Afrocentric Rectification of Terms: Excerpt from: What Slave Trade? And other Afrocentric reflections on the Race War

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Why rectification of terms?

The way reality is perceived and acted upon depends crucially on how it is packaged, on the framework within which it is presented, and on the concepts and terminology used in representing it. And this is not an innocuous matter. For example, to teach a child that an adder is a rope is to program him for fatal risk; for, if asked to pick up a rope, he may well pick up an adder from the ground and get bitten to death. Likewise, there is danger for a people who live in a dangerous world which has been described innocuously or neutrally or euphemistically by their enemies. They would then live in a world with a false sense of security, with a false consciousness of reality that could be dangerous to their survival. They would be like a child in a den of snakes who has been taught that snakes are ropes. Then take the case of the eagle which has been taught that it is a chicken, or the sheep which has been taught that it is a wolf. The former would leave its natural potential unrealised, while the latter would be devoured by the genuine wolves should it confidently wander into their midst. Inappropriate descriptions are thus a great and practical danger, and should be rectified.

It has long been recognised, from as far back as the time of Confucius, that there is a general need for a periodic exercise in rectification of terms. That is because words are tools for mentally grasping reality; and like all tools, they get worn out with use. When words cease to mean what they say, or become too vague, they are like ill-fitting clothes or worn spanners. It is then necessary to mend or replace them.

Furthermore, in cases where there is a conflict of viewpoint or of interest, the terminology devised by one side is not likely to reflect the viewpoint or the experience of the other side.

The Black World's situation

In the particular case of the Black World, a Black World which is trapped in a global structure of institutions, ideas and terminologies set up by its white enemies, the

need for a rectification of terms is acute. And the rectification requires a redefinition or re-description of reality in our own terms, terms that convey our true experience and serve our interests. To illustrate the point consider the following definition of racism.

By racism we mean ethnocentric pride in one's own racial group and preference for the distinctive characteristics of that group; belief that these characteristics are fundamentally biological in nature and are thus transmitted to succeeding generations; strong negative feeling towards other groups who do not share these characteristics coupled with the thrust to discriminate against and exclude the out group from full participation in the life of the community.[1]

By not touching on the historical role of racism as the system, theory and practice of white supremacist superstitions and on its imperialist history; by ignoring its role in programs of unprovoked political, economic and military aggression; by obscuring its malignant roots in a specific capitalist vocation of chattel slavery; by overlooking the psychotic violence of those possessed by its spirit; and by reducing it to ethnocentric social discrimination, this definition deftly equates racism with any ordinary ethnocentrism and xenophobia. But there is much more to racism than xenophobia and ethnocentrism. Reducing racism to ethnocentrism is like calling murder molestation. On this definition, if a mutilated Black, a grandson of chattel-slaves, should emerge partially roasted from a Ku Klux Klan lynching, and should declare that he hates whites and would have nothing to do with any whites, and would forever stick to the company of Blacks, and would work for the physical separation of black and white communities, he would be denounced as being a racist, indeed as being no less a racist than the Ku Klux clan attackers who barbecued

him alive! Such a definition of racism is clearly obscurantist and mischievous; it seems calculated to make everyone, its inventors and practitioners as well as their victims, equally racist. Furthermore, it fails to capture the Black World experience and interest.

Why an **Afrocentric** *Rectification of Terms?*
In the case of the Pan-African World, which is in profound conflict with a Pan-European World, which is addicted to oppressing and exploiting Africans, many of the terms employed by Europeans do not reflect the African experience of what they describe.

As we shall see, terms like "slave trade" and "colonialism" are not only Eurocentric; they are no more accurate in describing what happened than "molestation" would be in describing mass murder. In fact, they are insidiously hostile to our interests. What is at stake in retaining or rectifying such orthodox terminology is this: Which version of reality shall we work from, that imposed by our enemies or our own, that which serves the interests of our enemies or our own? Shall we be blinded by what, for us, would be false consciousness or act by the light of a correct consciousness?

If the African experience is to be correctly presented, particularly in historical works, there is a special need to rectify orthodox, Eurocentric terminology in ways that register the African experience or viewpoint. That is over and above whatever rectification of terms is made necessary by the usual wear and tear that usage inflicts on words.

An Afrocentric rectification of some key terms
We need to be quite clear and precise on what has been going on between the Pan-African World and the Pan-European World during the last six centuries. Imprecision and

euphemism can only add to our confusion, and confusion can only help to increase our already long line of disastrous defeats. With an eye to greater accuracy in terminology, we shall start by re-examining the three principal phases of the Black World's insertion into the Eurocentric Global Order (EGO), those conventionally called slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Do they describe phenomena from the Afrocentric perspective? If not, what terms should replace them? And as there is no collective term in conventional use for all three — even though some have taken to using "Holocaust" or "Black Holocaust" or "The Maafa" — what term would be appropriate? And is the term racism precise enough?

1. Slave Trade

When the era of the so-called Slave Trade is examined, what do we find? Its two main features were interminable wars and forced labour; and the targets of both were the Black Race; and the entire thing was organised by Whites of European stock, and they were its prime beneficiaries. It was a system of war and violence on four continents and on their interconnecting seas. This war system operated in three zones:

(1) There was Africa, the war front, the zone of daily battles, skirmishes, raids, kidnappings and ambushes, which yielded war prisoners for carrying off into captivity.

(2) There was the Diaspora zone, the rear area of the Europeans, made up of the transit waters (the Atlantic and Indian Oceans), together with the territories of the Americas as well as the plantation islands in the Indian Ocean, off shore from East Africa (Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion, Zanzibar, etc.). For the Black war captives, this was the zone of permanent martial law and terrorism (especially on the plantations, mines and slave-holding towns); the zone of forced labour (the Gulags and Siberias of their time); the zone of daily resistance by the captives, and of their periodic escapes, mutinies and revolts, and of the brutal suppression thereof (there were some 250 recorded revolts in the USA alone, an average of one a year for the era before Emancipation); the zone of guerrilla wars between the Maroon communities (hundreds of which existed at any one time all over the Americas) and the slave-owner communities around them which sought to re-enslave them; and the zone of full-scale wars between the slave-owner states and the liberation movements, as between France and its slaves in Haiti, or between the USA and the Black Seminoles. And

(3) There was Europe, the headquarters from where the entire far-flung system of daily warfare was masterminded, stimulated, coordinated, armed and financed, and to which the bulk of the resulting riches was taken.

It needs to be pointed out that, in its search for labour, Europe took war to the Black Race; that Europeans went to Africa as deliberate war provocateurs, and craftily fomented wars, and committed and suborned warlike acts, in order to stimulate a harvest of war prisoners. This was how it all began:

The captains of two of Prince Henry's exploring caravels brought back with them to Lisbon in 1442 a dozen Africans, whom they had captured on the West Coast in the course of a wholly unprovoked attack upon an African village. Further exploits of a similar kind followed.[2]

After Columbus "discovered" America, and labour was needed for plantations there, the raiding of Africa for slaves became the official business of rival European states. By the early 18th century, it

brought war, war of the most atrocious and desolating character, and on a scale until then unimagined, to Africa, and "made of England the great slave trader of the world." . . . The trade had grown so large that mere kidnapping raids conducted by white men in the immediate neighbourhood of the coast-line were insufficient to meet its requirements. Regions inaccessible to the European had to be tapped by the organization of civil wars. . . Tribe was bribed to fight tribe, community to raid community . . .Tribal feuds and individual hatreds were alike intensified, and while wide stretches of countryside were systematically ravaged by organized bands of raiders armed with muskets, "hunting down victims for the English trader whose blasting influence, like some malignant providence extended over mighty regions where the face of a white man was never seen," the trade put within the reach of the individual the means of satisfying a personal grudge and of ministering to a private vengeance.[3]

This inter-Black warfare which Europeans stimulated and orchestrated yielded a steady harvest of war prisoners. The Europeans then carried this harvest into captivity across the waters, and converted them into chattel-slaves. It should be emphasised that those they carted out of Africa were not yet actually slaves. They were turned into slaves only after they were landed in the Americas, where the slave plantations received them and broke them in, and put them to toil under a system of state and private terrorism. For example:

For a hundred years slaves in Barbados were mutilated, tortured, gibbeted alive and left to starve to death, burnt alive, flung into coppers of boiling sugar, whipped to death.[4]

Thus, the Americas were, for four centuries, from Columbus' arrival in 1492 till the last act of emancipation there in Brazil, in 1888, a vast forced-labour camp for the transported Black captives and prisoners of war, a forced-labour camp vaster than Siberia with all its Gulags! In the eyes of the operators of this war system, these captives were chattels, things excluded from humanity and from the polity, the legal equals of cattle and pigs and pots and pans. In the eyes of these Europeans, and of their most Christian law, every Black was a chattel, either chattel-in-stock already or chattel-in-the-wild awaiting capture; all Blacks were livestock, beasts of burden to be hunted, corralled, marched to market, bought and sold, broken and tamed and stripped of human culture, and then worked to death and replaced by another breathing tool. The equation of Blacks with livestock was even manifested in the plantation architecture in the USA. At Monticello, the plantation of Thomas Jefferson, that great champion of liberty, as at Mount Vernon, George Washington's plantation:

the symmetrical placement of the slave quarters and stables were not mere formal accidents. . . . they indicated in architectural terms what was commonly accepted among planters in the South — that slaves were equivalent to livestock. In fact, as Frederick Law Olmstead noted during his journey to the cotton kingdom a half century after Jefferson's time, slaves were often traded for horses.[5]

Seen in its totality, this was a vast war on the Black Race that was most cunning in its grand strategy. In Africa, the first zone, Europeans made war on Blacks by inducing Blacks to

make war on one another. It was "divide and conquer" at its devilish worst, applied to an entire Black race on the vast African continent, by a well-disguised white hand manipulating from afar. For the kidnap victims and the war prisoners who were carried off into captivity in the Diaspora, there was a second zone, a zone of total war — military, cultural, economic, psychological, ideological; a total war waged against them by whites, clearly and visibly by whites, and designed to break each of them into an obedient workhorse for the rest of life. When taken altogether, this was the most devious and devilish of war systems ever contrived: Europe was the headquarters, Africa was the war front, the Americas were the prisoners-of-war camp, chattel-slavery was the kind of forced labour to which the prisoners of war were subjected in that camp, the produce and profits which went to Europe were the peculiar booty from this most peculiar of wars. As for all the Blacks caught up in it, the overwhelming majority, probably as much as 99.9%, were victims of different kinds and degrees: the war captives shipped abroad, the war dead and the war survivors left in Africa, all those who resisted the pressure to collaborate, and even those among the Black procurers who never made contact with the Whites but unwittingly served the interest of the European war fomenters. All were caught in the toils of a devilish system whose totality they were in no position to see or guess; all were driven by overpowering forces beamed and controlled from outside their societies, forces which crushed all resistance, even those put up by African kings and queens. They were, one and all, victims of a Mammonist Europe, which devised the entire thing and kept it going.

Within that war-making system, the chattel-slave was simply an intermediate producer-good, highly desired, and with an indispensable economic function in the overall Mammonist scheme; similarly, slave trading was only a middle-segment economic activity; in contrast, race war and captivity-with-forced-labour were the heart and soul of it all. Contrary to the conventional portrayal, this was not a system of slavery and slave trading accompanied by violence; it was, rather, a system of grand violence to produce Black chattel-slaves who would produce other commodities for the profit of Europeans. It was a great war-making system for profit; it operated in far-flung theatres; it killed or carried off into captivity well over 100 million Blacks; and though the yields from the farms, factories, forests and mines of the system were enormous, and though the profits from these were the ultimate interest of its masterminds, its principal products were actually death and wholesale destruction: it cannot, therefore, be correctly described by terms like "The Slave Trade". In this it is much like World War II. Despite the enormous economic output which sustained that war, the killing and destruction was the main feature of the phenomenon; to name it by one or other of its economic aspects would be a euphemistic misnaming of a whole by the name of one of its parts; it would be as if a blind man, who got hold of only the elephant's ear, were to call the elephant by the name "ear".

And now, and most importantly for us of the Black World, what name should this entire part of our past bear so as to correctly reflect our experience of it? It can only be named the Chattelisation War, for that is the dominant character of the entire phenomenon when seen from the standpoint of the Blacks. Consider a Black African who was captured in any of its battles or skirmishes, and then carried across the ocean into captivity to toil for the rest of his life: or from the perspective of the kidnapped African who, as Lerone Bennett

put it, "stepped out of his hut for a breath of fresh air and ended up, ten months later, in Georgia with bruises on his back and a brand on his chest"[6] (quoted in C. Anthony, 1986, p.111), the actual buying and selling would be but a tiny part of his total experience; his life as a chattel-slave would be a much bigger part indeed; but if he considered the overall quality of his experiences, he would see it as one of war, first at the battle front in Africa and then at the prisoner-of-war camp in America where he was forced by terrorism to toil for the rest of his days. If he could further see the entire system, and see the prime movers who contrived to have Blacks kidnap other Blacks and to bring Blacks to fight Blacks on the battlefield where he was captured, he would accept that, superficial appearances notwithstanding, it was indeed a Race War to chattelise Blacks, an imported hurricane of war.

From the foregoing, we can see that the Eurocentric term "The Slave Trade", when applied to the Trans-Atlantic system of chattel slavery, hides and distorts the African experience of that phenomenon. From the African viewpoint, it was a system which instigated wars in Africa, harvested and enslaved the prisoners of those wars, sold them on the African coast, transshipped and resold them on the American coast, and then worked them to death as chattel slaves on the plantations and mines of the Americas. Slave trading, the actual buying and selling of slaves, was a minuscule part of an African experience which was dominated by warfare, insecurity, captivity, forced labour, torture, harrowing brutality, terrorism and other abominations. However, slave trading was the dominant experience of the Europeans who organised and financed the system, or who sailed between the ports of Europe, Africa and America carrying the human and non-human cargoes. Whereas "the Slave Trade" is an appropriate name for the European experience, it is not appropriate at all for the African experience; nor is it even appropriate for the American planter's experience, which consisted mostly of managing plantations, putting the chattel-slaves to toil, selling produce, watching out for runaway slaves and putting down slave rebellions. The buying and selling of chattel-slaves was neither his main preoccupation nor the dominant part of his experience.

Of course, "Slave Trade" is the European world's euphemism for its four centuries of premeditated, unprovoked, relentless, cunningly orchestrated and devilish aggression on the Black Race. It focuses on the phenomenon from the chief interest of its European instigators. It allows them the irresponsible illusion that it was just trade, that Europe came like a shopper to Africa, and placed its order for slaves, and paid, and was simply handed some Black slaves that the Black shop owner already had on the shelves. That illusion has no foundation in the facts, and must be done away with. And it is our duty to our race to evoke the accurate picture by adopting an accurate name.

2. Colonialism

Similarly for the era of so-called colonialism. It too needs to be seen more clearly and precisely, and accurately renamed. Two parallel processes ushered it in: the emancipation of the slaves in the Diaspora, and the invasion and conquest of Africa by European powers. With emancipation, the White race ceased to officially regard the Black race as chattels, actual and potential, as chattel-in-the-corral and chattel-in-the-wild. All were admitted into humanity, and into the polities of the European peoples, either as subjects in the colonies, or as citizens in the independent countries, even if of a handicapped or lower status.

This induction into humanity and citizenship and citizen rights was what the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the constitution of the USA finally accomplished for its ex-chattel-slaves — from being non-human, to being 3/5 of a human (according to the 1787 Constitution of the USA), to being a full human and citizen; but the Jim Crow or racial segregation laws soon kept them from the enjoyment of their new status as citizens.

With that done in the Diaspora, the chattel-in-the-wild in Africa was also accorded the same new status. In Africa they were invaded, conquered and made subjects or protected persons of the imperial states of the Pan-European World. In other words, by being invaded and conquered and brought under the rule of these empires, they were inducted into humanity, but admittedly into a lower order. As a notorious remark of the early 20th century had it, Blacks are their brothers, though their junior brothers! (Albert Schweitzer). Blacks would now be prepared for civilisation, and the job of doing that was dubbed the "White Man's Burden".

For this privilege of being tutored in the ways of "civilisation", Blacks were subjected to genocide, terrorism, land expropriation, property confiscation, forced labour, and taxation by the modern versions of Sparta's genocidal, helotist state. The starkest and best-documented varieties of this were in King Leopold's Congo Free State (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), France's Congo, Portugal's Angola, Germany's South-West Africa (now Namibia), Britain's Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and the British-Boer Republic of South Africa. In the Belgian example, a "System" was devised to terrorise and exploit the Blacks to the point of utter ruin. How did it wreak its havoc?

The beneficiaries aimed at no work of permanence, no constructive national task. They had no enduring interest in the Congo. Their one and only object was to get as much indiarubber out of it as they could in the shortest possible time, and to inflate their rubber shares on the stock exchange. And a perennial state of warfare all over the Congo was necessary to the accomplishment of that object, because there was no finality in the demand. It was incessant. An act of political submission after the usual massacre of unarmed — in the modern sense — men by armed men did not suffice. The community, clan or tribe, must produce indiarubber and continue to produce it, and must be fought and fought and fought again, tortured through its women, deprived of homesteads and foodstuffs; until broken, hunted, starving, fugitive, despairing, every capacity to resist demands, however outrageous, every shred of self-respect, had vanished.[7]

How was all this carried out? First, all of the Congo Free State was made the property of one man — all the land, all the people, all the resources were owned by Belgium's King Leopold II. Secondly, Concessionaire Companies were set up in which the King kept half the shares while the other half were held by his business associates. These companies were then floated on the stock exchange. Thirdly, most of the territory of the Congo Free State was farmed out to these companies to exploit. Fourthly, the Blacks, the indigenous population, were deprived of their right to trade with Europeans in rubber or ivory, and Europeans were to be prosecuted if they bought these articles from the natives. Fifthly, the natives were required to pay taxes in rubber and ivory. Sixthly, colonial officials were instructed that their paramount duty was to extract the maximum quantity of rubber and ivory from their districts, and that promotion would be based on what they achieved. Seventhly, a bonus system was instituted

wherein an official's commission was higher the lower the expense in getting native labour and collecting the "taxes". Eighthly, a native army was recruited and used to terrorise the villagers, and encouraged by the rule that the more rubber and ivory they extracted the more freedom they would have to loot and rape. Ninthly, "hostage houses" were created and women and children imprisoned there to ensure the "good behaviour" of their men in collecting rubber and ivory, in producing food for the officials and soldiers and carriers and their camp followers. This "System", worked out with scientific thoroughness, was advertised to an admiring European World as being for the "moral and material regeneration" of the natives of the Congo.

The Blacks of the Congo Free State, quite naturally, refused to be robbed and exploited as forced and unpaid labourers. They resisted, but to no avail. Soldiers were unleashed on them, with license to commit all manner of atrocities, including murder, mutilation, starvation in hostage houses, flogging to death. To break the resistance, in some areas,

All the chiefs were gradually killed off, either outright or by the slower processes of confinement and starvation in the "houses of detention," or by tortures, which rival those inflicted upon the plantation slaves in the West Indies.[8]

Eyewitnesses reported that

The soldiers sent out to get rubber and ivory are depopulating the country. They find that the quickest and cheapest method is to raid villages, seize prisoners, and have them redeemed afterwards for ivory. . . . It is blood-curdling to see them returning with hands of the slain, and to find the hands of young children amongst the bigger ones evidencing their bravery.[9]

One of the European employees of the Concessionaire Companies wrote home boasting of having killed 150 men, cut off 60 hands, crucified women and children, and hung the remains of mutilated men on the village fence.[10] The atrocities aside, other aspects of the "System" devastated and depopulated the land. A report from the Kasai region states:

The rubber tax is so heavy that the villages had no time to attend even to the necessities of life . . . the capitas (the Company's armed soldiers stationed in the villages) told me they had orders not to allow the natives to clear the ground for cultivation, to hunt, or to fish, as it took up time which should be spent in making rubber. Even so, in many cases the natives can only comply with the demands made on them for rubber by utilising the labour of the women and children. In consequence, their huts are falling to ruin, their fields are uncultivated, and the people are short of food . . . and dying off . . . This district was formerly rich in corn, millet, and other foodstuffs. . . . now it is almost a desert.[11]

These measures, wherever introduced, rapidly transformed the district:

It was as though a tornado had torn across it and destroyed everything in its passage. But the effects were much more lasting than any natural phenomenon. Thriving communities had been transformed into scattered groups of panic-stricken folk: precipitated from active commercial prosperity and industrial life into utter barbarism.[12]

Commenting on the "System" and its principles, methods and consequences, E. D. Morel said:

You cannot steal the land of the natives of

tropical Africa, degrade them from the position of agriculturists and arboriculturists in their own right, lay claim to possession of their actual and potential wealth, destroy their purchasing power, deny them the right to buy and sell by denying their ownership in the natural or cultivated products of their own country, which their labour alone can make accessible to the outer world, and impose upon them the duty of harvesting their products for you as a "tax." You cannot do this, and thereby convert them into slaves of European capitalism, without the use of armed force, pitilessly, relentlessly and, above all, continuously applied. And the circumstances under which that force must be exercised in tropical Africa are such that its application must involve the destruction of the population, if only because it must be pursued in utter disregard of the natural needs and requirements of the native population, and at the cost of the complete annihilation of African society.[13]

This example of helotisation of a conquered people had its predictable result. In twenty years, 1891-1911, it wiped out more than 10 million of the Blacks in King Leopold's Congo Free State, one half of the population when it began. This act of genocide, with its meticulously rationalised "System", was just one of many committed on Blacks by Europeans during their so-called Scramble for Africa, their thirty years' war (1884-1914) of invasion and conquest and helotisation of Africa; and it was, by itself, greater than that which Hitler's Nazis inflicted on the Jews.

While that was an example of the helotisation of indigenous Blacks by Whites who came only to pillage and not to settle, another kind of helotisation was carried out, particularly in southern Africa, by Whites who came to both settle and pillage. Consider the case of the British. In the words of Earl Grey, written in 1880,

Throughout this part of the British Dominions the coloured people are generally looked upon by the Whites as an inferior race, whose interest ought to be systematically disregarded when they come into competition with their own, and who ought to be governed mainly with a view to the advantage of the superior race. And for this advantage two things are considered to be specially necessary: First, that facilities should be afforded to the White colonists for obtaining possession of land heretofore occupied by the native tribes; and secondly, that the Kaffir population should be made to furnish as large and as cheap a supply of labour as possible.[14]

Such was precisely what British settlers, in partnership with the British Government of Queen Victoria, did. Consider the case of the AmaNdebele (Matabele) of what became Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). By the trickery of treaties and the terrors of war, the AmaNdebele were dispossessed of their land, stripped of their cattle, reduced to the status of bondsmen, scattered, barred from moving about from place to place except under a system of permit or pass, and made to do forced labour on the farms and mines of Whites. The net result?

The net position is this: The native population of Southern Rhodesia possesses today no rights in land or water. It is allowed to continue to live upon the land on sufferance and under certain conditions . . . There appears to be no attempt on anyone's part to deny the bedrock fact that these 700,000 natives have been turned from owners of land into precarious tenants.[15]

And among the methods employed in the raids and wars that achieved this? In the words of the *Matabele Times,*

We have been doing it up to now, burning kraals because they were native kraals, and firing upon fleeing natives simply because they were black.[16]

And for a glimpse of the spirit in which the British troops waged that war, consider these words by an adventurer friend of Cecil Rhodes, a W. A. Jarvis:

The best thing to do is to wipe them all out as far as one can – everything black.

And in letters to his mother, Jarvis wrote:

I hope the natives will be pretty well exterminated. . . . There are 5500 niggers in this district (Gwelo) and our plan of campaign will probably be to proceed against this lot and wipe them out then move on towards Bulawayo wiping out every nigger and every kraal we find. ... And after these cold blooded murders, you may be sure there will be no quarter and everything black will have to die, for our men's blood is fairly up.[17]

At the end of it all, the AmaNdebele view of what the British had done to them was this:

Our country is gone, our cattle have gone, our people are scattered, we have nothing to live for, our women are deserting us; the white man does as he likes with them; we are the slaves of the white man, we are nobody and have no rights or laws of any kind.[18]

Similar exercises in genocide and helotisation have been documented from other parts of Black Africa in that period, one of the more notorious being the German attempt in Namibia. The policy was "the substitution of the native owners of the soil by German immigrants and the transformation of free men into a landless proletariat of hewers of wood and drawers of water."[19] The

implementation of the policy led to war, and to an attempt to exterminate the Herero under General von Trotha's extermination order.[20] And for the crime of resisting the German attempt to dispossess them of their land and cattle and independence, the remnants of the Herero were heavily punished by wholesale executions and forced labour. In the words of a high-ranking German government official:

The Herero must be compelled to work, and to work without compensation and in return for their food only. Forced labour for years is only a just punishment, and at the same time it is the best method of training them.[21]

On the eve of World War I, after these acts of, conquest and dispossession/helotisation were concluded, the daily regimen of warfare, which had been imposed on Blacks for five centuries, could at last be relaxed. After all, Blacks had finally been militarily defeated and broken everywhere on earth. Their political structures had been smashed and swept aside, and state structures managed by Europeans had been erected over them. The police and the economic strangulators, assisted by White vigilante terror squads, such as the Ku Klux Klan in the USA, were sufficient to keep the Black ex-chattels in their allotted place, and in subservient demeanour. In many parts of Southern Africa, reserves were set aside for cattle, for wild game animals, and also for the Black natives. In their new docility, Blacks were meant to be exploited thoroughly till the end of time. With the conquerors of White race and the conquered of Black race, a harsh and bloody rule overtly based on race was imposed on Blacks everywhere; and as Blacks had little prospect of ever overthrowing White rule, it would be White Supremacy forever! Everywhere, therefore, military operations against Blacks were muted, but White military might was, at all times, held in readiness to

put down any uprisings. It was in this way that the entire Black World finally graduated from the old era of daily armed skirmishes to that new era of economic warfare and endemic White terrorism which was known as Jim Crow in the USA, and as colonialism elsewhere. By 1914, Blacks were everywhere subjected to the kind of rule which lasted longest in Apartheid South Africa: rule by violent dispossessors who came to turn the place into "White man's country" and to make of themselves, through rampant terrorism, a permanent and exclusive ruling race.

But what was the main character of that "Colonial" phase when seen from the Afrocentric perspective? Everywhere, White armies; White terror squads; White bureaucrats; White traders, farmers and miners; and White politicians and White priests together sat upon the conquered Black Race. And though no longer chattel-slaves, the members of the Black Race were not yet citizens in these states set up by White power, as they were allegedly still being tutored for civilisation and citizenship; they were, rather like the Helots in ancient Sparta, of an intermediate status between slaves and citizens. And as in ancient Sparta, these White conquerors' policy was to exterminate, enslave and exploit the conquered in the struggle to expropriate/steal their land, labour and liberty. They also had the means and the will to periodically terrorise their Black Helots and keep them docile and toiling away for their masters. In describing the system in Northern Rhodesia, Basil Davidson said:

There was in practice an utter domination and an unbounded subordination with no bonds or rights or obligations established between the two except those of the settlers' convenience. Nothing appears to have tied these two groupings together except a mutually hateful contiguity from which neither could escape. The Africans regretted that the Europeans were in the country . . . but could not possibly get rid of them. The Europeans longed for the Africans not to be there, physically not there, yet were unable to do without them. The Africans provided labour and in this they were horribly indispensable. If they had to be recognized, it was to the extent of their labour value (estimated at the lowest possible rate), and no further.[22]

Thus, for Africans, the so-called colonialism was, in reality, Helotism, a Spartan-type despotism maintained by an ambience of raw terror. Whether called the Jim Crow or Racial Segregation system in the USA, or the Separate Development or Apartheid system in South Africa, or the *Indigenat* system in the French colonies, or the *Indigena* system in the Portuguese colonies, or the Colour Bar in the British colonies, or whether unnamed as in the countries of Latin America, these were merely varieties of the same structure of legalised terrorisation and servitude for the Black helots. Black labour, initially coerced physically, was subsequently channelled into a system of legalised low wages, or even of starvation wages, for the Black helots. It was a system of immiseration maintained by raw terror. It was the Helotism phase of the Race War, and should be so recognised and named.

Of course, as with the term "slave trade" discussed earlier, colonialism is a term reflecting the European experience of the phenomenon. They sent out parties of Europeans from their homelands to settle in colonies abroad; hence their use of the term colonialism for the whole phenomenon. But for the indigenous populations among whom they settled, whom they conquered and ruled by terror, the experience was one of helotism. They conquered and helotised us. Thus, the proper Afrocentric name for what is

conventionally called colonialism is helotism.

In the Americas, it is standard practice to refer to the day of the official ending of the status of chattel-slavery as Emancipation Day, as the day on which the chattel-slaves were freed. In fact it was simply the day on which they were legally dechattelised, left poor and propertyless, left without compensation and without political rights, and left free to starve as a marginalised and terrorised labour reserve, i.e. as helots in the White supremacist capitalist societies in which they found themselves. In the USA, with the Compromise of 1877, even the formal citizen status awarded soon after Dechattelisation in 1863, was rescinded and the ex-chattels were thoroughly helotised for another full century under what is called Jim Crow or Segregation. While the term Jim Crow gives no clue as to what befell the ex-chattel, the term segregation is a euphemism of sorts in that it does not focus on the nature and quality of the experience, but on the mildest, formal aspect of the situation. It indicates nothing about life in the chain gangs of the Gulags of America, or about life under the White terrorist associations which, through frequent lynchings and White race riots cowed the Black ex-chattel into social docility and automatic caste deference to all Whites, and which obliged them to acquiesce in dispossession and underpaid labour. This so-called segregation was experienced by its terrorised victims as helotism, American style.

3. Decolonisation/Neocolonialism
World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, World War II and the Cold War which followed it, combined to drastically shorten the period of this helotism. World War I took Imperial Russia out of the EGO, and the Bolshevik Revolution turned it into the Soviet Union, and made it an ideological crusader against the principles of the EGO. Then

World War II severely weakened the EGO and set the stage for the Cold War, that era of propaganda and proxy wars between the EGO and the Soviet Union. This produced a new situation in the world. Sensing the weakness of their masters, and discovering a new and strong ally in the Soviet Union, the helotised Blacks sought to reverse their recent and thorough defeat. With a season of protest (e.g. The Fifth Pan-African Congress, 1945), of agitation (everywhere), and of strikes and uprisings (e.g.. Madagascar 1947; Nigeria 1949; Kenya 1952; French Cameroon 1955), the Black World's counter-offensive opened. Appraising the new situation, and fearful of losing all in a storm of agitation and insurrection backed by Soviet power, the European conquerors made concessions to their restive Blacks.

First of all, the Black helots were formally admitted to full human status, and accorded human rights in keeping with the UN Charter of 1945. The state-apparatus of each helotist state was then handed over to a trans-civilised elite of Black politicians and soldiers, who had been carefully culled and bred from among the helots; they were to supervise it on behalf of the White conquerors. In 1960 alone, the great year of "freedom", 17 territories in Black Africa were granted self-rule. Where these political concessions were withheld, the Black helots took to insurrection, and even to full-scale wars of liberation, which they eventually won against Pan-European armies (e.g. Angola, 1961-1975; Mozambique, 1964-1975; Guinea-Bissau, 1963-1974; Zimbabwe, 1964-1980; Namibia, 1966-1990).

Even in the USA, Cold War exigencies obliged the Whites to retreat from Jim Crow/Segregation and from the more blatant manifestations of White Supremacy. Thus, in the mid-1960s, after a decade of great agitation, Blacks there were reluctantly

readmitted to that formal citizenship which had been granted them a century before, after Dechattelisation, but which had been quickly annulled. And after its Portuguese-ruled neighbours fell to Black liberation armies in 1975, a USA-style retreat from helotism was orchestrated for the unabashedly White Supremacist Republic of South Africa, and Black-majority rule was eventually installed there in 1994. And so it came to pass that Blacks were everywhere installed as administrators of the countries into which the Black World had been carved. This partially reversed the military and political defeats which the Black World had suffered in the anti-invader wars of the 19th century.

With this accession of Blacks to some degree of political power a new dynamic, with unprecedented possibilities, began. With the recruitment of Black helots into the state apparatus, the Negrophobic/Melanophobic rigors of state terrorism and oppression abated. As kinship, ethnic and racial solidarities developed between the state apparatus and the Black society it administered, each state apparatus became the seed of a proto-state. Efforts at economic development began to be partly geared to the welfare of the native society of Blacks, rather than exclusively to the interests of the European conquerors. But with time, it became clear that the developmental possibilities of these proto-states were severely restricted by the structures which still bound them to their absentee conquerors. Within a decade or two, it became quite clear that the White-ruled territories of the era of helotism had become glorified Bantustans, all nominally sovereign, all poor, some a little less poor than others, each with a severely constricted resource base, and each debt-trapped in decay. Their anti-helotism struggles and wars of independence had merely Bantustanised them.

The day on which the administrative apparatus of each helotised country was handed over to some local compradors is conventionally called its Independence Day. But now, some four decades later, we know that that is a profound misnomer. Each such day was merely a Bantustanisation /Bantustan Day. It was the day on which the European helotisers handed over the despotic apparatus of their helotist state to their African comprador lackeys to start misruling on behalf of their masters, in exchange for a share of the spoils from helotism. It was the day on which began the misrule of the African population by the nigger "boss boys" for the absentee White Baas who supervised from afar. In effect, the African independence struggles, whether conducted by armed struggle or negotiation, were like jailbreaks that failed. The prisoners had tunnelled out of the old prison, beyond its outer wall, but while they were tunnelling, the jailers had expanded the jail and erected an outer wall, so the escapers surfaced outside the old wall, but well within the new, and so, for all their effort, found themselves still in prison, though in a new wing.

These Bantustans have now been embroiled in yet another phase of a centuries-old race war. The European conquerors' assault has continued using economic warfare (through IMF and World Bank strangulation and by Debt Trap Peonage); political warfare (through sapping their pseudo-sovereignty and imposing ruinous regimes on them); military violence (through foreign-engineered wars and mercenary attacks, e.g. South Africa's direct and proxy wars on Angola and Mozambique), together with ideological warfare (through an alienating education, Christian brainwashing and an anti-African propaganda). Clearly, toning down the ferocity of the Pan European World's anti-African violence and Negrophobia/Melano-

phobia did not mean that the race war has been suspended or is over. The Pan-European World continues to wage it by every available means. Some of these means, which use Black proxies and agents to keep the Black World in turmoil, are reminiscent of the methods of the Great Chattelisation War; as in those wars, the current turmoil are disastrous and devilishly devious, with the White hand stirring the Black cauldron kept cleverly out of sight. In describing the effects of the economic assaults on the Bantustans in Africa, even some official observers from the Pan-European World, in a 1985 report, have stated: "What has happened in the past two decades can be compared to the effects of a world war."[23]

This era of the European World's tactical retreat from direct administration of their conquered African territories has been called neo-colonialism by many, and semi-colonialism by some; which may be appropriate from the Eurocentric point of view. From the Afrocentric perspective, however, it ought properly to be called the Bantustan era, for that was what the territories were turned into. Its heyday has been quite brief, from Ghana's proclamation of independence in 1957 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the latter being the event which has set the stage for a transition towards rehelotisation or worse.

With the end of the Cold War; with the evaporation of the ideological schism within the Pan-European World; and with the recovery of power and confidence by those imperial powers (Britain and France especially) whose weakness at the end of World War II had precipitated the concessions to the Black Helots, a new situation has again arisen. Those concessions are no longer seen as necessary, and are about to be withdrawn. Hence the plan and open talk about

Recolonisation (i.e. a full Rehelotisation) of Africa. And so the Race War goes on, changing yet again in its methods and intensity. But, unlike after World War II when the Blacks took the initiative which, in the end, fell short and landed them in Bantustans, the initiative now has passed back to the Pan-Europeans; and their intention is to return Africa to some advanced version of the pre-World War II condition of unmitigated helotism and White Supremacy forever.

4. Racism

Racism is a term used for a phenomenon associated with chattel-slavery, helotism and Bantustanism; it denotes the White Supremacist System and Ideology of the EGO as well as behaviour based on its doctrines. It is the theory and practice of European global domination. The ideology proclaims the White supremacist superstition that the races of humanity stand in a genetic hierarchy in ability, with Whites at the top, Blacks at the bottom, and yellows in between. Thus, Whites are allegedly the genetically supreme race, the master race, born to rule all others; and Blacks, allegedly, are genetically inferior to all others, and are born to serve them all. Racism, as the White supremacist ideology of the EGO, propagates blancophilia and Negrophobia/Melanophobia among other things. It belongs to the arsenal of weapons for psychological warfare which European power employs. It was used to boost the morale of Europeans and to demoralise persons of other races, especially those forced or tricked into believing it.

While racism is an omnibus ideology, encompassing all the races in its doctrines; its attitudes towards Blacks, which constitute Negrophobia/Melanophobia, should be of special interest from the Afrocentric/Negrocentric point of view. While the term racism is still pertinent, and only needs to be

regularly spelled out as the White supremacist system, the more specific term Negrophobia/Melanophobia needs to be used whenever the racism being referred to is of the kind directed at Blacks. Just as, for the Semites (Arabs and Jews), it is the anti-Semitism within racism that is of prime concern, hence their general use of the more specific term, so too should the Negrophobia/Melanophobia within racism be of prime concern to us Blacks, and lead to our regular use of the term. Acts of racism are White supremacist acts in the general race war; acts of Negrophobia/Melanophobia are White supremacist acts against Blacks in that race war.

It is vital to now look at how Negrophobia/Melanophobia, that branch of the EGO's ideology of racism which is targeted at Blacks, has evolved in these five centuries. During the Great War of Chattelisation, which lasted from the 15th to the 19th century, Blacks were defined as subhuman, i.e. as non-humans belonging somewhere among the apes and baboons and horses and cattle and other wild animals. Blacks were considered chattels, beasts no better than cattle except for having two legs, beasts to be hunted and yoked for toil. Much like workhorses, plow oxen, water buffaloes or elephants, Blacks were to be hunted in the wild, captured, broken, stripped of any traces of human culture, and thereby made fit for forced labour. From that point of view, that war on Blacks was not, technically, war at all; it was the hunting and corralling and taming of wild beasts. It is from our Afrocentric/Negrocentric point of view that it can be called a Race War, since we consider ourselves human, and no less so than Whites. Only when that premise is granted can it be considered a Race War; and during its first four centuries, the EGO did not grant that premise.

However, from the time of dechattelisation in the 19th century up until World War II, Whites officially redefined Blacks as human beings, but of an inferior quality: they classified Blacks as primitives, as savages, as humans of the backward kind that required to be slowly made civilised by the terrors and rigours of helotism. We must "thank God for little mercies", mustn't we? It was not until after World War II that the EGO officially declared Blacks to be fully human, and admitted them to civil rights and human rights. Nevertheless, Blacks are still considered underdeveloped, economically and politically and culturally. Thus, in all its six centuries so far, only within the last fifty years has the EGO officially agreed that Blacks and Whites are humans alike! But for how long will that concession, born of Cold War propaganda needs, continue to be made? And how seriously is it believed in anyway, even by the top managers of the EGO, let alone by their hoi polloi, by their skinheads and crypto-Nazis?

As the foregoing makes clear, it is absolutely important to rectify our terms, and to name phenomena from the Afrocentric/Negrocentric standpoint. In particular, the entire six-centuries-old encounter between the Black World and the EGO should be called the Race War; and its principal phases should be renamed the Chattelisation, Helotism, and Bantustan eras of the Race War. And in place of Recolonisation, the term should be Rehelotisation. These terms capture the essence of the condition of the Blacks in each phase. And, in the interest of precision, the terms "White supremacist system" and "Negrophobia/Melanophobia" should, as appropriate, be generally used in place of the term Racism. As for the term "Black Holocaust", it represents accurately the sum total of what the Black Race has been put through in this Race War. The term Maafa, meaning "disaster" in KiSwahili, has the merit

of drawing attention to the disasters which the African-European encounter has inflicted on the Africans, but it fails to capture the fact that these were not natural, but rather man-made disasters. Hence "Race War" is still the preferable term.

It should be noted that each Black community experienced each of these phases of the Race War in its own time. But, generally speaking, the chattelisation wars raged between 1442 and 1888; they were endemic, with chronic and acute phases in each locality, and lasted till slave raiding and captive trafficking and slave holding died out there. The anti-invader/anti-helotisation war began in the 17th century with the Dutch settlers' wars on the Khoisan aborigines of the western Cape in South Africa; it spread generally from c. 1807 to 1942, from the start of the British effort to militarily suppress captive trafficking till the end of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia; however, it climaxed and was most intense and Africa-wide during the so-called Scramble for Africa, 1884-1914. That was Europe's thirty years' war of conquest and partition and helotisation of Black Africa, and was followed by some 30 years of unmitigated helotism (1914-1945) on the European-ruled haciendas into which Black Africa had been partitioned. Among the anti-chattelisation wars must be included those wars fought between the helotisers and the die-hard chattelisers, such as the Civil War in the USA, after which the ex-chattel-slaves were helotised. The de-helotisation wars lasted from 1945 to 1994, from the agitation of the Fifth Pan-African Congress, through the failed insurrections in Madagascar, Kenya, Cameroon, etc., to the successful liberation wars of the Portuguese and British colonies (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe), and to the successful agitation and insurrection against Apartheid South Africa. These were the struggles where, by combinations of agitation, insurrection and total war, the peoples of the Black World sought to regain their political autonomy. Some aimed for more, some aimed for less, but all wound up in Bantustans of one sort or another. Even Mandela's new South Africa, which was achieved at such great cost, especially in the lives of the generation of the Soweto children's insurrection, is but another disguised Bantustan.

It is one of the ironies of events that though Mandela was adamantly, and correctly, opposed to his nephew, Kaiser Matanzima, for heading one of the Apartheid-era Bantustans, Mandela himself succeeded only in founding a bigger, disguised G-7 Bantustan, but a Bantustan all the same, like the other "flag independence" states in Africa.

SUMMARY

Eurocentric Terminology	Afrocentric Terminology
Slave trade	The Great Chattelisation Wars
Emancipation Day	De-chattelisation Day
Colonialism/Jim Crow/Segregation	Helotism
Independence Day	Bantustan Day
Neocolonialism/Independence or post-colonial Era	Bantustanism/Bantustan era
Racism	The White Supremacist System and ideology; Negrophobia/Melanophobia
?	Race War
?	Black Holocaust
The Scramble for Africa	The anti-invader wars/anti-helotisation wars
Decolonisation, anti-colonial struggle	The anti-helotism/dehelotisation struggle

What Slave trade? And Other Afrocentric Reflections on the Race War is a work-in-progress in which Chinweizu proposes Afrocentric terms to replace, in African discourse, many obscurantist and disorienting terms from the Eurocentric lexicon. The proposed changes will be made through mini-essays on terms like "slave trade", "slavery", "traditional", "modern", "philosophy", "the scramble for Africa", "colonialism", "nigger/niggerism", "decolonisation", "renaissance", "culture", "civilisation", "classical", "history", "prehistory", "the state", "development", "free trade", "the market", "democracy", "human rights", "freedom", and "globalisation".

NOTES

1. Quoted in Charles, S. (1986) 'Black Civilization and the Religious Dimension', in Okpaku et al., *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples, Vol. 7*, Lagos: CBAAC, p. 38.

2. Morel, E.D. (1969) *The Black Man's Burden*, New York: Monthly Review Press, p. 15.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 20.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

5. Anthony, C. (1986) 'The Big House and the Slave Quarter: Prelude to New World Architecture' in Okpaku, J. et al. (eds) (1986) *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples, Vol. 8*, Lagos: CBAAC, p. 108.

6. Quoted *ibid*, p. 111.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

17. Quoted in Samkange, S (1986) 'The History of Zimbabwe: Source of Nationalism', in Okpaku et al., *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples, Vol.5*, Lagos: CBAAC, pp. 245-246.

18. Morel, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

20. *Ibid.* See also Drechsler, *op. cit.*

21. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

22. Davidson, B. (1994) *The Search for Africa*, New York: Random House, pp. 152-153.

23. 'Report of the Committee on African Development Strategies -- A Joint Project of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Overseas Development Council', quoted in Amoda, John M. (1995) *Economic Development and Capacity Building for Conflict Preventions*, Lagos: International Training Institute for Peace, p. 1.