Ethiopia as a great land,¹ are other reasons why Rastas imbibe Ethiopianism.

Forms of Bondage

Descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, Rastas found themselves on the lowest rung of the social strata in the Caribbean. They live under very harsh and traumatically impinging social conditions. The Caribbean islands, the main base of the Rastas, rank among the most poverty-stricken areas of the world, with a vast majority of the people living in slums and dismal settings. The bulk of Rastas in Jamaica, for instance, live in "wattle and daub" houses – houses built with sticks, covered with wattle, plastered with clay and then painted with lime. In most cases, the roofs are made with thatched palm leaves!² Some other Rastas, according to Orlando Patterson, live in shacks:

dreadful, nasty little structures – a cluster of cardboards, barrel sides, old cod-fish boxes, flattened tar drums and timber scraps. A few of the more luxurious consisted of carcasses of old cars.³

and, according to Katrin Norris:

[Rastafarians] live in the utmost squalor in huts of boards, metal scraps, motor car parts, tyres, cardboard and anything they can lay their hands on.⁴

In fact, the wage differential in Jamaica has been described as probably the most alarming in the world, with skilled labourers earning as much as thirty times more than unskilled workers, and with the ratio of the “haves” to the “have-nots” being one to twenty.⁵ Thus are the snarling fangs of capitalism wantonly displayed in the life of the average Caribbean Rasta: it is clear that he is under serious economic bondage. The socioeconomic situation is such that he finds himself pauperized, marginalized, and allowed only minimal resources.

Politically, the Rastaman is in chains. Dissatisfied and disgruntled, he is seen as a potential threat to bourgeois peace and stability. Like the “nigger” in rabidly racist Caucasian settings, every move of the Rasta is viewed with suspicion, even in the Caribbean where his race dominates in numerical strength. Thus baited, his pent-up anger and frustration often erupt into violence, resulting in killings and destruction of property. Clashes between Rastas and civil authorities are almost endemic, often leading to serious casualties on both sides. Madeline Kerr calls this internalized frustration of the Jamaican society an “intraggression”.⁶ No matter how hard he tries, the Rasta still finds the powers of the comprador bourgeoisie firmly established, and the rule of absentee cane farmers and merchants in Europe and America unshakeable in his Caribbean society. He lacks the economic base to effect a political change in a system that oppresses him.

Psychologically, it is not only the Rastaman but all black men in the diaspora that have to battle with the Jim Crow mentality of the oppressing “superior races”. Incredible as it may sound, varieties of rabidly racist, 14th-century theories of humanity still abound. In most Western societies, the Negro is still seen as inferior mentally, socially and physically to the other races of the world! The psychological situation which brings about the defensive “rebel instinct” in Rastas is traceable to their unenviable historical background of slavery, and apparent perpetuations of it in lesser forms, as manifested in occasional whiffs of racism and oppression within their societies.

Prominent among racist theories of society are those of Arthur de Gobineau, Gustave Le Bon, Sir Richard Burton and Charles Darwin. While Gobineau and Le Bon ascribed such terrible qualities to the black race as incapacity to reason, inability to perceive analogies and differences, absence of critical judgement and an inability to control reflex impulses,⁷ Sir Richard Burton, colonial governor of Martinique, asserted that:

The safety of the whites demands that we keep the Negroes in the most profound ignorance. I have reached the stage of believing firmly that one must treat the Negroes as one treats a beast.⁸

He concludes that once a Negro has become adult:

his mental development is arrested, and thenceforth he grows backwards instead of forwards.⁹

This view accords with that of A.B. Ellis, who even tried to give it a scientific basis! To him the “lower races”

acquire knowledge with facility till they arrive at the age of puberty, when the physical nature masters the intellect, and frequently deadens it. This has been attributed by some physiologists to the early closing of the sutures of the nigger’s cranium. They can imitate, but they cannot invent or even apply. They constantly fail to grasp and to generalize a notion.¹⁰

These obvious misconceptions form the bedrock of the megalomaniac, domineering and oppressive attitude of some white people in their relations with blacks, up till today. The Rastaman therefore has a lot to refute, a lot of misconceptions to correct, in order to salvage himself from the physical and psychological bonds which racial bigotry has heaped on him. It comes as no surprise then that Rastas in their art forms refute allegations of their inferiority, proclaim black supremacy and snipe at the imperfections in the social systems of the whites. Such efforts are attempts to rid themselves of the psychological bondage. In the words of the East African literary colossus Ngugi Wa Thiong’o:

The Rastafari movement is one of the organizations helping the wretched of the earth to rise above the absurdity of their situation.¹¹

Manifestation of Bondage in Rasta Arts and Aesthetics

Nowhere is the bondage motif more prevalent in Rastafarian art and aesthetics than in reggae music, the official music of Rastafarians. Rastas have through the medium of this music projected their plight to the world, aesthetically portraying the various forms of bondage bedevilling them. The Rastas in their choice of symbols are eclectic, often drawing on different bondage situations – the Egyptian bondage, the Babylonian, the modern-day Zionist and slavery situations.

Reggae music originated in Jamaica, but like the blues, its latent force, its moving spirit, its primordial inclination and sensibility towards it are hereditarily African. An offshoot of ska, a Jamaican dance music that is patterned after the American rhythm and blues, reggae, like ska, is highly reflective of the Jamaican society. In ska, themes and rhythms are often disorganized and random, to portray the prevalent socioeconomic disorder in Jamaican society. Rastafarians transpose this convention into reggae music with their weird, often appalling appearances and hairdos, and in the syntactic and semantic ambiguities and deviations in their diction, to show that they are in bondage. Like its precursors – ska and rocksteady – which were preoccupied with themes of social injustice and the condition of poor Jamaicans, reggae music serves as a podium for social commentary and protest, and a medium for conscientization. This explains the preponderance in it of themes of oppression,

bondage and injustice. Whether presented in physico-concrete terms or in psychological forms, the bondage motif has never been lacking in Reggae. We shall examine a few excerpts.

In one of Bob Marley's songs, entitled "Concrete Jungle", he portrays the oppressed (black) man's helplessness in the Caribbean. The song, sung in a soft, slow and mournful tone that is suggestive of the pathetic situation that is being described, asserts that the oppressed man is "bounded in captivity". Marley realized that though slavery has been abolished, the black man is still battling with vestiges of slavery in other forms. He is still in sociological and psychological bondage!

No chains around my feet
 But I'm not free
 I know I am bounded in captivity
 And I know I'll be.¹²

In Marley's "Redemption Song" and "Buffalo Soldier", the Negro's position is that of a slave: the musical genius is engaged in historical recapitulation for the purpose of conscientization. There is a recapitulation of the history of slavery, in which the Negro was "robbed" and "sold" to merchant ships ("Redemption Song") or, more succinctly, "Stolen from Africa, brought to America" ("Buffalo Soldier").¹³ In his "Crazy Baldhead" Marley projects the black man's bondage situation. He catalogues a number of atrocities perpetrated against the Negro ("I and I"):

I and I build the cabin
 I and I plant the corn
 Didn't my people before me
 Slave for this country
 Now you look me with a scorn
 Then you eat up all my corn...¹⁴

The agricultural imagery of cultivation is emblematic of the exploitation of the human and economic resources of the Negro, and his marginalization within the capitalist economy which is sustained by the Negro's sweat. It is a statement on the traumatic economic bondage which the capitalist system subjects blacks to. Marley appears more virulent in his criticism of the capitalist system in his "Survival".

How can you be sitting there
 Telling me
 That you care, that you care
 When every time I look around
 The people suffer and they suffer
 In everyway, in everywhere?¹⁵

In this simple but densely packed and emotionally presented opening, Marley portrays the atrocities of the capitalist system, the social dysfunctionality which inheres in it, and the

pathetic plight of the marginalized masses within its social framework. He lists the innate discrepancies in a class society, in couplets:

Some people got everything
 Some people got nothing
 Some people got hopes and dreams
 Some people got ways and means

He then asks, rhetorically, how in such a marginalizing situation there could be survival for the poor black man:

Where is survival
 The black survival?¹⁶

To Marley, the poor masses are in bondage and it will take a miracle to take them out of it, since the webs of capitalism are so closely woven to emasculate its victims. He resorts to biblical allusion to support this. Such a miracle will be:

Like Daniel out of the lion den
 Like Shedrack, Meshack and Abednego
 Burn in the fire, but they never get burnt.¹⁷

In Rasta philosophy, Babylon (in the light of the ancient Israelites' experience) is a place and symbol of oppression and bondage, an exile and another biblical Pharaonic Egypt. Zion, on the other hand, is home. The Rastas notice some similitudes between their situation in exile and that of the Jews in diaspora, especially in Babylon. So while Jamaica is Babylon, Africa is Zion in the Rasta linguistic register. Thus Marley in "Africa Unite" urges his people to unite, as a prerequisite for achieving progress. This progress is seen as a movement out of the Babylonian bondage:

Africa unite
 Cause we're moving right out of Babylon
 And we're grooving into our father's land.¹⁸

The same idea prevails in Marley's chart-buster "Exodus: Movement of Jah People". In this song, Marley advocates a movement out of the bondage of the capitalist system (Babylon) to Africa, using the Egyptian bondage motif as reference point. To break all the bonds and limitations that might hamper this movement, therefore, Marley calls for another biblical Moses to lead the blacks out of oppression:

Let's have another Brother Moses
 One across the sea
 Move.¹⁹

The idea of movement is suggestive of change, freedom, a release from bondage and oppression, an echo of the biblical plea “Let my people go” in revolutionary terms. The idea of “grooving” to the fatherland (“Africa Unite”) is suggestive of enjoyment, relaxation and some kind of euphoria which Africans in diaspora hopefully expect to meet when they go back home to Africa. This, conceptually, is in diametrical opposition to their sufferings in exile. Although the idea may sound idealist or prove meretricious, it is nonetheless a kind of solace and hope to an oppressed people. In Marley’s “Trench Town” the bondage motif is obvious:

Up came a river to wash my dread
 Upon a rock I rest my head
 There I vision through the seas of oppression
 Don’t make my life a prison.²⁰

The literary qualities of this song are orchestrating, with the rhyme scheme adding to its musicality. The imagery in the metaphorical “seas of oppression” and life as “prison” adds more verisimilitude and concretization to what is being discussed. Marley then states the functionality and cathartic effect of reggae music – its use as a psychotherapeutic agent to liberate the body and soul from the bondage of social dysfunctionality:

Lord, we free the people with music
 We free the people with music
 We free our people with music
 With music, oh music, oh music.²¹

In “Babylon” Marley makes a total renunciation and denunciation of the capitalist system, urging the oppressed man to break the shackles of oppression:

We refuse to be
 What you wanted us to be
 We are what we are
 That’s the way
 Its going to be.²²

He calls the Babylon system a vampire that perpetually sucks the blood of the sufferers. He therefore advocates rebellion:

We’ve been taken for granted
 Much too long
 Rebel, rebel.²³

He also traces the genesis of the black man’s suffering to the periods of slavery and colonialism:

From the very day we left

To go out of our fatherland
We've been trampled on.²⁴

In "Redemption Song" Marley sees the black man's bondage as mental and psychological. He therefore conscientizes him:

Emancipate yourself from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look....²⁵

Marley recommends revolutionary violence by the mass of suffering people, to counter the reactionary violence of the oppressor, and to liberate the oppressed from the shackles of oppression. The same bellicose spirit is seen in "War", Marley's adaptation of a speech delivered by the great Emperor Haile Sellasie I on 28 February 1968 at a gathering in California. According to Marley in the song, until racism and oppression are obliterated from the world, there will always be war. He describes the sociopolitical situation in places like Angola, Mozambique and South Africa as "sub-human bondage" which must be destroyed if there is to be peace in the world.²⁶

Other Rasta Artists

Peter Tosh

Besides Marley, another very good projector of the bondage motif is his fellow Jamaican Reggae musician, Peter Mackintosh (Peter Tosh). Much of Tosh's music portrays the black man in sub-human bondage, criticizes western life-styles and espouses rebellion as a way out of the shackles of oppression. Tosh, like Marley, was always revelling in crisis when he was alive. Often on the wrong side of the law for his professions and convictions, Tosh's revolutionary stance is further emphasized by his alliance with tough radical Rasta sects and the scaringly vituperative rhetoric in his music.

Tosh's chart-buster "Equal Rights" was conceived against a background of the cheating and oppression of blacks by whites. He therefore calls for equal rights and justice at all costs:

I don't want no peace
I need
Equal rights and justice ...²⁷

In his "Downpresser Man" Tosh conceptualizes the oppressor in concrete, physical terms. "Downpresser man" in Rasta language is a synonym for the oppressor: a man who presses others down, a subjugator, a suppressor, one who puts his fellow men in bondage. Tosh predicts a time when oppressed men will unite to revolt, throw off their shackles, and in a peculiar feat of revolutionary violence, hunt the oppressor, the downpresser man. There will be no means of escape for the oppressor then. Even nature will sympathize with the oppressed

men and frown on the oppressor. The situation is both dramatic and picturesquely orchestrated:

Downpresser man,
Where U wanna run to?
You gonna run to the sea
But the sea will be boiling
When you run to the sea.
You gonna run to the rocks
The rocks will be melting
When you run to the rocks
I say downpresserman
Where you wanna run to?²⁸

In a dramatic turn of events, therefore, the captives are free and the slave master becomes the captive. He now has to beg to be spared the wrath of the intractable avengers. He resorts to bribery to save his neck, but to no avail, “’cause the downpressed ‘nigger’ ain’t no sucker no more!”:

You can’t bribe no-one
Dem no want no money
The runners money
That money gets funny...²⁹

Breaking the bonds of oppression is his ultimate goal now!

Eddy Grant

Another reggae musician in whose work the bondage motif recurs is Eddy Grant, a highly prolific reggae artist with an orgiastic love for Africa. One of his songs in which this motif is well orchestrated is “War Party” from the album *Killer on the Rampage*. In a very solemn and painfully pathetic tone, Grant vividly describes the relationship between black and white people in the Caribbean – the deceit of the oppressor who pretends that he loves the oppressed men, inviting them to “parties”, only to exploit, use and then discard them.

Such a “party” is emblematic of the false alliances, facaded traps and solidarity moves with which the oppressor baits his victims. It is what Grant regards as a War Party. He therefore declines an invitation to such alliances, where he would be caged. Moreover, he has heard and seen the outcome of such meetings in the past between the oppressor and the oppressed:

You invite me to a war party
Me no wanna go
Everybody seems to be inviting me to
A war party, me no wanna go
Heard about the last one
So thanks, but no thank you.³⁰

Grant goes on to outline all the heinous crimes perpetrated against the Hamitic races by the Caucasian races, the enslavement of the Negro races, their pogrom-like elimination and the fact that the situation is still prevalent:

You killed off all the Indians
 And you killed off all the slaves
 But not quite
 So you killed off the remains.³¹

The situation becomes a game of hide and seek, the oppressor hunting his victim and the victim hiding, reminiscent of the Egyptian bondage motif – how Pharaoh sought and killed all the male children of the Israelites who were then in his bondage:

You a look for me, and I'm looking for you
 I can't believe what they say about you is true
 That you're a bastard just like Pharaoh
 You killed the children just like Pharaoh
 Now you sent a ticket for me
 It don't have RSVP
 Oh lord it's a war party.³²

The oppressor has given him no chance to reply, so as not to turn the invitation down (“It don't have RSVP”), but the oppressed man is wiser now, having learnt from experience:

Heard about the last one
 So thanks, but no, thank you.³³

Obviously, the black man is still in chains as he is daily tricked into false alliances with the oppressor. The result? Disaster:

You've invited all our wise men
 Many times before
 To dance around your fires
 And even out your scores
 And when the toll's taken
 Of the valiant and the brave
 The only decoration
 Is the one upon the graves.³⁴

The Theme of Bondage in Other Art Forms

Some Rastas are fine artists and carvers. Even in the works of these artists, oppression and the fact that the black man is in bondage are manifest. Carvings, drawing, and paintings of weird, sad or weeping personalities are common in Rastafarian aesthetics.

Dreadlocks and rough (natty) appearances are used by Rastas as a sign that they are still in bondage, besides being symbols of their defiance of the existing sociopolitical order.

Nigerian Rastas are usually unanimous about keeping their dreadlocks. Some of them were interviewed by this researcher. When asked when they will do away with their dreadlocks, they all said not until the black man is no longer in chains!³⁵

The use of marijuana by Rastas is another effect of their bondage, especially in their native Jamaica. Marijuana, which Rastas regard as a holy herb and an effective cure for such ailments as asthma, bronchitis and other cold symptoms, is in actual fact a kind of opium, used to suppress the sorrowful feelings engendered by the dismal Babylon system; the bondage underneath which the Jamaican Rastas operate. This is attested to by Professor Leon Barrett. In his scholarly work, *The Rastafarians of Marijuana*, he writes:

Its use produces psycho-spiritual effects and has socio-religious functions, especially for people under stress. It produces visions, heightens unity and communal feelings, dispels gloom and fear and brings tranquility to the mind of the dispossessed.³⁶

And in corroboration of this view, a fifty-year old Rasta elder declares:

If Ganja was not available in Jamaica as a sedative to keep poor people calm, the island would have experienced anarchy already.³⁷

In his “Easy Skanking” Bob Marley states the importance of marijuana as a suppressant of sorrowful feelings caused by the oppressive realities innate in his society:

Excuse me while I light my spliff
Good God, I gotta take a lift
From reality I just can't drift
That's why I'm staying with this riff.³⁸

Generally, use of marijuana, alcohol and other drugs is an index marker of societies where oppression reigns supreme, where certain members of society are in bondage. Besides the Caribbean, South Africa during the apartheid years is another good example. Rastas also use marijuana in order to protest against their oppression within the “Babylon System” which bans its use. Professor Barrett asserts that:

As a protest against society, ganja smoking was the first instrument of protest engaged in by the Rastafarian movement to show its freedom from the laws of Babylon.³⁹

In language, Rastas have developed a speech and language culture out of the conventional English language. It is in fact a deliberate bastardization of the language of the oppressor, as a mark of protest against him; a psychological means of feeling free from bondage. Rastafarian bastardization of language involves the changing of the orthodox meaning of words to their opposites, for example, the adjective “natty” which in conventional English means “neat, smart or daintily tidy” is normally used in Rasta register to describe a dirty-looking

dreadlocked Rasta! The bastardization also takes the form of the breaking of basic linguistic rules, qualitative deviations from the rules of the English language and a deliberate creation of incoherence and syntactic and semantic ambiguities in language to portray the contradictions and frustrations that are inherent in the oppressive Babylon system.

Edward Brathwate, using Shakespeare's Prospero and Caliban (from *The Tempest*) as symbols, regards the kinds of language scheme engaged in by the Rastas and some other black artists in the Caribbean as "Calibanization" and traces its origin to the eras of slavery and colonialism. He asserts that the Calibanization of the language of the enslavers is the first and most fundamental form of cultural resistance undertaken by the slaves during the era of slavery.⁴⁰

George Lamming, too, identifies language as playing a historic role as a major colonizing agent. Using the relationship between Prospero and Caliban as a symbol of that between the colonizer (the oppressor) and the colonized (the oppressed), he advocates a rejection of the language of the colonizer, before the colonized individual could be totally free from bondage. This is because, according to Lamming, an adoption of a foreign language engenders a kind of spiritual exile from the colonized man's native inheritance.⁴¹

Conclusion

Rastafarians are obviously pushed towards defiance by the prevalent sociopolitical realities under which they operate. They definitely have their virtues. Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica, once referred to them as "beautiful and remarkable people".⁴² Professor Barrett, too, admits that the Rastafarian movement has a philosophy and structure that is capable of providing a rallying point for the masses in search of social change, and that it has "evolved into a dynamic, creative instrument for social change".⁴³

What the Rastas agitate for is simple: justice, not judgment; fair, if not equal opportunity with others to make their lives; and freedom to live their lives the way they want, in a world that is devoid of oppression and bondage. They have projected these convictions to the world through their arts, beliefs and ways of life, and the whole world now knows about the bondage under which Negroes operate in Jamaica and other parts of the world. They are, in the words of Shakespeare, men "more sinned against than sinning".⁴⁴

A reversal of the situation will definitely see the Rastas harnessing and diverting all their efforts towards constructive, patriotic and not necessarily confrontational activities in society. Until the prevalent anomalies are rectified, the theme of bondage and reactions to bondage will continue traumatically to dominate Rasta arts, life and aesthetics.

Notes

1. See, for example, Psalm 68 verse 31.
2. Barrett, 1977:8-11.
3. Patterson, 1965:23.
4. Norris, 1962:36.
5. Barrett, 1977:12.

6. Kerr, 1961:21.
7. Biddis, 1970:134–144; Mezu, 1973:86–88.
8. Sir Richard Burton, the Colonial Governor of Martinique, as quoted in James, 1984:17
9. Ibid.
10. Ellis, 1890:9.
11. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1972:86.
12. "Concrete Jungle", Marley, 1985.
13. "Redemption Song", Marley, 1980; "Buffalo Soldier", Marley, 1983a.
14. "Crazy Baldhead", Marley, 1983b.
15. "Survival", Marley, 1980.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. "Africa Unite", Marley, 1980.
19. "Exodus", Marley, 1983.
20. "Trench Town", Marley, 1983a.
21. Ibid.
22. "Babylon", Marley, 1980.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. "Redemption Song", Marley, 1980.
26. "War", Marley, 1983b.
27. "Equal Rights", Tosh, 1977.
28. "Downpressorman", Tosh, 1977.
29. Ibid.
30. "War Party", Grant, 1982.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. The present researcher interviewed ten Natty Dread Rastafarians on the issue of dreadlocks.
36. Barrett, 1977:129.
37. Ibid. p. 130.
38. "Easy Skanking", Marley, 1978.
39. Barrett, 1979:129.
40. Brathwate, 1970.
41. Paquet, 1982:1–15.
42. Barrett, 1977:xi.
43. Ibid.
44. Act IV, scene 2.

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African Studies in China

Hong Yonghong

The earliest history of African studies in China may be dated back to Han Dynasty (B.C.206—A.D.220)⁵⁵. But, the African studies as an academic discipline in China started in 1949. This history can be divided into four phases: their emergence and development from 1949 to 1965; their suspension from 1966 to 1970; their revival from 1971 to 1977; and their later development from 1978 up to the present.

The Emergence and Initial Development of African Studies in China, 1949–1965

It is generally believed that African studies in China began in 1949, at the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, the true commencement date is 1955. It was in this year that the Asian–African Conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia. This was the famous Bandung Conference, which was attended by Premier Zhou, the first premier of New China. At this conference, Zhou made a noteworthy speech on contemporary international relations, calling on all the Asian and African peoples to unite to defy imperialism and colonialism.

On 4 July 1961 the Institute of Asian and African Studies opened its doors. The Institute had been set up at the behest of Chairman Mao Zedong, and was attached to the Division of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CASS). At the same time the Chinese Society for Asian and African Studies was established, which served as a common forum for Chinese scholars and governmental officials. In 1964, the Institute of Asian and African Studies was divided into two: the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) and the Institute of South Asian Studies.

During this period, Chinese scholars compiled several works on Africa, such as the *Survey of Africa*, *Outline of Different Countries*, *African Manual*, *Catalogue of African Books*, *Africa from Darkness to Dawn*, *Africa Towards Independence and Freedom*, and so on. The Institute published a journal, the *Asian–African Journal of Translation*, translating many articles by Soviet authors into Chinese. Meanwhile, Chinese scholars translated many works about Africa into Chinese, such as W.E.B. du Bois's *Africa*, Suret Canale's *Afrique Noire: Occidentale et Centrale*, W.A. Hunton's *Fate of Africa*, and E.Sik's *US Foreign Policy in Africa*.

The main feature of African studies in China during this period was that they dealt with fundamental issues, introducing the Chinese people to a basic knowledge of Africa. One of the important methods was to give lectures about Africa to students. For example, in many universities and colleges, teachers presented courses on African history, dealing with contemporary African politics, culture and economy, especially the African people's struggle for independence. Yang Renbian, a professor at Peking University, was preeminent among these teachers. He gave lectures on African history and supervised the first postgraduates to major in African history. His teaching materials, compiled by his postgraduate students, were published later.

In the early years Chinese scholars of Africa were interested in the African independence movement, its methods of operation, its characteristics, its functions, etc. Most of the scholars believed that the best way for the independence movement to succeed was through armed struggle. This led to the question of how to explain those states that gained self-government peacefully. The answer given by some Chinese scholars was that other countries in the world were carrying on the armed struggle or had won their independence through armed struggle. As Chairman Mao said, "no reactionary concedes to progress without a fight." Therefore, the African independence movement is also called the African liberation movement or the African liberation struggle (or war) by many Chinese people.

The Suspension of African Studies in China, 1966–1970

In 1966, the Cultural Revolution broke out. The intellectuals, as "reactionary academic authorities", were attacked first. The students began to strike, and the Red Guards began to struggle against their teachers. Almost all scholars were criticized and obliged to defend themselves. They had to give up their research and were unable to do academic work. This led to the paralysis of African studies in China.

Despite this, Sino-African relations improved during this period. China and African countries have a similar history. They had been ruled by European colonialists, and they faced the same challenge, i.e., how to modernize. Especially, China consistently supported the independence of African countries and the liberation of the African people, and a profound friendship was established between the two peoples. The Chinese government has stressed the significance of Sino-African relations: as Chairman Mao said, "African people are our true friends, and both Chinese and African people must unite to struggle against imperialism and hegemonism." It is because of this foreign policy that the United Nations (UN) recognized the legal status of the PRC, with the support of most African countries.

The Revival of African Studies in China, 1971– 1977

Because of its own efforts and those of the developing countries, especially African countries, China was admitted to the UN in 1971. Chairman Mao described this vividly as follows: "We [the Chinese people] have been helped into the UN by our black brothers". This was the beginning of the revival of African studies. The Chinese government arranged for some scholars to translate a series of African works concerning 50 or more African countries into Chinese. These works are used as "internal reference materials" by Chinese diplomats,

embassy staff and researchers. The covers of all of these publications are yellow, so Chinese scholars call them "Yellow Books".

These books concern many African countries, including their politics, economy, culture and history: for instance, Basil Davidson's *Old Africa Rediscovered*, Louis John's *History of South Africa*, the *History of Black Africa* by Anderlie (a Hungarian historian), *African History* by the Soviet Union Academy of Social Science. This series of works provides a basic knowledge of African countries. It could be called, *A Survey of Various African Countries*.

Chinese Institutes of African Studies in China, from 1978 up to the present

The fall of the Gang of Four in 1977 marked the end of the Cultural Revolution. In the following year, the Chinese government chose Xiangtan University, located in the late Chairman Mao's hometown, Xiangtan City, Hunan Province, for the establishment of an institute for the study of African affairs. An Office of African Studies was set up at the university that year and the biannual *Reference Journal of African Affairs* began publication². In 1979, under the sponsorship of Xiangtan University, the first academic conference on African affairs was held. During this conference, the Chinese Association for African History was founded in Xiangtan City. In the same year, Nanjing University, Xiangtan University and Nankai University etc. sponsored the establishment of the Chinese Association for African Studies. In 1998, the Office of African Studies was renamed the Xiangtan University Institute of African Laws, with the present author as director.

In 1978, IWAAS resumed its research. In 1981, it was integrated into CASS. The present director of IWAAS is Professor Yang Guang. The institute's research interests are comprehensive, its major concerns being the politics, economics, social development and international relations of the 73 countries and regions in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. It has a total staff of 60, of whom 40 are researchers. Its research work is conducted by four research units, namely the Division for Middle East Studies, the Division for African Studies, the Division for International Relations, and the Centre for Southern African Studies.

The Division of African Studies, headed by Professor Zhang Hongming, is mainly engaged in the study of Africa's contemporary politics and economics, history, ethnicity and traditional culture. The Division for International Relations, headed by Professor Zhang Xiaodong, focuses on research in international relations in the Middle East and Africa. The Centre for Southern African Studies, headed by Professor Yang Lihua, focuses on the political and economic development of post-apartheid South Africa and the regional integration of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Editorial Department, headed by Xu Tuo and Wu Chuanhua, produces a bimonthly journal on West Asia and Africa. It is the leading academic journal devoted to Middle Eastern and African studies in China. The journal has established exchange relations with publishers at home and abroad. The Chinese Association of Asian and African Studies is attached to IWAAS.

Peking University set up the Institute of Asian-African Studies in the early 1980s. In 1998, the Centre for African Studies was founded at Peking University. This is an interdisciplinary institute for comprehensive African research. It consists of teachers and research fellows from different departments and institutes at the university, who are

specialists in African politics, economics, culture, history, sociology, languages and literature. The present director is Professor Lu Ting-en.

The China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), which is under the leadership of the State Council, was founded in 1983. It is divided both on geographic lines and on the issues that are dealt with. The Division for West Asia and Africa, which submits its research to the Government to aid it in determining foreign policy, is one of the geographic divisions. The current director is Lu Zhongwei.

The Institute of African Studies at Nanjing University was founded in 1990. Its predecessor was the Office of African Economic Geography, founded in 1964. Its research fields include African economics and geography. The present director is Professor Zeng Zenggu.

In 1999, the Centre for Asian–African Studies was founded at Yunnan University; it conducts research into African culture and international relations. Professor Liu Hongwu is the present director. In the same year, Shanghai Normal University set up its Centre for African Studies, which concentrates on African history. The director is Professor Shu Yunguo. In 2003, the Centre for African Educational Studies was founded at Zhejiang Normal University. The director is Professor Xu Hui.

In addition, there are some scholars who specialize in African affairs at East China Normal University, Nankai University, Renmin University, Peking International Relations College, the Central University for National Affairs, Zhengzhou University, Shanxi University, Shanghai Social Science Academy, and so on.

Major Works on African Studies

African studies by Chinese scholars cover many fields. I have divided them roughly into six aspects, as follows: history; politics and law; economics and geography; culture and education; international relations; and studies of different African states and regions.

African History

In the early period of African research, Chinese scholars concentrated on African history. The first African work by a Chinese scholar, the late Professor Yang Renbian, is the *Concise General History of Africa*.³ This consists of Professor Yang's teaching materials, and was compiled by his former postgraduate students, who are now university teachers. In 1995, the East China Normal University Press published *A General History of Africa* in three volumes: the first volume, on ancient African history, is chief-edited by He Fangchuan and Nin Sao; the second, on modern African history, is chief-edited by Ai Zhouchang and Zheng Jiaqing; and the third, on contemporary African history, is chief-edited by Lu Ting-en and Peng Kunyuan. Other works on African history are *General African History*,⁴ *Past and Present in Africa*,⁵ *Textbook of African History*,⁶ and *Rising Africa and its History*.⁷ Also, Chinese scholars have translated some works on African history into Chinese, for instance, Anderlie's *Black African History*, UNESCO's *General African History*, Roland Oliver's *Africa Since 1800*, B. Davidson's *Africa in Modern History*, and M. El Fasi and D.T. Niane's *General History of Africa*.

In addition to African history in general, Chinese scholars are interested in the histories of the various African states and special domains. *The Brief History of African Liberation Movements* by Wu Bingzhen and Gao Jingyuan was published by World Knowledge Press in 1993. *Colonial Rule and Social Protest in Agricultural Regions: A Study of the Eastern Province of Ghana During the Colonial Era* by Li Anshan was published by Hunan Education Press in 1999. His another work, *The History of the Overseas Chinese in Africa*, was published by Overseas Chinese Press in 2000. Zhen Jiaqing's *History of Colonial Africa* was published by Peking University Press in 2000. Zhang Xiang's *Rainbow Nation: The New South Africa* was published by the Modern World Press in 1998. Liu Wenpeng's *History of Ancient Egypt* was published by the Commercial Press in 2000.

The idea that Africa is one of the cradles of humankind is accepted by almost all Chinese scholars. Generally, they divide African history into three phases: ancient history, modern history, and contemporary history. Ancient Africa is also called pre-colonial Africa, and includes primitive African society, slave society and the feudal society. Before the arrival of European settlers, most African peoples were in the final stage of primitive society. The watershed between ancient Africa and modern Africa was the year 1415 when Prince Henry of Portugal occupied the small islands off the North African coast. Contemporary African history begins in the 1960s.

African Politics and Law

African politics is closely related to its history. Many Chinese historians also study African politics. The main works are *Africa and Imperialism (1914-1939)* by Lu Ting-en,⁸ *A New Treatise on African Socialism* by Tang Dadun, Xu Jiming and Chen Gongyuan,⁹ *A Concise Dictionary of African Socialism* by Lan Ying,¹⁰ *Political Change in Contemporary Africa* by Xu Jiming and Tan Shizhong,¹¹ *Political Development in Africa: From Many Perspectives* by Zhang Hongming,¹² *Social Security Systems of Contemporary West Asian and African Countries* by Yang Guang and Wen Baoyou,¹³ and *Report on Political Developments in the Middle East and Africa* (one volume a year) by Yang Guang and Wen Baoyou.¹⁴

Chinese scholarship in this field covered a wide range of topics such as African socialism, the party systems, military coups, ethnic conflicts, questions of corruption, and so on. Of these topics, African socialism is one of the most interesting. Most scholars discussed African socialism under four headings: African Arabic socialism; African democratic socialism; African rural socialism; and African scientific socialism.¹⁵ The basic characteristic of African Arabic socialism is that it combines socialism with Islam, as in Nasser's Egypt and Khaddafi's Libya. Leopold Senghor in Senegal and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana represented African democratic socialism, which called for the rebirth of "the African character" or the recovery of "African roots". This was a political doctrine that stressed independence, pride, and honesty. The classic example of African rural socialism was the Ujamaa movement of Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, which stressed the importance of the collective. Nyerere did not believe that Tanzania would benefit from a dogmatic application of Soviet-style socialism. He pointed out that African conditions were very different from the European conditions familiar to Marx and Lenin. In contrast to this, African scientific socialists like Mohamed Siad Barre in Somalia, Marien Ngouabi in Congo (Brazzaville), and Mariam Mengistu in Ethiopia,

insisted that Marxism–Leninism was the only true socialism and that it could be applied in every case. Chinese scholars agree that African socialism, whatever its form, was an innovative move towards national independence and development.

The study of African law came later. In the mid-1980s, when China first entered the international marketplace, Chinese law scholars began to pay more attention to foreign countries' legal systems. The Shanghai Social Science Academy translated and compiled *Constitutional Systems and Commercial Laws of Various Countries*, one volume of which dealt with the law in African countries.¹⁶ In 2000, Hunan People's Press published *Introduction to African Law*¹⁷, the first work by Chinese scholars on the different African legal systems: African customary legal systems, African religious systems, African common law, African civil law, and the different subdivisions of African law: constitutional law, criminal law, marriage and family law, commercial law, procedural law and human rights law. Since 1999, the national academic journal of West Asia and Africa has set up a column for "Studies of African Laws"; the main contributors are the members of the Institute of African Laws. This year, another work, *Comment on African Criminal Laws* by Hong Yonghong, will be published by China Jiancha Press.

African Economics and Geography

There are a few books about African geography. They are: *Oil in Africa*,¹⁸ *A Survey of African Agricultural Geography* (two volumes),¹⁹ and *Timber in Africa*.²⁰ Besides this, a number of atlases showing the geographical, political and climatic situation in Africa are also published every year.

In contrast to these, the Chinese intellectual attached great importance to studies of African economics. Many works have been published. *A Study of African Economic and Social Development Stratagems*, edited by many Chinese scholars, was published by People's Publishing House in 1992. Its chief editor was Zhang Tongzhu. Also published in that year was *Economic Reform and Development in Africa*, edited by the Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations. *A Guide to African Trade* was published by Fudan University Press in 1993.²¹ Social Science Literature Publishing House issued *Rethinking and Development: Economic Adjustment and Sustainable Development in Africa* in 1998.²² The East China Normal University Press published two works: *A Study of African Population Growth and Economic Development*, edited by Shu Yunguo, in 1996 and *The Development of African National Capital* by Luo Jianguo in 1997. *The African Market Economy* was published by Lanzhou University Press in 1994.²³ *A New Chance for the African Market* was published by China Foreign Trade Press in 1997.²⁴ *African Market Organization* was published by China Encyclopaedia Press in 1995.²⁵ Another work was *African Economic Circle and Chinese Enterprises* by Li Zhibiao.²⁶

These works deal with the factors that affected economic development in Africa. They ascribe the decline in most African economies to the failure to develop independent post-colonial economies, and to internal as well as external factors. The internal factors are of two kinds: natural forces and mistaken government policies. The external causes of economic decline are the impact of the debt burden and its progenitor, foreign aid, the international market environment, and the policies of the World Bank and the IMF.

African Culture and Education

There are four important works on African culture, namely *The Culture of African Black People* by Ning Sao,²⁷ *A Study of the Culture of Black Africa* by Liu Hongwu,²⁸ *Traditional Culture and Modernization in Africa* by Li Baoping,²⁹ and *African Black Civilization* by Ai Zhouchang.³⁰ The authors of these works are interested in sub-Saharan African traditional cultures, especially the relations between traditional culture and modern civilization in Africa. They believe it is necessary to rethink African traditional cultures, and that they should neither be eliminated nor preserved in full. In addition, Chongqing Publishing House published a series called *Gallery of Africa* in 2000, which surveyed 33 African countries. In 1995, Changchun Publishing House published *Blooding Africa: The Impact of European Civilization on African Civilization* by Feng Yujun and Liu Yanling. There are also other books about African culture, namely *The Wisdom of Africa* by Mu Tao,³¹ *Egypt: Africa's Ancient Civilization*, by Hu Sanmei,³² *Pyramid of Thought: Africa and Oceania* by Yi Hong,³³ and *South Africa: The Mutual Impact of Black and White Culture* by Pan Guangming and Li Zhong.³⁴

According to Chinese scholars, African black culture is an important part of world culture. Its formation was closely connected to the African geographical environment, the structure of the tribes, ethnicity and linguistic systems. Traditional black culture in Africa is deeply influenced by the traditional religions, which are manifested in ancestor worship, worship of a supreme being, and initiation rites. It is a kind of culture handed down orally mainly in the form of history, myths and proverbs. The Western colonialists' invasion in the 15th century had a great impact on African traditional culture. After their independence, the African countries initiated a renaissance of black culture and advocated Negritude. African traditional culture is an important factor affecting the continent's development. The positive elements of the traditional cultures will expedite the modernization process but the negative ones will obstruct it. African socialism is an experiment to find the proper way to merge tradition and modernity.

As far as African education is concerned, there are a number of books that deal with African schools, for example, *An Outline of African Education*, co-written by a group of authors,³⁵ *The Manual of Universities in Africa* by the Chinese Ministry of Education,³⁶ *African Education Since the Second World War* by Li Jianzhong,³⁷ *Higher Education in Ten Countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America* by Wang Liushuan,³⁸ *The Famous Universities of the World (Africa and Oceania)* by Ya Xiong,³⁹ *The Teaching of Islam* by Wang Junrong and Feng Jinyuan,⁴⁰ etc.

Chinese research into African education is very limited. Nevertheless, Chinese scholars have many achievements in this field. Chinese scholars distinguish roughly three periods in the development of African education: the pre-independence period, the period from the 1960s to the 1970s, and the period after the 1980s. During the first period African education was deeply influenced by its colonizers. After independence, the African countries tried their best to develop education, which led to a rapid increase in the numbers of schools. Since the 1980s, because of financial constraints, the number of schools has decreased and the quality of education cannot be guaranteed. Several lessons can be drawn from the history of African education: for example, a favourable environment is needed, the effects of rapid population

growth must be considered, and priority should be given to higher education rather than primary education.

International Relations in Africa

Without doubt, most Chinese scholars are interested in relations between Africa and China. The main works are: *China and Africa* by the Centre for African Studies at Peking University,⁴¹ *Relations between China and Africa over Two Thousand Years* by Sheng Fuwei,⁴² *Friendly Communication between Old Africa and China* by Chen Gongyuan,⁴³ and *Relations between China and Africa*.⁴⁴ *China's Discovery of Africa* by Dutch writer J.J.L. Duyvendak was translated into Chinese in 1983.

As stated above, the Chinese people are sincere friends of the African people, and there is a long history of communication between China and Africa. The development of Sino-African relations after the foundation of the new China went through the following stages: in the 1960s, Sino-African relations were established and developed. During this period Premier Zhou visited Africa three times and put forward the "Five Principles" for developing relations with African countries, and the "Eight Principles" of economic and technical aid. In the late 1960s, Sino-African relations suffered a setback as a result of the Cultural Revolution. The emphasis shifted from political relations to economic and trade relations in the 1980s. In the 1990s, Sino-African relations entered a new era of full cooperation. In the eyes of Chinese scholars, maintenance of stable and good Sino-African relations not only benefits China and Africa, but also contributes to the unity of developing countries. Favourable conditions exist for the development of Sino-African relations, such as long-standing traditional friendships, mutually dependent economic and trade relations, and the common need to fight against hegemonism and power politics and to establish a fair and reasonable new international economic order. However, there also exist some challenges such as the Taiwan issue, etc.

Chinese scholars are also interested in relations between Africa and other states. *Africa and the USA* by Liang Genchen⁴⁵ is a study of US–African relations from 1945 to 1990. *The Foreign Relations of African States* by Tang Tongming examines the foreign policies of most African states since their independence.⁴⁶ *International Conflicts and Disputes (Africa)* by Wu Hua⁴⁷ deals with various conflicts among the African countries. There is also a book covering relations between Africa and other states published in Taiwan by Tianyi Publishing House in 1982. Another text looks at relations between Russia, Africa and the Middle East. *Les Conflits de Frontières en Afrique* by Egyptian writer B.B.Ghali, which deals with the same subject, was translated into Chinese in 1979.

Studies of Different African States and Regions

Generally, Chinese scholars divide Africa into five regions: Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern, and Central Africa. In 1997, the World Knowledge Press published a series of books about different countries, five volumes of which dealt with African countries.⁴⁸ Each volume dealt with a different African region. Other works include *The Northern African Countries*,⁴⁹ *A Guide to Trade and Investment in Central and Western Africa*,⁵⁰ and so on.

There are many books about individual African states. According to the available statistics, 95 such works were published between 1990 and 2000, but most of them focus on

Egypt and South Africa. There are about 40 books about Egypt, and most of them are about ancient Egyptian history and civilization, for example, *The Ancient Pyramid* by Li Jidong, published by Liaonin University Press in 1996, and *The Lost Civilization* by Mu Tao and Ni Huaqiang, published by East China Normal University Press in 1999. There are 26 books about South Africa, for example, *South Africa* by Ge Ji, published by World Knowledge Press in 1994, *Ethnic Relations in South Africa* by Xia Jisheng, published by East China Normal University Press in 1996, the *Politics and Economy of South Africa* by Yan Fu, published by Nankai University Press in 1998, and *Modernization in South Africa* by Ai Zhouchang and others, published by East China Normal University Press in 2000. Although they cover a wide range, including the history, politics, culture, education and economy of the African states, about a third of them are biographies. There are 12 works about Nelson Mandela, making up one-third of the biographies.

Conclusion

Since the foundation of the new China in 1949, Chinese scholars have had great achievements in African studies. I have briefly outlined them in this article. It is undeniable that attention has been paid to certain issues, while others have been disregarded. For example, Chinese scholars have paid a little attention to Afro-Arab relations. There is a need for more communication between Chinese and African scholars. I hope that Chinese intellectuals will make greater progress in African studies as Sino-African academic communications develop.

Notes

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1. Han Shu (History of Han Dynasty), an ancient Chinese text, mentions some places in Africa. According to another ancient Chinese text, Song Shi (History of Song Dynasty), the kings of Song Dynasty (A.D.960—1279) accepted some deer and zebras presented by African kings. During the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644), Zheng He, a Chinese navigator, with his fleet, made seven voyages and visited some kingdoms in Eastern Africa.
2. It ceased publication in 1986.
3. World Knowledge Press, 1984.
4. Edited by the General African History authors group, Peking Normal University Press, 1985.
5. Edited by Lu Ting-en, Nin Sao and Zhao Shuhui, Peking Normal University Press, 1989.
6. Edited by Lu Ting-en and Ai Zhouchang, East China Normal University Press, 1990.
7. Edited by Gu Zhangyi, China Youth Press, 1999.
8. Peking University Press, 1987.
9. Education and Science Publishing House, 1994.
10. East China Normal University Press, 1992.
11. Economy and Science Press, 1988.

12. Social Science Publishing House, 1999.
13. Law Publishing House, 2001.
14. Published yearly by Social Science Literature Publishing House.
15. Some scholars classified them into three categories, namely African-style socialism, Northern African Arabic socialism and African scientific socialism; others into two categories, namely Northern African socialism and Black African socialism; or African-style socialism and scientific socialism.
16. Law Publishing House, 1986.
17. Edited by Hong Yonghong et al.
18. Edited by Zhang Tongzhu, Science Publishing House, 1991.
19. Edited by Chen Zongde and Yao Guimei, China Financial Press, 2000.
20. Edited by Liu Peng et al., China Linye Press, 1996.
21. Edited by Chen Guangyao and Yang Yiping.
22. Edited by Tan Shizhong.
23. Edited by Yang Dezhen and Su Zeyu.
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25. Edited by Chen Mo.
26. Beijing Publishing House, 2001.
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Welcome to the NGO World of the South Sudan: Reflections

Peter Adwok Nyaba

To a person who has travelled in any part of war-torn South Sudan these days, it will come as no surprise that the peace talks in Naivasha are on the mind of every South Sudanese, whether ordinary or sophisticated. During the last two weeks of January 2004, I travelled through Central Equatoria and Lakes. I passed through Yei, Maridi, Yambio, and Mundri and wound up in Rumbek. It is no exaggeration to say that even those among the displaced and homeless of the liberated towns and villages of South Sudan who had become deranged owing to the war or who had sunk into apathy felt concerned, and enquired whether peace was at hand.

The towns and villages we passed through had been liberated by the gallant SPLA forces of Central Equatoria, Lakes and parts of Bahr el Ghazal in 1997, since when there has been no active fighting there, except for the wanton and intermittent aerial bombardment by the Government aircraft that used to characterize South Sudan until a few months ago. Western Equatoria, of course, was liberated as early as 1990 and its people have since been living in freedom and relative peace. Unfortunately, this has not translated into social and economic recovery.

I was part of an exploratory trip undertaken by SNV, a Dutch NGO operating in East and the Horn of Africa. The objectives of the trip apart, I had a reason of my own for taking the long overland journey from Kaya to Rumbek. As a student of society and a social and development activist I wanted to gauge for myself the people's expectations and the socioeconomic changes that had taken place since my last trip, in 1999. In that year I had made a similar journey as part of a CRS team engaged in a background study for USAID's Sudan Transitional Aid for Rehabilitation (STAR) programme, which was then about to be implemented in the ten counties of Central, Western Equatoria and Lakes.

The international humanitarian intervention spearheaded by the UN/OLS on behalf of the victims of war remains to date a double-edged sword. Its impact on the people of South Sudan will last for a very long time to come. On reflection, my trip made it absolutely clear that everything of interest and value in South Sudan is still driven by relief and development aid institutions. A few individuals have managed to log themselves into the comforts of war and aid-driven economy, while the majority wallow in abject poverty and neglect. Thus in

Yei, Yambio, Maridi, Mundri, Yeri and Rumbek, Ugandan and Kenyan consumer goods (beers, salt, cigarettes, and so on) are ubiquitous. Ironically, this has become a means of siphoning back to East Africa what little cash comes in as remuneration for the staff of the humanitarian agencies or that accrues from the provision of services and the exchange of local produce.

South Sudan is experiencing a second tragedy – economic exploitation along with the deprivation of the many. The trip has alerted me to an important fact that we have ignored since the outbreak of the war: that nobody offers you anything for nothing. The US is the biggest provider of relief aid to South Sudan and we are left with a feeling of gratitude.

The US ships in thousands of tons of maize and soya bean cooking oil. Maize and soya grow well in Equatoria, and Western Equatoria has been producing surplus crops which lie rotting in its stores in Yambio, Nzara, Tambura and Maridi. Did it ever occur to the providers of food relief that it would cost less to buy maize, cooking oil and other consumable goods from the farmers in Western Equatoria and Lakes than from the USA or Europe? The answer is yes, but of course importing from the US works to strengthen the US economy so that it can provide us with food relief. This could be the height of cynicism. In this I clearly saw the hollowness of the process we call liberation, for which the South Sudanese have sacrificed two and half million lives in less than two decades. What does “liberation” really mean if in the end relief dependency syndrome dominates the thinking of the people who have not seen members of the ruling class for a long time? What does it mean if chasing the Northern Sudanese and their soldiers from the towns and villages has not translated into economic freedom for our farmers and cattle herders?

I had the shock of my life while in Rumbek. South Sudan is like a free port where all currencies and commodities, except the Sudanese dinar, circulate freely. However, in APEX camp, which serves the high-class UN agency and NGO staff, we had the rude shock of being told that we could not pay for Bell beer in Ugandan shillings, although the beer is produced in Uganda. The new economic masters of South Sudan operate as if there is no local authority and they act in a way that is insensitive to the people. They claim that this is because they are being heavily taxed, but this is unconvincing, to say the least. My real fear is that nobody seems to care. Everybody, including those in positions of authority, is complaining about everything, yet nothing is happening in terms of reforms.

The level of corruption has surpassed the pre-war levels and affects all sectors, including the humanitarian agencies, as the competition for power and accumulated wealth shifts into high gear. There is not the slightest hope of reform in the near future partly because of the muted political environment occasioned by the long-running war and the militarization that accompanied it; and partly due to the fact that the forces for change and democratic transformation are fledgling and weak. The situation as it exists, and which perhaps will deteriorate with the coming of peace, will be the unmaking of the New Sudan. There is no uniformity in the manner in which things are managed. It depends on the individual in a position of authority and how exposed he or she is to modernity.

Wherever we went, the hunger for information and news, particularly news about the peace negotiations, was evident. People constantly asked questions, but it was not easy to volunteer to play the role of an SPLM information officer, especially as I myself was relying

on third- and fourth-hand information, proximity to Naivasha notwithstanding. The *Sudan Mirror* is perhaps the only print medium that features South Sudan. It arrives very late, of course, and given the level of illiteracy it only serves a small minority. The need for information sharing, whether through print, electronic or audio means, cannot be over-emphasized. The Sudan Radio Service provided by the Office of Transitional Initiative (OTI) airs its programmes in Arabic, English and six local languages. Radio Voice of Hope also provides programming tailored to peace issues and the promotion of South Sudanese values.

The social and political engineering of South Sudan's transition to peace has many faults, which require immediate attention and rectification to avoid entrenchment of the very factors that precipitated the war and the ethnic conflicts. Peace with the North can only be consolidated by peace and harmony within the south. It will come about only when instruments and institutions of good governance are put in place, which must be done immediately. This must be followed by the establishment of principled and accountable vertical and horizontal relationships between individuals and institutions, whether state, public or private. This alone will ensure and consolidate the peace the people of South Sudan are yearning for.

Notes

1. This article first appeared in the *Sudan Mirror*, 1–14 March 2004.

No Further Evasion of the Essential Question: What will we do in Darfur?

Eric Reeves

On the very eve of the Rwandan genocide the international community seems finally to have found its voice in condemning the Khartoum regime's brutal, systematic displacement and destruction of the African tribal groups of Darfur, primarily the Masseleit, the Zaghawa, and the Fur. The actions that stand condemned, considered collectively, and given the clear racial/ethnic animus defining them, amount to genocide – the deliberate destruction of these people because of who they are, "as such."

But even so, it is far from clear that the searing clarity of this genocidal destruction will produce an international response more adequate to the catastrophe than the shameful acquiescence of April 1994, when the world watched in dismay from a distance as 800,000 people in Rwanda were slaughtered in frenzied mayhem.

Though the comparison to Rwanda has recently been made explicitly by Mukesh Kapila, now former UN humanitarian coordinator for Sudan, the description of war in Darfur that is most often offered by UN officials and others is "ethnic cleansing." This is evidently meant to convey a lesser degree of "criminality" and urgency. Jan Egeland, UN Under-secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs – and notably one of the first officials to call attention to the scale of the catastrophe in Darfur – is entirely representative:

"What we see is...the systematic depopulation of areas. People are not necessarily killed then. They are moved away," Egeland said at a [April 2, 2004] news conference. "I would say it is ethnic cleansing, but not genocide." (Reuters, April 4, 2004)

But what is happening in Darfur is not simply "ethnic cleansing," any more than the destruction of the Jews in Eastern Europe was simply a "Säuberung," the Nazi euphemism for genocide (the German word means "cleansing" or "clearing"). For given the immensely destructive consequences of "systematic depopulation" in rural Darfur, there is too little difference in too many cases between the deliberate killing of members of a "racial or ethnical group" and the inescapable, fully known consequences of the "systematic depopulation" of the members of this group.

Here we must remember that the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide specifies not only "killing members of a group" among

they will have been killed no less deliberately by a military strategy that Khartoum has relentlessly followed, both in using its own official military assets (including frequent aerial bombardment of civilian targets), but in the purposeful directing of its Arab militia allies (the “janjaweed”) in the countless attacks that have produced the present catastrophe.

In short, knowing full well the consequences of such a strategy, Khartoum has engaged in a military campaign that has “deliberately inflicted on the African tribal groups of Darfur conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part.”

This is genocide.

Neither the euphemizing obligations of diplomats, nor the constraints imposed by various institutional mandates---governmental and non-governmental---can change this reality.

It was precisely such diffidence, coupled with indecision and moral failure, that ten years ago produced international acquiescence in the slaughter, by Hutu extremists, of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda. Unable to say the word---genocide---it was easier not to act, easier not to accept the obligations that are stipulated in the Genocide Convention for “contracting parties:

“The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.” (Article 1, UN Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948)

But of course until genocide has been declared, the “contracting parties” (including the US) are not obligated to “undertake to prevent and to punish” the genocidaires operating in Darfur. This is the context in which we must seek to understand why no organization or government has, to date, proposed a single course of action that will not be fully undermined should Khartoum intransigently assert the “rights” of national sovereignty. There are abundant calls for “informing,” “condemning,” “requesting,” “calling upon,” “insisting,” “recommending,”---even “ensuring.” But inevitably even such “ensuring” is simply part of a “recommendation” that has no provision for enforcement or implementation or even means of pressuring for compliance.

Most conspicuously, there is no voice calling for humanitarian intervention---the cross-border provision of urgently needed humanitarian assistance, civilian protection, and the creation of critically important safe havens for the almost 1 million displaced, both in Chad and in Darfur. And it is here that the distinction between “ethnic cleansing” and genocide cuts deeply in implication, given the explicit provisions for “prevention” in the Genocide Convention.

To be sure, Norway and the US seemed to be approaching an articulation of the need for humanitarian intervention in early February 2004:

“The United States reaffirms its commitment to addressing the immediate protection and assistance needs of those in Darfur, as well as throughout Sudan, including humanitarian cross border operations if assistance cannot be provided through Sudan.” (Statement of US AID Administrator Andrew Natsios, from the Press Office of USAID, February 3, 2004)

Norway’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Petersen spoke in similarly urgent terms at the time:

“Norway is extremely concerned about the further deterioration of the already dramatic

humanitarian situation in Darfur province in western Sudan in the last few days. Norway deplores the recent bombing of the town of Tine, which continues the pattern of indiscriminate attacks on civilians, and the serious breaches of human rights that are constantly being reported. Norway will together with other donors do what is necessary to provide humanitarian relief and protection for the population of Darfur [emphasis added]." (Press release: Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 4, 2004)

But these commitments have not been reiterated, and no planning is evident that would make good on these commitments. Voice of America has recently reported that, "US defense officials are closely monitoring developments in Sudan's troubled Darfur region, but say there are no plans at present for any military response to the humanitarian crisis there" (Voice of America, April 1, 2004).

Here we must bear in mind that any planning for humanitarian intervention will need to take account of the immense difficulties created by the seasonal rains that are due in about a month; these rains will make ground transport in many places virtually impossible. Indeed, logistics in general will be nightmarishly difficult. Moreover, Chad's permission must be secured for such an operation. Given the weak Chad government's close relationship with Khartoum, this would require robust diplomatic pressure on President Idris Deby from France---but there has been no sign of such a commitment from Paris, even in the wake of French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin's recent trip (late February 2004) to the region.

In short, it seems unlikely that humanitarian intervention will occur without a finding of genocide. But then we urgently need a much more compelling explanation of why, given the overwhelming body of evidence before the international community, what is occurring in Darfur is not genocide. And such explanation cannot be a glib distinction between displacement and "depopulation," on the one hand, and human destruction on the other---not when the former so clearly and consequentially implies the latter.

All the current anguish over the Rwandan genocide, all the reflections on what could and should have been done, all the genuflection on lessons learned or not learned---all this is incinerated in the agony of the ongoing, ethnically/racially animated destruction of tens of thousands of human beings in Darfur.

Who will explain to the people of Darfur why it was possible for the US and the Europeans, without UN authorization, to intervene in Kosovo (where perhaps altogether 10,000 people died) but not in Darfur, where many times this number will certainly die? Who will explain why this has nothing to do with the fact that the victims of the genocide are Africans? Who will explain why this devaluation of human lives is not ultimately a terrible racism?

Who will explain why an assertion of Sudanese national sovereignty by the viciously tyrannical National Islamic Front regime---which came to power by military coup, deposing an elected government---trumps the moral significance of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives in Darfur? Who will explain why a regime that has not observed a signed cease-fire, refuses to begin substantive peace talks, and refuses to commit to a humanitarian cease-fire is being given more diplomatic breathing space in which to pursue genocidal destruction? Who will explain to the people of Darfur how long the catastrophe will be permitted to

accelerate without more than hortatory language from the international community? Who will tell the people of Darfur whether or not there is a threshold of human destruction at which the international community will respond with humanitarian intervention? And if so, what is that threshold? Having long surpassed the total for Kosovo, and with a further 100,000 lives to be lost because of Khartoum's present destruction of the agricultural economy and medical resources, Darfur and its people will wonder: is the number 150,000--- a figure that seems virtually certain to be exceeded? Perhaps it is 200,000? Perhaps the half-way point in the figure for Rwanda, 400,000?

Are these numbers anything but a reflection of moral madness on the part of the international community? And yet as Human Rights Watch has asserted, "almost 1 million Darfurian civilians have been forced to flee their homes in the past fourteen months." ("Darfur in Flames: Atrocities in Western Sudan," page 1). And the UN puts the figure of those described as "war-affected" at 3 million. Who can say that the final total, in the absence of forceful international action and with Khartoum's continued intransigence, will not ultimately bear comparison with the numbers of Rwanda?

These many questions all reduce to one: Is the international community prepared to allow Khartoum's assertion of national sovereignty to outweigh the significance of hundreds of thousands of lives in Darfur?

Given all that we know about Darfur, and all that can be inferred with moral certainty, and given the present refusal by any government or international organization to call for humanitarian intervention, we have a default answer: the world indeed again stands prepared merely to witness vast, racially/ethnically driven human destruction. And until there is a clear, decisive call for urgent humanitarian intervention, this answer will stand. The issue of the day is not remembering Rwanda, but understanding why we are still prepared to accept genocide in Africa.

The Shilluk Kingdom in Southern Sudan is Going up in Flames

Eric Reeves

The perversity of the irony could not be greater; even as the international community is finally finding its voice in condemning Khartoum's massive crimes against humanity in Darfur, the regime is cynically using this new focus of attention to resume and accelerate its scorched-earth military campaign against civilians in the south, particularly the Shilluk Kingdom of oil-rich Upper Nile Province. Using both regular troops and allied militia groups, Khartoum has killed many hundreds of innocent civilians, displaced tens of thousands, and has put additional tens of thousands of civilians beyond the reach of humanitarian aid. Indeed, just yesterday Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa) reported on the highly alarming suspension of relief efforts into a huge part of the Upper Nile region of southern Sudan:

"Humanitarian aid workers operating in the Upper Nile region in southern Sudan have been ordered to stop humanitarian activities immediately and leave amid increasing tension, it was stated Thursday. ... We have evacuated all NGO staff from mid-western Upper Nile region yesterday,' Abdalla Akece, an officer with Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC) told Deutsche Presse-Agentur. Akece said the offensive is concentrated in the Nyigier, Aboroce, and Orenyngo [and] that Khartoum's policy is to clear the area of SPLA presence." (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, April 1, 2004)

This comports all too well with a series of extremely alarming and highly authoritative reports reaching this writer from numerous well-placed regional sources. Indeed, there is growing concern that Khartoum's brazen acceleration of military activities in Upper Nile is a means of derailing negotiations in Naivasha, which have already been severely stressed by the difficulties of reaching a peace agreement even as Darfur endures a holocaust. Khartoum has still not signed onto the US compromise proposal addressing the key issue of Abyei, more than a week after the SPLM has done so, and progress seems to have ground to a halt.

Khartoum knows perfectly well that a Presidential determination on the regime's "good faith" in the Naivasha peace talks is due April 20, 2004. The regime also knows that this deadline implies the drafting of a determination and report by about April 10, 2004---roughly a week from today. The regime clearly believes that the present stalling pattern can be

continued for at least this length of time, and that a “passing mark” can somehow be secured. It is for this reason that the US compromise proposal on Abyei hasn’t been signed---but hasn’t been rejected either: the expedient calculation is that by holding a decision on Abyei in abeyance, the regime will receive the benefit of the doubt.

The Bush administration and its diplomatic team has badly fumbled the diplomatic situation if it had any hope of using the leverage of the Sudan Peace Act. Charles Snyder, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, testified on Sudan before the House International Relations Committee on March 11, 2004 and explicitly invoked the Sudan Peace Act. At the time, he gave clear indication that the administration viewed the deadline imposed by the Sudan Peace Act as real---and a meaningful source of leverage. But how much leverage is provided if a Presidential determination and a State Department report to Congress are issued in the presently ambiguous state of affairs in Naivasha?

Certainly whatever diplomatic ambiguity has been allowed to remain unresolved, there can be no ignoring Khartoum’s present military offensive in Upper Nile. These brutal actions must inform, and in a deeply consequential way, the assessment now being readied by the State Department for President Bush. That we don’t have more publicly available information than we do is clearly the responsibility of the Civilian Protection Monitoring Team (CPMT), based in Rumbek and Khartoum. Extremely reliable sources have confirmed that the CPMT is simply not doing an adequate job of investigating reported attacks on civilians, and in particular the ongoing civilian destruction and displacement in the Shilluk Kingdom of Upper Nile.

The CPMT has this mandate for investigation as of a March 2002 agreement, brokered by the US, between Khartoum and the SPLM/A. But for a year now, the CPMT has been failing miserably in its responsibilities. Particularly disgraceful were a series of highly deficient reports on reported civilian attacks in the Longochok/Liang areas of Easter Upper Nile.

But the consequences are not only for the civilians who are threatened by the ongoing failure of the CPMT to fulfill its mandate. Lack of adequate reporting has highly unfortunate consequences for our broader and more particular understanding of the attacks, reported by humanitarian aid officials with responsibility for this part of Upper Nile Province and by other highly authoritative regional sources. Let us also bear in mind that some of these reports have been put emphatically in the public domain. The UN’s Integrated Regional Information Networks (Nairobi) recently reported:

“Clashes involving a number of government-backed militias and government forces in the Shilluk Kingdom region of southern Sudan are resulting in an increasing number of deaths and displacements. On 11 March, militias and government forces from Malakal attacked villages west of Awajwok including Alaki, the village of the Shilluk king, according to the Fashoda Relief and Rehabilitation Association (FRRA). The FRRA is the humanitarian wing of [Lam Achol’s] Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-United (SPLM/U), which realigned with the SPLM/Army (SPLM/A) in October 2003.”

“In Alaki, houses were set on fire and cattle driven away by attacking forces, Gabriel Otor Marko, the FRRA executive director, said on Thursday. The militias were reinforced by government forces in gunboats on the River Nile, who then attacked Nyilwak, where they dispersed a large civilian population. ‘An unknown number of people were killed or

wounded, houses set on fire and properties looted,' he said. On 10 March militias had also attacked the villages of Adodo, displacing its civilians." (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, March 19, 2004)

These attacks have been reported as occurring in specific places and on particular dates; this should provide the CPMT with ample reason to investigate: "Between 5 and 7 March civilians in Dinyo and Nyijwado were reportedly attacked by militias and government forces. Many of them had already been displaced to the area in January from Nyibanyo in similar attacks.

About 3,000 fled to Nyilwak, while others were killed and wounded, the FRRA reported." "On 7 March Obay and Pakang were also reportedly attacked by army and militias, killing nine civilians and wounding nine others. A dispensary and school were looted, a headmaster killed, cattle driven away and civilian houses set on fire. The populations of the two villages reportedly fled."

"On 4 March government and militias abducted eight women from Dinyo, taking them to New Fangak, where they are still being held; some of them were lactating and had left behind their babies." (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, March 19, 2004)

Why has there been no urgent CPMT investigation of these highly credible reports? Why, for example, has the CPMT not reported on Malakal (on the edge of southern part of the Shilluk Kingdom), where a highly reliable humanitarian official reports an influx of 13,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs)? Why aren't these IDPs being interviewed? The government contractor for the CPMT, PAE Government Services, Inc., has an enormously lucrative contract for this work, courtesy of the US State Department: why is the State Department not holding PAE Government Services and the CPMT accountable? Why is this outrageous dereliction of duty, at this most critical moment in Sudan's history, not being addressed?

This same dereliction of duty was evident in February of 2004, when Khartoum-backed militia groups attacked humanitarian workers in Nimne (also Nimnim), very near Bentiu, epicenter of the oil region of Western Upper Nile. The UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks reported at the time (February 27, 2004): "Paramilitary forces in Nimnim, western Upper Nile, deliberately attacked eight aid workers working in the area last week, according to the UN.

The early morning attack on 20 February was specifically directed at the aid workers' temporary compound outside the village of Nimnim, where they had been staying for three days distributing food and other relief items, said a statement issued by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. The relief workers came under rifle, machine-gun, rocket-propelled-grenade and mortar fire from 'unidentified militia forces' for 20 minutes, before the workers fled from the scene on foot. The gunfire was directed at the aid workers' enclosure, avoiding the local village, and targeted the relief workers even as they were fleeing." (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks [Nairobi], February 27, 2004)

At the time the UN urgently called for an investigation and despite this urgent plea there as no investigation by the CPMT: "The United Nations Friday called for an investigation into a recent attack on aid workers delivering assistance in the Western Upper Nile area of southern Sudan. The spokesman for the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan

says unidentified militiamen used machine guns, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades to fire on eight aid workers during a relief operation in the Western Upper Nile town of Nimnim.

“The aid workers were not injured. They were bringing supplies to more than 13,000 people in Nimnim when they were attacked Friday, February 20. The spokesman, Ben Parker, says relief operations have been suspended in the area, affecting about 30,000 people. ‘This was a very targeted military attack from the ground, and in that sense, it’s something we’ve very, very rarely seen before.’” (Voice of America, February 27, 2004)

All later evidence of responsibility for the attack would point clearly to Khartoum and its militia allies. That such an extraordinarily brazen and vicious attack on humanitarian workers should go uninvestigated by CPMT, with the consequence that 13,000 civilians were precipitously denied all humanitarian access, is an utter disgrace, and one that does far too much to explain the CPMT’s current failure to investigate the civilian destruction and displacement in the Shilluk Kingdom, further east in Upper Nile.

Authoritative reports also indicate that there is massive forced conscription of young civilian boys and men by Khartoum and its militias in Rubkona, as well as Nhialdiu, Mayom, Wangkei, and Mankien (all in Western Upper Nile): why is this not being investigated by the CPMT?

There are far too many questions and not nearly enough in the way of answers---answers that should have been provided by virtue of the CPMT mandate and PAE Government Contractor, Inc.’s contractual arrangement with the State Department. These failures are not bureaucratic matters, or somehow a sideshow to the peace talks in Naivasha.

Indeed, Khartoum’s sense that it can act with impunity in Upper Nile augurs extremely poorly not only for the peace process but any meaningful implementation of the Agreement on Security Arrangements (September 2003). It is the obligation of the US to ensure that Khartoum understands clearly that there will be a fully informed Presidential determination about the regime’s “good faith” in the peace talks as well as its obligation to provide unfettered humanitarian access – currently non-existent in the Shilluk Kingdom and of course throughout Darfur.

This determination must, in turn, be made honestly and with a resolute sense of what the consequences will be if Khartoum is found not to be “engaged in good faith peace negotiations,” or is judged to be “unreasonably interfering with humanitarian efforts” (language of the Sudan Peace Act).

There is no room for hesitancy, disingenuousness, or omission- hallmarks of the State Department report of April 2003 in supporting the Presidential determination on Khartoum’s performance. The time for a full and honest reckoning is upon the world – and US the must speak first. To do so requires urgent, responsible reporting on the situation in Upper Nile Province.

In Search of the Viennese African, Angelo Soliman (ca. 1721-96): From Educator of a Hereditary Prince to Stuffed Exhibit

Monika Firla

Implications of African Diaspora Research

It is not possible to deal with Angelo Soliman (ca. 1721–96) as a black man in 18th-century Vienna (the then capital of the Holy Roman Empire) without talking about certain present-day intellectual and social trends in Germany and Austria. Owing to the fact of Nazi-induced genocide and to manifest and latent racism, defining Africans as permanent and classical victims is understood as the right way to prove one's own political correctness if one is white. This attitude can be found among all those who are new to the topic; the present author acted like this too in 1993 when re-editing Wilhelm A. Bauer's biography of Soliman, first published in 1922.¹

But it is precisely the role of the African as a passive victim that people of African descent, who were born in Germany or Austria or who live in these countries as a second home, want to have revised. They are tired of being constantly looked on as humiliated blacks in order to help create the perfect moral good white. Politically conscious people of African descent very clearly claim a new approach to African diaspora studies that is meant to point out the active role of Africans and their descendants in our social history,² whatever tragic circumstances they had to go through in their lives. There is nothing that children of black and white parents find so unbearable to hear as "When are you going back (to Africa)?" or "Nobody can be black, brown etc. and German/Austrian at the same time", especially when they were born in Germany or Austria.³ Thus, documentation of black people's active participation in European history is instrumental to constituting their history as a means of discovering their own identity. Only with this kind of awareness of the past will they be able to strengthen their presence and create a future for themselves in Europe where they have to live their lives, and want to live them, whatever reasons they may have for being there.

Implications of Angelo Soliman Studies

One of the many black people who played a part in the history of the German-speaking peoples was Angelo Soliman,⁴ probably the most famous after Anton Wilhelm Amo.⁵ In the case of Soliman we have to face a special dilemma for he was not only a former slave,⁶ but the educator of a hereditary prince; furthermore, after his death his body was stuffed, dressed in a fancy costume, and put on display in a museum.⁷ Between these two extreme positions, Soliman's biography has to be dealt with. Nevertheless, even the intellectual public is mostly interested in the fact that he was stuffed,⁸ as evidenced in plays by Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando (1936), Conny Hannes Mayer (1983) and Ludwig Fels (1991). The last two playwrights in particular represent Soliman as a mere victim of racism and sexism who was even abused by male and female paedophiles, and was not only stuffed but also murdered. Soliman's military, social and intellectual role is almost entirely ignored, and as an individual, he is shown as completely passive, only playing his drum from time to time.

Playwrights like Meyer and Fels try to show the members of the public what they so often do to their African compatriots in modern everyday life. But these playwrights are simply reproducing an archetype of the classical African victim whose role in European history was passive and without any significance. Unfortunately, Fels's view of Soliman as a humiliated inactive target of shocking sexual insults is coming to be generally accepted in German schools. Characteristically, playwrights do not use printed literature as sources, but instead present outdated biographical data found in fast-food-like Internet files.⁹ To introduce Soliman for the first time to the readers of *Tinabantu*, let us refer to more serious research work.

Angelo Soliman's Biography¹⁰

Soliman was born in about 1721, probably as a member of the Kanuri people in present-day North-Eastern Nigeria.¹¹ His clan (referred to as "Magni Famori") seems to have been the Mâgōmi Kanuri/Kanōri, from whom the Kanuri kings were elected.¹² In about 1728 Soliman and some of his compatriots were captured by African slave hunters and brought to North Africa on a Spanish ship. In about 1730 he was bought and freed, and taken to Messina in Sicily to the household of a marquise who treated him like her own child. He probably had private tutors, and was taught how to read and write Italian. For a long time he refused to be baptized as a Catholic, but when he fell seriously ill he agreed and was allowed to choose the name Angelo, after Angelina, the name of an African servant in the same house whom he loved very much. He was given the surname Soliman at the same time.

At some time between 1732 and 1734 Soliman was given as a gift to Prince Johann Georg Christian von Lobkowitz, the Austrian governor of Sicily, who for a long time had wanted to have him as a member of his court.¹³ Yet Soliman, it should be emphasized, was not a slave as some authors maintain.¹⁴ Slavery did exist at the time, e.g. in Portugal, in the Muslim world, and in the Americas and West Indies, but there was no slavery in the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁵ Nevertheless serfdom (of the white population) was practised in rural regions and serfs could be sold together with the land or even as individuals.¹⁶ Soliman's being made a gift to Lobkowitz has to be understood as a transfer from one household to another, though Soliman and the marquise had to undergo a grievous separation.¹⁷ In former

times life was much harder for all children (white and black) than it is nowadays. So, for example, in 1716 it was quite acceptable to send 100 young baker boys right into Turkey to bake bread there for the Austrian troops during the Turkish war.¹⁸

The fact that Soliman was a former slave and forever separated from his family must be carefully handled since the public tend to be so impressed by it that they see him merely as a victim. Yet this denies the role that he later played in Viennese society, and by cheating him of his biography, adds to the insults he has suffered. The Stoic philosopher Epictetus (ca. 50–138 C.E.) himself was a former slave, as was the Roman playwright Terence (185/195–159 C.E.). But the fact that they were slaves has never been regarded as diminishing their intellectual role or work.

To return to Soliman's biography: Lobkowitz took him to one of his castles in Bohemia, but, as the prince was usually on active service, he did not take much responsibility for Soliman's further education. This was eventually seen to by an old steward. Soliman later spoke excellent Italian, French and German, and passable Latin, Czech and English. Eventually, he accompanied Lobkowitz to war as qualified servants were allowed to.¹⁹ He became the prince's valued comrade in arms and once saved his life when he was wounded by carrying him off the battlefield on his own shoulders. Being a confidant of the prince he was fond of handing over all the petitions he got from the other subjects, etc. As a servant, Soliman was without doubt paid for his services, as he was later by the princes of Liechtenstein.

Pichler reports that Count Franz Moritz von Lacy (1725–1801) had an extraordinarily high regard for Soliman because of his military courage, and once offered him the rank of captain out of turn, which Soliman refused – probably to avoid the envy of his fellow soldiers.²⁰ Some authors, like Bauer,²¹ express doubts about Lacy's esteem for Soliman. But in 1999 the present author found a copy of a letter, written in French, from Lacy to Soliman, dated 9 November 1761. There is no salutation, but the letter begins with the following words:

You know, my dear Angelo, that there is nothing I would refuse you if the means of doing you a favour depended on my good will

If we take in consideration what we know about Soliman's biography as a whole, he is certainly the addressee. Obviously he had asked Lacy for a better position for one of his friends in the army.²²

After Lobkowitz's death in 1753, Soliman entered the service of Prince Joseph Wenzel of Liechtenstein (1696–1772), although Emperor Francis I Stephan, husband of Empress Maria Theresa, had tried to engage him on very *flattering* terms, according to Pichler.²³ Liechtenstein was the most important general in the Empire, and a special confidant of Maria Theresa. Like Lobkowitz, he had one of his permanent residences in Vienna. When Soliman received Lacy's letter in 1761, he was one of Liechtenstein's valets (ranking third among the valets) and earned a salary of 150 florins a year. In 1764 Soliman had reached the first position in the hierarchy of valets and thus was the head of the domestics and an absolute confidant of his princely employer.²⁴

In the same year, when he accompanied Liechtenstein to Frankfurt am Main where Joseph I, Maria Theresa's son, was elected Emperor, Soliman won 20 000 florins from a banker while playing cards at a banquet. The fact that he offered the banker a chance to avenge himself, won an additional 24 000 florins, but gave his opponent the chance to win this sum back, earned him the *respect* of all the onlookers and the *admiration* of his opponent, who paid him a visit next day, *embraced* him and *expressed appreciation for his magnanimity*.²⁵ Whether it was Soliman's deliberate strategy or not, his social qualities won him the appreciation of the public. And as had been the case when he was in Lobkowitz's service, in the service of Liechtenstein he was *the protector of the unfortunate and of the people in distress*.²⁶ Maybe Soliman, as a man who had once been separated from his family forever and yet had found in the marquise's house in Messina another African woman whom he had loved so much that he had chosen to be named after her, had a special understanding of other people's distress and a special sense of how to help them.

In 1768 Soliman married Magdalena Christiani von Kellermann, the widow of a secretary who had worked for a member of the important Harrach family.²⁷ This marriage took place secretly with the help of the then archbishop of Vienna. Unfortunately Emperor Joseph II, who was *very interested* in Soliman's life, learnt his secret one day while casually *promenading with him arm in arm*.²⁸ By 1768 Joseph II (1741–90) had already been twice widowed; he never married again. In summer he lived in a house in the Augarten, close to the entrance. Several times a day he took a walk among the people.²⁹ Obviously it was in the Augarten that the Emperor walked arm in arm with Soliman and came to know of his secret marriage.

When Liechtenstein heard of Soliman's secret marriage, he immediately fired him.³⁰ This is sometimes misinterpreted as meaning that Africans were not allowed to marry white women or that Liechtenstein was motivated by homosexual jealousy. Neither of these assumptions is correct. Firstly, we find countless legally married black and white couples in the Holy Roman Empire in the 18th century. Secondly, every servant had to ask his princely employer's permission to marry. Without doubt, Soliman was aware that Liechtenstein did not want his employees to marry at all, since he tried to avoid spending money on their families when they died.³¹ This must have been his reason for marrying in secret. Obviously, he was under the illusion that Liechtenstein would excuse his unauthorized action, and this demonstrates once more how eminent Soliman's position was. Nevertheless, if the prince had shown any indulgence in this affair it would have caused him a severe loss of prestige. After his dismissal, Soliman and his wife lived in their own little house in a Viennese suburb and enjoyed a circle of *very educated and excellent people*.³² Their only child, Josephine, was born in 1772. Among her godparents were aristocrats and other influential people.³³

In 1773, Joseph Wenzel of Liechtenstein's nephew and heir, Prince Franz Joseph of Liechtenstein (1726–81), met Soliman by chance in the streets of Vienna. He called him into his coach and "told him that he was entirely convinced of his innocence and wanted to make good his uncle's injustice". The younger Liechtenstein paid Soliman an annual salary that would be his wife's old-age pension in case of his death. In return, Soliman only had "to perform a kind of supervision over the education" of Liechtenstein's son, Hereditary Prince Alois (1759–1805).³⁴ This means that Soliman was responsible for the smooth organization of

the young prince's education. Soliman's engagement shows how highly esteemed he was in the eyes of his princely employer, who had known him a long time. Soliman, who "pursued the sciences with a will" and whose "favorite subject" was history,³⁵ now earned 600 florins a year.³⁶ This is the same salary as for a princely steward. The whole family moved once again to the centre of Vienna, where they lived in Liechtenstein's palace.³⁷ Soliman was now responsible for the education of a hereditary prince. He was not the first African to reach such a position, since Abraham Hannibal (1696–1781), the great-grandfather of Alexander Pushkin, had taught mathematics to the then tsarevitch (crown prince) in 1725.³⁸

The extent to which Prince Franz Joseph of Liechtenstein appreciated Soliman as a supervisor is documented in a declaration that Soliman signed on 1 October 1773. There he undertook to stay in the same position under the same conditions until his pupil attained his majority or married, even if his father should die.³⁹ As it happened, Franz Joseph died in 1781, upon which his son Alois I succeeded him. Alois married in 1783, and Soliman retired in 1784.⁴⁰

His former pupil had no objection to Soliman becoming a freemason. In September 1781, Soliman joined the elite Viennese lodge "Zur wahren Eintracht".⁴¹ Even before he had gone through the final ceremony, an *in absentia* recommendation by Soliman of another potential member was delivered by the then Master of the Lodge.⁴² In November 1781, on the recommendation of Soliman, Ignaz von Born (1742–91) was elected a member of the lodge.⁴³ This mineralogist, author and imperial confidant was one of the leading Austrian intellectuals and internationally renowned. He and Soliman were friends,⁴⁴ but we do not know when their friendship began. Though Born without doubt had many friends, it obviously had to be Soliman who was his sponsor. In March 1782, Born, elected by his fellows, became the Master of the Lodge.⁴⁵ Soliman was immediately appointed "preparing brother" by Born himself.⁴⁶ The "preparing brother" had to examine and instruct the designated and new members of the lodge, and in this role Soliman came into close contact with his freemason brothers of the intellectual upper class. In March 1784, Soliman was elected deputy master of ceremonies, which meant that he had to organize and supervise the meetings.⁴⁷

As the minutes of the lodge have been preserved and edited, we know that Soliman had very special relations with several other members of the lodge. He proposed Erasmus von Grezmüller (public servant), twice voted by proxy for Joseph von Barth (chair of anatomy and imperial oculist) when he could not be present at meetings, and stood sponsor when Franz Anton Estner (priest and mineralogist) became a member. Joseph Friedrich von Retzer (one of the three leading intellectuals of Vienna) once stood proxy for Soliman when he could not attend a meeting.⁴⁸ The mother of the banker Franz Xaver von Stegner was godmother to Soliman's daughter, and August Veith von Schittlersberg acted as the executor of Soliman's estate in 1797.⁴⁹

In 1784 or 85, Johann Anton Mertens, who became chair of law at the University of Vienna in 1786, addressed Soliman in a letter as follows.

Best friend!

For a long time, it has been my object to become a member of such an

excellent society of upright and enlightened men as is the one of which you are a member. Certain circumstances have hitherto impeded me from asking for the fulfilment of my wishes. Yet now, my dear friend, I believe myself to be entitled to ask you to promote my membership, as a friend. In gratitude for this favour, I shall use any occasion to serve you in return and never give you any cause to regret the effort that you had undertaken for me. I am your sincere friend and servant,

Joh. Anton Mertens
Doctor of Laws⁵⁰

This letter, which I discovered in 1994, clearly shows the social position that Soliman enjoyed. Soliman was a member of his lodge as long as it existed. He also joined its successor, "Zur Wahrheit" in 1786, and remained a member until freemasonry came to an end in the same year because of the political restrictions imposed by Emperor Joseph II.

As mentioned above, Soliman's lodge was a gathering-place for the Viennese elite, and under Born's direction it became like an academy, offering lectures and publishing two periodicals. Mozart and Haydn were among its famous members.⁵¹ Soliman's freemason name was Massinissa.⁵² Massinissa (240–148 B.C.) was the king who founded the ancient Numidian empire (in present-day Algeria). This is not a black African king's name like Sundjata or Mansa Musa – kings of whom Soliman presumably had not heard. But the name Massinissa does show his awareness of his origins on the African continent and his being at home with historical details, for he avoided the names of Jugurtha and Hannibal, North Africans who ended up defeated.

In 1994 István Fried, a specialist on the great Hungarian writer and freemason Ferenc Kazinczy, discovered that the latter was one of Soliman's friends too. Thanks to Fried's research,⁵³ we now know further details. Kazinczy lived in the town of Kaschau in Hungary (the present-day Košice in Slovakia), which was part of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary. So did Victor d'Este, one of Soliman's fellow freemasons, who in 1786 worked as a professor of physics and agriculture in Kaschau. In the same year Kazinczy and d'Este travelled to Vienna, and since d'Este boasted of his acquaintance with Soliman, Kazinczy wanted to meet him too. He followed d'Este's advice, and sent Soliman a present of sweet Hungarian Tokay wine. Having received it, Soliman paid a visit to Kazinczy and addressed him with the words: "Brother Kazinczy, I thank you for the delicious Tokay wine." Then Soliman kissed him.⁵⁴ In 1791, Soliman and Kazinczy saw each other when the latter came to Vienna once again. Later, Kazinczy reported some details of their meetings.⁵⁵ Among other things we read that Soliman's daughter Josephine once danced with the later King Charles X of France when he paid a visit to Vienna and attended a ball in 1791.⁵⁶

In 1786 Soliman paid a visit to Kazinczy in Kaschau. He was accompanied by one Michael Leopold Brigido, to whom Soliman had delivered his letter of appointment as prince bishop of Laibach (the present-day Ljubljana in Slovenia).⁵⁷ This means that Soliman was a temporary commissioner for Emperor Joseph II at the time, since in those days it was the emperor and not the pope who appointed clerics like Brigido.⁵⁸

Fried also mentions a letter from Soliman addressed to Kazinczy in 1792. It can be found in the latter's correspondence, having been published in 1891. Soliman addressed his friend

Kazinczy as follows:

Vienna, 16 November 1792

Highly honoured friend!

I dare to write you in German, in a language in which I am less experienced, in the hope that you will be indulgent to me. I had already forgotten that I had asked you for a small bottle of Tokay essence. I was very surprised when I received your letter. I thank you very much for the kind-hearted remembrance, which has made me feel more flattered than I would be pleased by 10 measures of Tokay. What I have told you here, is true, upon my honour. You are indeed lucky, dear brother Kazinczy, to own an estate, so you can, like the father of Roman rhetoric, stay on your Tusculanum, accept your friend's visits and be pleased with the new days to come. I am living quite quietly, far from the great world; from time to time I calmly watch the sudden changes in the political scene.

Farewell and be quite well, and be assured of my respect and friendship.
Angelo Soliman⁵⁹

As this letter shows, in 1792 Soliman was leading a retired life. His wife had died in 1786, and, as Pichler reports, after that he never again invited friends to dinner, as he was trying to save money for his daughter, to whom he gave the best education he could. From time to time Soliman went on a journey, on his own or on somebody else's business. When he visited Milan, Archduke Ferdinand the governor treated him with distinction, though the details are unclear.⁶⁰

In his letter, Soliman alludes to the Roman orator, statesman and author Cicero (106–43 B.C.) without mentioning his name. That he was familiar with Cicero's life can be seen from the fact that he mentions Tusculanum, Cicero's estate in Tusculum near Rome. Presumably Soliman had read Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, a discourse on Stoic ethics and theology. Soliman's reference to his calmness in watching the *sudden changes in the political scene* sounds like Stoic philosophy. Was it, in Cicero's own words, *the most precious fruit of the entire philosophy* that Soliman found in this author's text – namely *to heal the sorrows, fears and desires* (Tusc. Disp. I, 119)? Out of his own past as a former slave, separated forever from his family, Soliman must have developed a special sense of the tragic in life, like the other famous African, Anton Wilhelm Amo.⁶¹ In 1781 Kant had published his *Critique of Pure Reason*, but Soliman would have had no motivation to be one of his admirers, if he had read his racist statements about Africans in 1764.⁶²

In 1794 Soliman's Hungarian friend was suddenly accused of rebellion, and though innocent, he was put in prison, where he remained until 1801. In 1795 he was granted some relief, and allowed access to some books and a few personal items. He was also allowed to order food at his own expense. These concessions were granted by special order of Archduke Joseph (1776–1847), who as governor was responsible for Hungarian affairs. When Kazinczy was free again, he casually recorded certain reminiscences of his late black friend in 1809, and also wrote down the following words concerning Soliman: "Blessings on your ashes, venerable man!" and "Blessing, blessings, blessings on you, good man!"⁶³

Why did Kazinczy praise his late friend Soliman so enthusiastically? As I have discussed elsewhere, Soliman, whose good connections with the imperial court have been mentioned above, had probably asked the archduke to ease Kazinczy's awful conditions in prison.⁶⁴

Angelo Soliman's Death and Afterlife

In November 1796 Soliman died of a stroke while walking in the streets of Vienna. His body was taken home.⁶⁵ Here we find the beginning of the scandal that overshadows not only his own biography, but also a lot of biographical research since the public is mostly interested in this scandal, to the extent that it is often forgotten that this African was an active individual. It seems as if people only want to discuss the tragic ends of Lumumba, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Steve Biko, and not their political importance.

Soliman's intestines must have been removed, for something was indeed buried two days after his death.⁶⁶ Then the corpse was transferred to the faculty of medicine where undefined experiments were carried out. Subsequently, the remains were delivered to an Abbé Eberle, at his request. Under Eberle's supervision the body was skinned, stuffed and put on display in a cabinet in the Imperial Palace, though we do not know what happened to the skeleton. The first source of these facts was an episcopal appeal, addressed to the imperial government and referring to a letter (since lost) from Soliman's daughter.⁶⁷ The next source was an article by L.J. Fitzinger. In 1868 the director of the Imperial Museum declared that Soliman's beauty *caused in the then Emperor the desire* to have him displayed as a stuffed exhibit in his museum.⁶⁸ This statement, that the Emperor alone gave rise to the scandal, is what until now has always been repeated by journalists and other uninformed authors, and it raises the image of an arbitrary imperial act. But if we look closely at the historical circumstances, the story seems to be quite different, as I have discussed elsewhere.⁶⁹

Let us speak first about the above-mentioned Abbé (Simon) Eberle. In the very first source, he – and not Emperor Francis II – is the person who is reported to have been responsible for what happened to Soliman's body.⁷⁰ In 1796 Eberle, a renowned natural scientist, was the director of the Imperial Museum. Since this was the Emperor's private property, the Emperor had to approve the director's suggestions;⁷¹ in fact, he eventually dismissed Eberle in 1801 because of his arbitrary and unauthorized actions.⁷² Eberle, like Soliman, was a freemason, though not a member of the same lodge.

In 1796 Eberle's assistant was Abbé Andreas Stütz, who also was a freemason and a member of Soliman's lodge "Zur wahren Eintracht", where he met his African brother more than thirty times.⁷³ Stütz, like Eberle, was a renowned scientist. In 1802, Stütz succeeded Eberle as director of the Imperial Museum, and held the post until 1806. In that very year, the new director, von Schreibers, had Soliman's stuffed body and those of three (!) other Africans removed.⁷⁴ Thus, stuffed Africans were only displayed while Eberle and Stütz were directors. Stütz had also installed a small natural history cabinet in his and Soliman's lodge, and once delivered a speech entitled "Death means life". He stated that death is only feared by the eye and the heart while the inquiring mind knows very well that there is no destruction in the universe. And so the death of one causes the life of another.⁷⁵

There are other details to consider: first, Ignaz von Born, Soliman's friend and master of his lodge, was one of the officials of the Imperial Museum long before his freemason brothers

Eberle und Stütz. He had criticized the whole imperial family for being unable to look at stuffed animals, which was the reason why the museum had to do without a collection of them.⁷⁶ Second, Joseph von Barth, another of Soliman's freemason brothers and a professor of anatomy, had founded the first theatre and museum of anatomy in 1786.⁷⁷

Soliman's social circle consisted of a scientific set which in 1784 welcomed young George Forster, a former member of Cook's expedition, and kept him close company as long as he stayed in Vienna.⁷⁸ Forster had called S.T. Soemmerring's 1785 racist publication "On the anatomical difference between moor and European" "a beautiful treatise", though the author maintained that Africans were inferior to blacks. Soemmerring was a special friend of Forster's and dedicated his work to him.⁷⁹

In the list of Soliman's heirs and creditors we find the name of a certain Dr Vetter. This Rudolph Vetter was a former student of Barth's, an assistant to another professor of anatomy, and *had put in sheets of newspaper*. In the register of Soliman's heirs and creditors, he was one of only two who was not a creditor (the other was one of Soliman's freemason brothers the von Schittlersberg mentioned above). Schittlersberg was presumably appointed the trustee of Soliman's daughter. But what exactly was Vetter's function? The only possibility is that Vetter was to inherit something into which he had put the "sheets of newspaper". And this must have been Soliman's corpse, from which Vetter had presumably removed the intestines. So, the "sheets of newspaper" served as padding for the empty abdominal cavity.⁸⁰

Since the corpse was exploited in this way immediately after Soliman's death, the plan must have been settled long before, as Bauer points out.⁸¹ But this would have been absolutely impossible without a declaration by Soliman.⁸²

It seems as if some of Soliman's fellow freemasons who were interested in natural science had asked him to leave his remains for exhibition. If this is so, then his daughter Josephine, who tried to intervene with the archbishop's help, was not informed of it. This is understandable, since otherwise she would have tried day and night to change her father's mind. Obviously the above-mentioned Fitzinger was not telling the truth when he said that the Emperor, and nobody else, had wanted Soliman's corpse.⁸³ Since Fitzinger was a freemason too,⁸⁴ it is possible that he tried to cover up for other freemasons like Born, Barth, Eberle and Stütz. If, on the other hand, the Emperor had really been responsible for the scandal, then the whole episode had been set in motion by a superior power which nobody would have been able to resist.

But what part did Soliman play, if my assumptions are correct? How could he leave his skin and skeleton to be displayed in a museum? Pichler reports that Soliman always kept his word and that nobody was able to change his mind if he had decided something "upon mature consideration".⁸⁵ This might be a hint at the assumed fact that he finally had done what some of his freemason brothers may have asked him to do. Perhaps he was able to face the prospect of being skinned and exhibited with equanimity because he accepted Stütz's views on death as put forward in his speech "Death means life", or because of what Cicero wrote on death and burial in his *Tusculan Disputations*, which Soliman must have had in mind when he wrote his letter to Kazimierz in 1792. Cicero states that "a great man never dies in a miserable way" (*Tusc. Disp. I, 96*) and that only the body and not the deceased person is involved in the

burial (Tusc. Disp. I, 104–105).

Soliman's stuffed skin was displayed together with stuffed animals in an American (!) environment. He was displayed as an African, however. In the fictional landscape of the Imperial Museum there were no white human exhibits,⁸⁶ and this clearly proves a racist point of view. Maybe Eberle and Stütz were eager to install a "modern" exhibition where everything was genuine, and at the same time repressed all racist implications in their minds. The same intellectual aberration can be found in the Nazi concentration camp physicians, who never experienced the slightest inner conflict.

But how did Soliman manage to act in the way suggested above? Obviously he not only agreed with Cicero but also with people like Eberle and Stütz. Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein (1717–47), born in present-day Ghana, acted in a similar way. Members of the inner circle of the Dutch West Indian Company had subsidized his theological studies in Leiden in the Netherlands. In 1742, he graduated with a thesis "On slavery that is not controversial to Christian freedom". From 1742 till his death he served as pastor of Fort Elmina.⁸⁷ He, as an African, had presented a justification for slavery. Obviously Capitein had to write what his "benefactors" wanted him to, as this brought him social recognition. Presumably Soliman acted in the same self-oppressed way. And so did people like Senghor, with his theory of Negritude, and Josephine Baker, dancing topless like figures in racist cartoons.

As I have discussed elsewhere,⁸⁸ Capitein, Soliman and others performed something called "identification with the aggressor". Anna Freud described it for the whites, and Frantz Fanon for the black people. Soliman did what millions of people did and actually do. He is by no means exceptional.

Conclusion

First and foremost, Soliman was a human being like others. He has the right to claim his full biography without being idealized or treated as a scandal; in other words, treated with any bias whatsoever. Only in this way will he be taken seriously and find his proper position in the history of the African diaspora in Central Europe.



Notes

1. Wilhelm A. Bauer (1922/1993). This book was based on the first publication on Soliman by the Viennese writer Karoline Pichler (1808). The French abolitionist Henri Grégoire had asked her to contribute to his famous *De la Littérature des Nègres*. Pichler's text appears in French translation as chapter 5 (Grégoire, 1808). It was Grégoire's intention to show, in contradiction of all supporters of slavery, that Africans had the same intellectual and moral abilities as whites. Bauer did a good deal of additional research and extended Pichler's work in many respects. For the present author's views, see Firla-Forkl (1993).
2. Hügel-Marshall (2001:77). The author is the daughter of a black GI.
3. The main organization for people of African descent is ISD (Initiative schwarze Deutsche und schwarze Menschen in Deutschland ["Initiative of black Germans and black people in Germany"]). Most members are descendants of Africans who came from German colonies from the late 19th century onwards, or of black GIs after World War II. A relatively new group are descendants of blacks who immigrated to Germany in the 1950s and 60s.
4. For some of the many others, see Debrunner (1979); Martin (2001); Firla (2001b).
5. Amo (ca. 1700– ca. 1753) was born near Axim in present-day Ghana and lived in Jena (East Germany), where he worked as a lecturer in philosophy till 1739/40. 1747 he returned to Axim and worked as a soothsayer and sage; see Brentjes (1976), Firla (2002).
6. Most Africans who came to Germany in the 18th century were former slaves bought and freed in Africa. They were brought to this country because the aristocracy liked to have black servants, valets, trumpeters, kettle-drummers, breakers-in etc. for their aesthetic appeal and as evidence of long-distance relations. While countries like Great Britain and Portugal practised slavery, in the Holy Roman Empire there was no slavery, only serfdom, which made it possible to sell and buy white people legally (Freese, 1995:261).
7. Bauer, 1993:82–84.
8. Martin (1993/2001:232–240) discusses Soliman as a mere "case" and does not mention his role as the educator of a hereditary prince.
9. Frederking & Krommer, 2003.
10. Soliman's first biography was Pichler (1808/1993; see note 1). The data was collected by Pichler's friend Eleonore Fliess, née Eskeles (1752–1812) from the circle of the late Soliman's upper-class friends (Firla & Forkl, 1996:129–133). In 1922 Wilhelm A. Bauer published a more comprehensive biography (1922/1993) which was based on Pichler's text. Bauer did a lot of archive research, and consequently was able to substantiate most of Pichler's data; he also discovered some new facts. Other researchers will be mentioned below.
11. Firla & Forkl, 1996:122–129.
12. Firla, 2003:8, n. 6.
13. Pichler, 1993:114–115.
14. For example, Wagner (1980:24).
15. Only foreigners who were accompanied by their slaves and staying in the Holy Roman Empire temporarily were allowed to keep slaves and take them back home in accordance with the laws of their own countries.

16. Frese, 1995:261.
17. Pichler, 1993:115.
18. Österreichisches Kriegsarchiv Wien (Austrian Military Archive, Vienna), Karton AFA-I R 58, 1714-17 (Pièce 188, a/1+2).
19. Firla, 2003:12.
20. Pichler, 1993:115.
21. Bauer, 1993:38–39.
22. For the complete letter, its German translation and full commentary see Firla (2003:14–21).
23. Pichler, 1993:115.
24. Firla, 1996:71–72.
25. Pichler, 1993:116.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 116; Bauer, 1993:66.
28. Pichler, 1993:116.
29. Gräffer, 1848–50 (vol. 3, 1848:197; vol. 5, 1850:80).
30. Pichler, 1993:116.
31. Firla, 1996: 87 n. 51.
32. Pichler, 1993:116.
33. Bauer, 1993:60.
34. Pichler, 1993:116.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
36. Bauer, 1993:59.
37. Pichler, 1993:117.
38. Gnamankou, 1996:82.
39. HALV (Family Archive of the reigning princes of Liechtenstein in Vaduz, Liechtenstein), Karton 231.
40. Bauer, 1993:63.
41. Wagner, 1980:25.
42. Irmen, 1994:47.
43. Wagner, 1980:25; Irmen, 1994:54.
44. Firla, 2003:24.
45. Wagner, 1980:8; Irmen, 1994:66.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Wagner, 1980:25; Firla, 1996:77.
48. Irmen, 1994:47, 103, 150, 155, 134.
49. Firla, 2003:46.
50. Cited *ibid.*, p. 29.
51. Wagner, 1980.
52. Fried, 1994:29–30.
53. Fried (1994). Since I have discussed Fried's research and added translations of his Hungarian sources, in the following passages I shall refer to my ensuing publication Firla (2003).

54. Cited in Firla, 2003:33, 42.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., pp. 35–36.
57. Ibid., p. 35.
58. Ibid., p. 39.
59. Cited *ibid.*, p. 40.
60. Pichler, 1993:116.
61. See Firla, 2002:69.
62. See Firla, 1997.
63. Cited in Firla, 2003:42.
64. Ibid.
65. Pichler, 1993:117.
66. Bauer, 1993:85.
67. Ibid., p. 87.
68. Cited *ibid.*, p. 83.
69. Firla, 2001a.
70. Bauer, 1993:87.
71. Firla, 2001a:17 n. 103.
72. Ibid., p. 16.
73. Ibid., p. 11.
74. Ibid., p. 14.
75. Ibid., p. 12.
76. Firla, 2002:14.
77. Firla, 2001a:9.
78. Ibid., p.18.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p. 9.
81. Bauer, 1993:84–85.
82. In 1996, I found a bust of Soliman in the Rollettmuseum in Baden near Vienna. It had previously not been identified (Firla & Forkl 1996:133–134).
83. Firla, 2001a:15.
84. Lewis, 1872:209.
85. Pichler, 1993:118.
86. Firla, 2001a:5–6.
87. Prah, 1989:42–43.
88. Firla, 2001a:18–19.

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The Passing of a Giant: Walter Sisulu, 1912 - 2003

Kwesi Kwaa Prah

Growing up as teenagers in the 1950s and the beginning of the 60s was for many of us an infinitely seductive and unstintingly exhilarating experience, because Africa was confidently shaking off the burden of colonialism and was on the march to great expectations. The pulsating pace of the march was irresistibly euphoric, and reading the *Evening News* in the late afternoons with Oko Addy became a most compelling addiction. The era brought us a pantheon of political and nationalist icons from far beyond the borders of Ghana. We came to know, by reputation or sight, Lumumba, Awolowo, Azikiwe, Nkomo, Kaunda, Banda, Kenyatta, Nyerere, Keita, Toure, Du Bois, Padmore and many others. Since that period there has been a steady ebb in the flow of “true sons or daughters of the soil” and veritable giants in the African political firmament. By the 1970s and 1980s, the scoundrels and butchers were tipping the scales, with the Nguemas, Amins, Bongos and Bokassas of this world hugging the footlights in the African political drama.

Very recently, on 5 May 2003, one of the real giants, of heroic proportions, passed on, and Africa went into mourning in a fashion we have not seen since the death of Julius Nyerere. Walter Sisulu passed away in the early evening, at his home in Linden, Johannesburg, in the arms of his devoted wife Albertina Sisulu who had, in the trying 26 years of her husband’s imprisonment, maintained a sober and rock-like fidelity to his life and cause. By her account, he died peacefully, at rest with himself and his conscience. Sisulu in death was celebrated in an unforgettable way. African tradition demands that no foul words or unpleasant judgement may be made on recently dead people. People are therefore often verbally kind and generous to figures they would normally be more critical about. But Sisulu’s case was definitely and doubtlessly different. It went far beyond customary politeness and decorum. The display of public affection and respect was penetrating, artless and perceptibly heartfelt.

Sisulu was born on 18 May 1912 (the year the ANC was founded) in Engcobo district in the Transkei. His mother, Alice, was a domestic worker and his father a white civil servant called Victor Dickinson. He grew up exclusively in his mother’s care and got as far as Standard 4 at the age of 15, when he had to drop out of school. We are informed that in 1923,

Walter was exposed to a distorted version of Garvey’s philosophy by one Wellington Buthelezi, who arrived in Qutubeni, Engcobo district with his

lieutenant, Reverend Twala, in the early 1920s. Buthelezi was a Zulu from Natal, but in Engcobo District he posed as a black American who had graduated from Oxford and Cambridge. He and Twala held public meetings at which, Sisulu recalled, "They talked about freedom for the black man and condemned the whites for their injustice and repression." Buthelezi preached that an American all-Negro contingent were coming in aeroplanes to liberate them. There was enormous excitement in the village. "Although we knew very little about oppression, it was a welcome idea that black people who had got power were coming. Soon afterwards an aeroplane did fly over the village and Walter was convinced that the American liberators had arrived."¹ Buthelezi's millenarian Garveyism proved to be the pipe dream it was. It was a measure of Walter's character that he was not disappointed and shattered when no crusaders came on the noble mission. Rather, the tale planted a seed of hope in his mind: "One day we shall be free".²

In 1928, he left Qutubeni village in Engcobo for Johannesburg. Off he went on the *MBombela*, the train which ferried miners between the Transkei and Johannesburg. Elinor Sisulu writes that the train was used "exclusively for transporting recruits from the rural areas of the mines On its journey of about 1000 kilometres, it would stop at countless small country sidings to load the human cargo destined for the mines."³ In those days, in the words of Alan Paton in *Cry the Beloved Country* (a book we read at Achimota school), "all roads led to Jo'burg". Johannesburg and the Reef area in general acted like a magnet attracting migrant and prospective migrant labourers from the whole Southern African region. So strong and pervasive was the economic institution of migrant labour that in one of Isaac Schapera's studies on the Batswana he suggested that it became almost a *rite de passage* for young African males. This, indeed, was true not only for the Batswana, but for Africans in the whole region.

Walter Sisulu went to Johannesburg as a prospective labourer and became a mine-worker living in a barrack in the Reef compounds (Rose Deep Mine, Germiston). He moved from this soul-crushing position to a less arduous but equally lowly job as a "kitchen boy" in East London. Sisulu was influenced and inspired by Clements Kadalie of the Industrial Commercial Union in East London. He returned to Johannesburg, not too long after that, to work in a bakery.⁴ It was at this point, back in Johannesburg, that he became increasingly involved in trade union work, and was soon to lead a group of workers in strike action for better wages. The strike was crushed and he got sacked for his pains. After this he went through a series of factory jobs, clashing frequently with his white bosses.⁵ While moving from one form of drudgery to the next, he was also studying for his as yet incomplete school certificate. Thus, between 1928 and 1940 Sisulu acquired enormous experience as a conscious member of the African working class of South Africa, in the decisive inter-war years. He had worked in a range of jobs: as a delivery man for a dairy; in the masonry and carpentry department, then as a miner at the Rose Deep Mine; as a domestic; as a baker for Premier Biscuits; as a paint mixer for Herbert Evans in Johannesburg; as a packer for a tobacconist; as a part-time teller at the Union Bank of South Africa, and after 1938 as an advertising salesperson and real-estate agent.

He joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1940, and came under the influence of Dr A.B. Xuma. That same year, Dr Xuma, also from Engcobo, became president of the organization. From 1940 onwards the focus of his life became uncompromisingly political. Critical of what they considered to be the old and inadequately combative political leadership of the ANC, in 1944, together with others like Anton Lembede, A.P. Mda, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Jordan Ngubane, Congress Mbatha, and Willie Nkomo, they formed the Youth League within the Congress. In the foreword to the biography of Walter and Albertina Sisulu, *In Our Lifetime*, Nelson Mandela writes that, "his home was the meeting place for that generation of young men whose fierce debates and arguments provided important impetus to the birth of the ANC Youth League. Walter was central to that circle: he was the magnet that drew us all together".⁶ In 1949, the Youth League was instrumental in voting the politically over-placatory Xuma out and replacing him with J.S. Moroka. Sisulu was elected first full-time Secretary-General of the ANC. This was an acknowledgement of his organizational skills. Ruth First recalled that,

This is the period when Walter Sisulu, night and day, became the centre of the organizational drive of the ANC. And this is the start of a new history in the life struggle of the ANC. And from this time on, largely under the leadership of Sisulu, though not exclusively, we have an ANC in direct and continuing contact with the masses, leading political strikes and mass disobedience campaigns. We have the reconstitution of the ANC with a system of branch and cell organizations which prepared it for the period when the ANC was forced underground and we have a policy of unity in action in the ANC ... which policy was in fact initiated in this period under the secretaryship of Walter Sisulu.⁷

Three years later, in 1952, dissatisfied with Moroka, the Youth League helped to elect Chief Albert Luthuli to the presidency. That year, 1952, Sisulu was the main creative force behind the Defiance Campaign. Together with Nanabhai (Nana Sita), president of the Natal Indian Congress, he led the first group of Africans, Coloureds and Indians in breaking the Pass Laws, by marching into Boksburg Location without the requisite permit.

By the early 1940s, Walter Sisulu had become an estate agent. In the words of his biographer, his agency, Sitha Investments, "was a hive of activity". When Mandela came to Johannesburg in 1941 Sisulu became his mentor. In his own words, Mandela expressed his fascination with Walter Sisulu's set-up.

This was 1941 and I had never seen a black man in an office, let alone running an estate agency. I did not even know what an estate agency was. I later asked my cousin what degree Sisulu had. Garlick thought he had only passed Standard Six. I found this difficult to believe, but it was confirmed by someone else. "But how can this be?", I asked. "With such fluency in English and with such offices?" The reply was that, "he has knowledge and skills from the University of life and Johannesburg is a good place to learn".⁸

It was, indeed, Sisulu who inducted both Govan Mbeki and Nelson Mandela into the ANC.

At the funeral of Sisulu, Archbishop Desmond Tutu made, in his inimitable style, the observation, in jest, that if he had been Sisulu he would have put into his CV the fact that he had inducted Nelson Mandela into the ANC. Mandela stayed for some months at the Sisulu house. Mandela's acknowledgement of Sisulu has been consistent. He has pointed out that, at that point in history,

more and more I had come under the wise tutelage of Walter Sisulu. Walter was strong, reasonable, practical and dedicated. He never lost his head in a crisis; he was often silent when others were shouting. He believed that the African National Congress was the means to effect change in South Africa, the repository of black hopes and aspirations. Sometimes one can judge an organization by the people who belong to it, and I knew that I would be proud to belong to any organization of which Walter was a member. I didn't know the name of the ANC until I was at Fort Hare, but even then I did not identify myself with the ANC until Comrade Walter recruited me. I tended to follow what he was doing because he was a man who made a tremendous impression on my thinking. He recruited me to the Youth League and I automatically became a member of the ANC.⁹

One of the striking and consistent facts about Sisulu, which in the wake of his death most of the people who had known him were quick to point out, was the fact that he had the rare quality of holding people together and leading without overtly demonstrating his leadership. His natural diplomatic qualities enabled him to mediate and hold together, in a collective, people with fairly divergent philosophical positions. What impressed a lot of his comrades was that he never expected others to do things he was not himself prepared to do. Walter Sisulu displayed a gently expressed but unwavering humanity, which radiated distinctly in his social life. He placed himself always at the bidding of the collective and was generally more concerned about the welfare and lot of others than about his own.

After serving on the Joint Planning Council for the Defiance Campaign, and leading one of the first batches of passive resisters when the campaign began in 1952, Sisulu was jailed briefly as a resister. He was arrested and tried again with other leaders of the campaign in late 1952, and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, suspended for three years. In 1953, he travelled to Europe, Russia and China. He was the guest of the World Federation of Democratic Youth at its third World Youth Festival in Bucharest, Rumania. Included in the delegation of South Africans were several who had fled the country. They included Duma Nokwe, Alfred Hutchinson, Henry "Squire" Makgothi, Paul Joseph and others.

From 1956 to 1961 Sisulu was a defendant in the Treason Trial. For the duration of the 1960 State of Emergency, he was detained without trial. The next year he faced prosecution twice. He was arrested six times in 1962 and placed under 12-hour house arrest on 26 October and under 24-hour house arrest on 3 April 1963. On 11 July 1963, Walter Sisulu was arrested and detained under the 90-day law. Convicted in 1963 of furthering the aims of the banned ANC and of helping to organize the May 1961 stay-at-home, Sisulu was sentenced to six years in jail. He was released on bail and placed under 24-hour house arrest. Pending an appeal against a six-year sentence, Sisulu forfeited bail of R6000, disappeared from his home

on 19 April 1963, and went underground. The next time South Africans heard from Walter was when he spoke on the underground ANC station *Radio Freedom* on 26 June 1963, telling the people of South Africa that *Umkhonto we Sizwe* had decided to fight the Apartheid regime on an "eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" basis.

As one of those arrested during the Rivonia Raid, Sisulu was sentenced to life imprisonment. At the Rivonia Trial, he was the main defence witness and was subjected to fierce attack from the testy prosecutor, Percy Yutar. Sisulu told him: "I wish you were an African. Then you would know...." Released in October 1989, Sisulu was a member of the Internal Leadership Core and was elected ANC Deputy President at the national conference in July 1991.

My first detailed and substantial briefing on Walter Sisulu was given to me by Joe Matlou, in late May 1976, in Lusaka, Zambia, shortly before the Soweto Uprising. At that point in time, the Africanists within the ANC, including people like A.K. Mqota, Joe Matlou, Tennyson Makiwane, Ambrose Makiwane and others, were expressing forcefully their rejection of the South African Communist Party influence on the ANC. Matlou told me in glowing terms how crucial Walter Sisulu's role was to the struggle of the ANC. As he spoke about Walter Sisulu his voice descended into an admiring sotto mode. He went on at great length about the history of Sisulu and was of the view that if there was any person who would bridge the growing gap and tension between the Africanists and the non-Africanists within the ANC, it was Walter Sisulu. This registered firmly in my mind.

Years later, not too long after Mandela was released, indeed on the occasion of Mandela's first visit to the Transkei, I was myself *en route* from Nairobi to Windhoek, and was changing flights at Johannesburg International Airport. I was in the international lounge when Walter and Albertina Sisulu walked in. In those days the Transkei and other Bantustans were ostensibly treated by the apartheid regime as independent states. Therefore, passengers for the Transkei passed through the international lounge. When the Sisulus walked in with their bodyguard, I was the only African in the lounge and as soon as they were seated at one of the tables I walked over to the table, greeted them and sat down rather excitedly. After initial courtesies, I launched into a probing conversation with Walter Sisulu on the future. What came across very distinctly to me was the air of fearlessness which hung around him. He was a thoroughly relaxed person, but in his eyes one could read the qualities of a totally courageous person who was in complete command of his ambience. There was also a distinct charm in his soft and gentle style. These qualities were, in a way, in sharp contrast with his diminutive figure. Not too long afterwards, Winnie and Nelson Mandela also came in with their bodyguards. Walter Sisulu left a marked impression on my mind, which has been consolidated over the last decade.

He displayed none of the triumphalism which lesser-calibre politicians were sometimes inclined to succumb to with the collapse of Apartheid. With quiet self-confidence he pursued his political bent, forging the sort of broad racial and cultural unity necessary to defeat the structure and legacy of Apartheid. Even when the odious system had been defeated, he sought no high profile office, but was rather content to stay in the background of post-Apartheid politics. With his passing, one of the last titans of the anti-colonial struggle on this continent has gone into history. He will never be forgotten.

Notes

1. Elinor Sisulu. *Walter & Albertina: In Our Lifetime*. David Philip Publishers. Cape Town, 2002, p. 30.
2. Pippa Green. Free at Last: Joy after 30 Years of Pain. *Independent News and Media*. South Africa, May 2003, p. 4.
3. Elinor Sisulu, op. cit., p. 40.
4. Rapule Tabane. The Gentle Voice of Moderation. *Mail and Guardian*, 9–15 May 2003, p. 7.
5. Elinor Sisulu, op. cit., p. 2.
6. Ibid., p. 6.
7. Ruth First. Speech: Walter Sisulu's 70th Birthday, 1982. Quoted from Elinor Sisulu, op. cit., p. 82.
8. Nelson Mandela. Interview, 11 August 1993. Ibid., p. 65.
9. Ibid., p. 68.

Hayrettin Effendi, The Last Black Eunuch in Turkey

Dieudonné Gnamankou

African Eunuchs in the Ottoman Empire

For centuries child trafficking was a widespread practise in those countries and regions of Europe, Asia and Africa that had fallen under Ottoman domination. Generally known as “blood tax”, this practise was organized for the various palaces of the Ottoman sultan in Constantinople (Istanbul). White and black children were the victims of this form of enslavement. The fate of young girls was to join the harem as concubines or to become servants. The boys served in the Ottoman army or administration and were used for menial or domestic labour. Some of them would be used as pageboys at the palace or eunuchs in the sultan’s harem.

The first black eunuchs in the Ottoman Empire were introduced in 1485. The sultans had them sent over from Ethiopia and the Lake Chad region. Up to the late 15th century only white eunuchs would watch over the concubines in the harems. In 1587 a black man was made Chief of the Eunuchs. Known as Kizlar Agasi, he had the rank of a pasha and was the commander of the Halberdiers. He held command over various high-ranking officials of the empire and had important religious offices. He was the manager of the imperial mosques and the holy sites of Mecca and Medina. He was on excellent terms with the sultan and was the most feared man in the country. On his retirement he settled in Egypt, where he lived in luxury.

To this very day, the building that housed the apartments where the black eunuchs from the sultan’s palace used to stay can be visited in the former Turkish capital of Istanbul. A total of six hundred of these black eunuchs used to live there all at the same time! Africa, their continent of origin, lingered on in their imaginations. Thus one can discover African landscapes sketched on the walls of some of the apartments.

The Last Black Eunuchs

The publication of *Meyyale*, a book in Turkish by Dr Hifzi Topuz, sheds some light and gives precious insight into the daily lives of the last eunuchs of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century. The eunuchs were only freed in 1918, the year when the *Mesutiet* was adopted, the abolition of slavery in Turkey. Chapter 8 of Hifzi Topuz’s book focuses on the eunuchs of the

harems. In no uncertain terms, the author describes the suffering of these men: from being torn from their families and home regions in Africa, to the painful procedure of castration which only 10% of the children survived, to their transfer to Turkey.

In the 1960s, in the streets of Istanbul, in particular the neighbourhood of Bostanji, one could still encounter the last black eunuchs. The eunuchs usually kept quiet about their past, taking their secret to their graves. However, one year before his death in 1976 Hayrettin Effendi, the last eunuch of the last Ottoman sultan, Resat, decided to tell his life story to a friend in the neighbourhood. This was 70 years after he had been removed from Ethiopia.

Hayrettin was a physically distinguished and elegant man. Tall, friendly and generous, he lived in a house with a garden, which he shared with a Circassian woman whom he deeply loved and respected. Hayrettin was a Galla from Ethiopia. His story is the story of all the black eunuchs of the Ottoman Empire, which for centuries had remained a secret. His testimony reveals the suffering of the eunuchs. It is the insight of a highly lucid man into the perversity of human nature in his time. It is a powerful appeal to humanity never to allow such atrocities to occur again. It is also a message of hope

Hayrettin Effendi's Testimony

The testimony of Hayrettin Effendi, last eunuch of the last sultan, appears below.

I remember my childhood as if it was yesterday. I come from the Habesistan. I am a Galla. My name used to be Gülnata. We lived in a small village. We were very happy. I was 7 or 8 years old. I played with the children of my age on the village square. We always used to play the same game. We used to run after each other. One day horsemen arrived. They did not resemble the men from our area. Their faces were lighter. They were armed. They caught us. One of them held my mouth and I nearly choked. My eyes nearly came out of their sockets. They captured me and all my friends and took us away. I could not understand their language. Later I was to find out they spoke Arabic. Once we arrived in a village, they placed us in a courtyard. There were other children like us. They spoke the same language as ours. They were sobbing. We could not understand why they had taken us away. We shared the same grief. For three days we went without eating or drinking. We were frightened. A few days later we were castrated [in Massawa, a peninsula on the Ethiopian coast, occupied by the Turks]. For many years, I have never been able to forget the pain and the torture endured. Two weeks after the castration we started to heal. We were taken to harbours. There were boys and girls like us. We did not all speak the same language but we all shared the same destiny. All the boys had been castrated. We all got along well. Then we were taken aboard a boat. We rejoiced at having escaped from monsters. But where were we to be taken to? We thought they would throw us into the ocean. We knew nothing. Everything was completely uncertain. Our villages, our brothers, our sisters, our mothers were far behind. Would it ever be possible to see them again one day? Some of us cried incessantly. We all feared being drowned. It was the first time we had seen the sea and we were scared. We kept together on the boat. We watched the waves. What further misfortune was awaiting us?²

The children were screaming and shouting out of joy, as they thought we would go back to our villages. Our joy was short-lived. The interpreter told us that it would be very difficult to bring us back to our villages. Slavery was abolished. We were free... [In Aden] we were disembarked ... We were led to the market square. The English commander gave a speech that was translated into Arabic. We understood nothing. It was then translated into Habesh for us. Since the slave trade was prohibited, we would be given to families of military commanders and civil servants whom they trusted ... The commanders were Ottomans and the civil servants Sanjkas.³

... It was winter. It was the first time I had seen snow. I was cold. Yakup gave me to someone famous in Istanbul. I was disappointed. I loved Yakup like my father. He gave me to Cerkez Mehmet Pasa. Can a human being be given as a present? I then understood that this could happen ... In 1918 came the *Mesutiet* and we were freed ... We bought this house together with a friend, a lady from the palace. We manage. It is our destiny.”

Notes

1. This is an excerpt from Hifzi Topuz, *Meyyale*, Istanbul, Remzi Kitabevi Publishing, pp. 69–72. We wish to thank Ozan, who orally translated this text and the whole chapter on the black eunuchs for us, and also Mrs Oya Göker, who brought this publication to our attention as soon as it was published in Turkey.
2. During the crossing, the slave boat was boarded and inspected by an English patrol boat and the Arab slave traders were arrested. All were led to the harbour of Aden in Yemen.
3. An Ottoman officer, Yakup whilst on a mission to Aden, took him and brought him back to Istanbul.

Innocence Betrayed: Free Omar Askia Ali After 32 Years in Prison

Yvonne King

OMAR ASKIA ALI, an African-American Muslim who has been in prison for 32 years, has claimed since his arrest on 7 January 1971 that he is innocent. A sentence of life plus 10 to 20 years was given to Omar Askia Ali, then known as Edward Sistrunk, after he was convicted of participating in a robbery and homicide at Dubrow Furniture Store, in South Philadelphia on 4 January 1971. The race of the person who was killed during the robbery was not relevant, as it often is in homicides involving African-American defendants. However, Omar's commitment to ridding his North Philadelphia community of drugs was relevant. As an active member of the Nation of Islam, Omar's confrontations with drug dealers were highly visible and effective. Considering, at that time, that some members of the Philadelphia Police Department were benefiting from the drug trade, Omar's efforts were obviously seen as a threat by them and others in the trade. Some police were shaking down drug dealers, while other police officers were protecting them. It is important to note that the police detective on Omar's case, William O'Brien, was one of the latter. According to a *Philadelphia Daily News* article, "[O'Brien] admitted being hooked on drugs and alcohol when he began stealing money during the drug raids with the other squad members." O'Brien was eventually charged, tried, and convicted of bribery, and sentenced to five to ten years.

The 1960s and 1970s were volatile times in cities across the nation, including Philadelphia. The relationship between the state apparatus, particularly police departments in urban areas, and black militants, including organizations such as the Black Panther Party and the Nation of Islam, was generally hostile. The image of Black Muslims in the 1970s as portrayed by the state and the media was usually a negative one, often instilling fear, especially among whites. Omar, as a member of the Nation of Islam who was struggling to rid his community of drugs, was a role model to many, but competition to corrupt police officers and their agents in the drug trade. As in most businesses they would try to eliminate their competition, and Omar seems to have been a victim of this.

It is interesting to note that in his book *Philadelphia's "Black Mafia": A Social and Political History*, Sean Patrick Griffin, a former Philadelphia policeman turned academic,

cites the Dubrow Furniture Store robbery as the work of eight Black Mafia affiliates. According to Omar, he was not a member of the Black Mafia or otherwise associated with them. He was a responsible family man, who owned a business, and served his community primarily through the Nation of Islam.

After his arrest in January 1971, Omar also became a victim of the racism in the Prosecutor's Office, not only at his first trial, but also at his second, nearly ten years later. This victimization manifested in Omar being tried by all-white juries. When selecting a jury in criminal trials, the prosecution and the defense are given the authority, in the form of peremptory challenges, to have people stricken from serving as jurors without giving reasons for doing so. Consequently, prosecutors have taken advantage of this procedure to deliberately remove blacks from juries because of their race.

This year Omar's attorney, Peter Goldberger, explained on a radio program in January 2003 how the Prosecutor's Office succeeded in getting an all-white jury at Omar's second trial around. During a 1992 hearing in Omar's long, ongoing appellate process, which continues to this day, Attorney Goldberger informed the audience that "the actual private notes of the prosecutor were brought out into evidence". He continued,

at first [the Assistant District Attorney] denied that there were any such notes, denied that there was any plan to exclude all Black people from the jury, but the defense was able to get ... the actual copy, which had the handwritten notes of the prosecutor in a code, not a very subtle code, that shows that she was keeping track, juror by juror, number by number, of the race of every person that came into that room for jury duty and making sure that that number on the **B** side got smaller and smaller, while the numbers on the **W** side got larger and larger.

In 1995, a federal judge in Philadelphia was persuaded by this argument (among other things), and ordered that Omar be set free unless the state gave him a new trial. The State appealed this decision and the Third Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the judgment granting Omar this relief. Even though the United States Supreme Court had held, in *Batson v. Kentucky*, 476 US 79 (1986), that "the Equal Protection Clause is violated whenever a state prosecutor exercises a peremptory challenge to exclude a [person] from the jury because of his or her race", Omar did not succeed. Goldberger explained that

even though we had absolutely proved a racist exclusion of all African-Americans from the jury, Omar could not benefit from that fact because of the decision by his lawyer in the mid-1980s, against Omar's personal urgings to keep that issue front and center, to drop it from her brief. There is a technical rule that the federal court cannot look at issues that weren't looked at earlier by the state court.

Currently, Omar Ali's case is being appealed yet again. His lawyer informs us that the issue is "the way the prosecutor cross-examined the witnesses and argued the case to the jury by innuendo of race and religion". A former assistant district attorney, Norris Gelman, who

represented one of Omar's other two co-defendants at the first trial, claims that "instead of relying on the evidence to secure a conviction, this [Omar's] case was tried in a way that the evidence was sort of subordinated to the other major themes ... of race and religion, which are not evidential, but were made to be evidential by this prosecutor who did select an all-white jury". Gelman went on to state that neither race nor religion "proves the historical fact of who was involved and who did what. It just plays to the various prejudices of various people. I do not think that Omar got a fair trial."

Despite the extent to which Omar Askia Ali has been a victim of police corruption, prosecutorial misconduct and incompetent legal assistance, resulting in 32 years of incarceration, he has participated in numerous programmes for self-improvement and established some to help others. They are too many to describe; however, the Boxing Association of America (BAA) certainly stands out because it was designed to help prison inmates and people on the outside. Omar founded the BAA in 1979 at Holmesburg Prison. The BAA boxing team was invited to the Civic Centre in 1982 to fight other amateur boxers in front of 2000 spectators, including then Congressional candidate William H. Gray III, Councilmen John Street and Lucien Blackwell, and the Pennsylvania Boxing Commissioner James Binns. They did so without incident. When interviewed at the event, the Holmesburg Superintendent David Owens stated that he "thought that within five years we should have the boxing team in the community and have it accepted by the community, but here they are doing it in only three years." The BAA hopes eventually to build a multi-purpose community centre in an at-risk community in order to deter crime by providing services that change behaviour and encourage self-development.

The US Constitution entitled Omar to a fair trial, but in 1971 he did not get one. In 1981, when he was granted a new trial, the entitlement still existed, but again Omar did not get a fair trial. In early 2003, in response to the prosecutor's deliberate exclusion of blacks from Omar's juries, former Assistant District Attorney Gelman said, "the idea of winning at all cost, no matter what the price, prevailed far too often in those days, but not today. The price was a fair trial and the [U.S.] Constitution, far too high a price to pay for a single conviction." We wish to be as optimistic as District Attorney Gelman in believing that the attitudes are, indeed, different today.

Let us make a commitment to publicize this case because, clearly, Omar Askia Ali should be home with his family, who remain steadfast in their efforts to free him, and back in his community to participate in its much-needed development.

For more information, contact Omar's wife:

Mrs Karen Ali

PO Box 42702

Philadelphia, PA 19101-1730

USA

Telephone: 215-386-1730

Write to OMAR ASKIA ALI at:

SCI Houtzdale

PO Box 1000

Houtzdale, PA 16698-1000

USA

Send donations to:

Mr Peter Goldberger

50 Rittenhouse Place

Ardmore, PA 19003-2276

USA

Encountering Death

Akwasi Aidoo

My flight from London Heathrow to New York JFK on April 2, 2004 almost didn't make it. The aircraft, British Airways Flight 183, nearly came down in flames, killing all 220 passengers on board. We took off dead on time at 20 hours, and all seemed normal. As always, everyone seemed to be minding their own business – reading, watching a movie, listening to music, or going straight to sleep.

The flight seemed the same as the hundreds of others I've flown in the last thirty years. The security check had been thorough enough to assure everyone of the absence of Al Qaeda operatives with plans and the means to bring us down. No, it seemed a perfectly safe, smooth and secure flight, until the unexpected happened.

I was not originally on the flight. I had changed to it at the last minute in Heathrow, when my flight from Entebbe, Uganda arrived late, giving me less than thirty minutes to rest before connecting on to New York. I wanted more time to stretch out, overcome my chronic motion sickness without medication, pick up a novel, and make some phone calls to friends in the city. There were three available flights in five hours, and I chose the last one. My three colleagues on the Entebbe flight, who had been at the same retreat with me in Jinja, Uganda, went on with the original flight.

For a moment, between phone calls, it crossed my mind that if anything tragic were to happen with either my flight or theirs there would be the all-too-familiar human response to see the fatal hand of destiny in it. "Isn't it amazing that he changed his flight and wasn't with them?" Some would ask.

The flight had been smooth, until two hours to New York City. The announcement that woke me up pierced through the dark business-class cabin with lightening shock: "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Pilot speaking. This is an emergency announcement. I repeat, this is an emergency announcement..."

I was sitting in the upper deck, right in front of the cockpit, so I knew this could be no hijacking. Perhaps a hostage had been taken in the back of the aircraft? Or some intelligence information had just come in about a bomb on board? Perhaps we had even run out of fuel because someone forgot to refuel the aircraft at Heathrow airport? It was none of these.

The Pilot continued: "We have detected smoke in one of the engines and have had to shut off the engine. There're vibrations in the middle of the aircraft, which we are closely tracking. Please remain seated, bring your seats to an upright position, and fasten your seat

belts. We will do our best to stabilize the aircraft, but we may have to make an emergency landing. The cabin crew will show you the steps to take in the event of an emergency landing..."

It was clear we were in harm's way. A young blond woman who sat three seats next to me shot up to go to the toilet. She looked half-asleep, wore blue jeans and had long hair all over her face. The cabin crew quickly blocked her and gently told her to sit down for now. In a minute, three female cabin crew were by her side. We, the men, knew (or thought we knew) to look away.

I didn't want to think of what the young distraught woman needed help with. It wouldn't have been fair, for weren't we all distraught in our own ways anyway, some under a thin cover of dignified silence, and others with closed eyes or some such inward-centered response. I wanted to focus on something usefully distracting, like the "Me and Daddy Show" at the Bronx Zoo that I was to attend with my son the next day. That thought refused to stay, and my mind wandered to the idea of last moments of life, and then the very idea and meaning of life itself.

Jinja in Uganda, where I had been, is the source of the River Nile, the longest river in the world. At that source, two historic monuments flank the majestic and lively river. One is where Mahatma Gandhi requested his ashes to be buried. The other is the putative spot where John Hanning Speke stood when he came upon the Nile's origin. The idea of remembering the lives and deaths of two great spirits through a river fascinated me for an instant. Rivers are in themselves not eternal, but there's something about their flow and contours that defy the cycle and rhythms of life and death. They seem to go on forever.

The Pilot's voice came on the intercom once again: "Ladies and Gentlemen, we have turned off one of the cooling systems... We will begin our descent for an emergency landing in thirty minutes. Please remain calm and seated with your seat belts fastened. We are doing everything possible for your safety. The cabin crew will demonstrate the exit procedures..." We went through the correct sitting position, where and how to head out of the emergency exits, why we should leave behind our hand luggage, etc. The heat was on.

A man sitting next to me, on my right, an African-American, who had barely eaten or drunk anything on the flight called one of the cabin crew and asked for a glass of wine. He was refused, gently, but offered water, which he took in one straight gulp. He asked for a second glass. I looked at him with a smile, trying strangely to reassure him that all will be well, but in truth I was as scared to die as he might have been.

I started to perspire, both from the heat and the stress of knowing that death might be lurking just a few seconds or minutes away. An older British man sitting next to me, on my left, must have noticed my fear, and he said: "Thank God we are not landing on water." I found that reassuring and didn't want to know if he knew what he was talking about. I asked one of the crew members passing by: "Are we landing on water?" "No" she said. I was doubly reassured and thanked the British man sitting next to me. In moments of stress or impending tragedy, every small act of life assurance is a gift of miraculous proportions, I thought.

It reminded me of the words of my good friend Aseghedech from Eritrea when I told her that I had found Jinja one of the most beautiful places on earth. She had said: "Ugandans survived Idi Amin's slaughter because their land is so beautiful that they had every reason to hope and to live. It's not for nothing that their land, Uganda, was called the Pearl of Africa." There's a popular saying that "where there is life there's hope." In moments of trial and triumph, perhaps the reverse is more accurate: "where there's hope there's life." Hope may not prevent death from laying its icy hands on us, but without hope the spirit goes out even before death arrives. I tried to be hopeful.

I remembered too that the human spirit could indeed rise to the level of defiance in the face of imminent death. Charles James Fox, the 18th Century indefatigable Tory politician for example, had said, "I die happy", mocking death as he lay dying. Perhaps a more evocative quote is from Lytton Strachey, the biographer, who on his deathbed dismissed death beyond measure with the immortal words: "If this is dying, then I don't think much of it." Equally inspiring was Kwame Nkrumah who said something to the effect that when death finally comes knocking at our door, it would be sorely disappointed, for we would have already sacrificed our lives to the struggle.

I had no such heroic thoughts of my own to defy death. Rather, I simply wished that if I lived, I would live life to the fullest in all ways possible. I would not focus on just one thing. I would smell a flower every morning, stop to marvel at the mystery of the ant, patiently smile at the rain, slowly eat lunch without the daily newspaper, commute to work and home with a walkman, courageously learn to swim, and say a simple hi to the homeless wherever and whenever I find them. I would swim the full breath of the river of life and learn to gently go with its flow now and then.

Of course, I also called on familiar spirits, starting with my grandmother, Naana, who was the first feminist I knew. Naana, a hunter, enjoyed life to the fullest, and said to me when I contemplated life as a priest: "My precious," she said in Twi, "remember that you were born to live. If being a priest would let you live life to its fullest, then be a priest." I dropped the idea. My mother who was more diplomatic said no less: "Perhaps you can be a priest who brings joy to all who cross your path, but you must yourself have joy in full measure to share it." These personal thoughts and sentiments kept me sane and going.

In due course, we commenced our descent and the terrifying experience of two hours heightened. What kind of landing would it be? What if it crashed? We had ten minutes to go, the longest time of the seven-hour flight. The bright lights of New York City lit up the sky, evoking memories of September 11th and imaginings of what and how the last minutes of the victims of that horrific attack must have felt.

In the final minutes of that entire experience, I closed my eyes, and found myself saying a little prayer to Saint Thomas. I used to be called Thomas in my devoutly Catholic days. Once a Catholic, always a Catholic, I thought. My atheist faith was weak. Death was near, and I chose to think of it spiritually. A little prayer won't hurt, I rationalized, after all who knows what's up there? This reminded me of the delightful feminist joke: "God is coming and, boy, is she pissed!"

I opened my eyes, looked out the window, and saw the airport runway. We were seconds perhaps to the ground, and on both sides of the aircraft tens of fire-fighting trucks and ambulances stood ready to save lives.

Somehow, the feeling of danger evaporated as we embraced the earth. Then the entire aircraft broke into thunderous applause as we hit the ground in what must count as one of the softest landings of all time.

Death had spared us, or rather the human spirit had won out, for the crew had demonstrated the most abiding courage and professional calm their training and experience could not even have instilled. They seemed superhuman. We were safe.

When it was time to go out, the crew stood in a line by the door, and one by one, we came out shaking their hands. A little girl of about my son's age hugged the pilot and said: "God bless you." The adults around her laughed nervously.

Finally, I got to immigration, and my encounter with the immigration officer who processed me nearly broke my new resolve to smile at all life, good or bad. When I said hello, he said nothing. I was used to that. He took my passport and immigration forms, and spent ten good minutes leafing through them. Then he asked: "Why have you come to this country?" "I live and work here," I said. "What do you mean you live here? Where's your residence card," he asked. "I don't have one," I said. "I'm here on a work visa, which is on page 29 of my old passport. I work at the Ford Foundation."

He looked irritated, and continued to ask the same questions twice in a row. I did my best not to show my exasperation, for I knew he could throw me out on the flimsiest of "Homeland Security" grounds. I smiled instead. He fingerprinted me twice, photographed me, stamped my passport, and handed it back to me. I said "Thank you." Again, no response. I walked away, sure that this particular human being will never get it. The oneness of all humankind is an alien concept to him.

In every situation, no matter how much you've suffered, someone or the other will find a reason to be mean-spirited, I thought. But that's not the important point. What counts is that I've a new lease on life. If logic and the statistics of probability are anything to go by, this should mean that another close brush with death would not occur soon.

The day after is always for reflection. What's the lesson of the experience? How would the memory of it change my life? Today, after hearing a blow-by-blow account of my experience, an American friend suggested lightheartedly that I consider seeing a therapist. I'm not sure, for the word "Therapist" has always frightened me ever since I deciphered its alternative meaning if split between the first and last two syllables: "The-rapist." So, I'll settle for the simple but powerful lesson the experience taught me, which is to always fully embrace the joys and beauty of life in all its forms. I've sworn to do just that.

CONTRIBUTORS

Annette Groth is a German sociologist who has been working for many years in the field of development, e.g. for UNHCR (Geneva) and the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (Barbados). She is currently a consultant for Bread for the World, a Protestant development agency. Her work focuses on education, scholarships, and advocacy on globalization-related issues such as GATS, TRIPS and EU issues.

Eugene Godfried is a community organizer, music producer and radio journalist. For the past 26 years he has worked with Caribbean nations to promote ideas and actions regarding popular culture and Caribbean identity. He is currently Director of the Caribbean Division of Radio Havana, Cuba.

Humberto Marquez is a well-known Latin American writer.

Mwajuma Vuzo is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Educational Research at the University of Oslo in Norway. At present she is attached to the LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) project as a Ph.D. student.

Halima Mohammed Mwinsheikhe is a senior curriculum developer at the Tanzanian Institute of Education, and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the field of language of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools at the University of Oslo. She is attached to LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) Project.

John Adebayo Afolabi is a Nigerian writer and a lecturer in the Department of Dramatic Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria.

Hong Yonghong is Professor of African Law at Xiangtan University (The People's Republic of China). He is currently Visiting Professor at CASAS.

Peter Adwok Nyaba is Director, Larjour Consultancy, Nairobi, Kenya

Eric Reeves is an academic with African interest, based at Smith College, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Monika Firla is an independent researcher based in Stuttgart/Germany. She completed her PhD in philosophy in 1981 and served as a Librarian from 1982-89. She taught philosophy from 1988-96. Since 1988 she is responsible for the monthly "Jour fixe in the African Department of Linden-Museum Stuttgart" (together with head/husband Dr. Hermann Forkl). Her publications on African literature, include a study of the racism of Kant, the African Diaspora in Germany and Austria before 1900. Exhibitions on Africans in Wurttemberg/Southwest-Germany in 2001 and on Angelo Soliman in 2004.

Kwesi Kwaa Prah is Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS).

Dieudonné Gnamankou is a historian and philologist. He specializes in African and Russian history and conducts research on the African diaspora in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. He is the author of *Abraham Hanibal, l'aïeul noir de Pouchkine* (1996), and of various publications on the African slave trade, the African origins of the Russian poet Pushkin and of a thesis on the Black diaspora in Russia from 1670 to 1917. He also edited the collection *Pushkin and the Black World*, published on the occasion of the bicentennial of the poet's birth (1999).

Yvonne King is a former senior lecturer in the Faculty of Law at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria, and a former member of the Black Panther Party, where she worked with prisoners in the correctional system of Illinois, USA. Currently, Dr King is based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, working as a development consultant for non-profit organizations, and is a contributing writer to the Philadelphian newspaper *Neighborhood Leader*.

Akwasi Aidoo is a Ghanaian sociologist who is currently Director of the Ford Foundation's Special Initiative for Africa Programme.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Submission of Papers

Papers should be sent to the Editor, TINABANTU, The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), P.O. Box 352, Plumstead 7800, Cape Town, South Africa. Tel. +27-21-762-4454. Fax +27-21-762-4452. E-mail casas@casas.co.za

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