

ITIKADI

SOCIALISM, THEORY AND PRACTICE
VOLUME 1 NO 2

MARCH 2021

ISSN 3204 - 2168



FOCUS

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD ON THE CURRENT
CONSTITUTION OF KENYA: MYTHS, OPPORTUNITIES,
AND PROBLEMS



The Communist Party of Kenya, Vice Chairperson, Booker Omole, presents a copy of Itikadi to the Vice President of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Delcy Eloina Rodríguez Gómez at her office in Meliá Caracas. PHOTO FILE.

PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF KENYA





Communist Party of Kenya Vice Chairman Comrade Booker Ngesa, in green shirt, joins party members and the general public in a protest against corruption, capitalism and the building bridges initiative. The protest which was held in Kisumu City on 8th February, 2021 attracted the participation of students, farmers, and traders from the Nyanza region. PHOTOS BY JOSEPH KUYA.

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ITIKADI: Socialism, Theory and Practice is published every two months in print and digital formats by the
Communist Party of Kenya (CPK) as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought in Kenya and the Eastern African
Region.

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Design & Layout : By Rigan Likuyi

PROPAGATING REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS WHILE EXPOSING NEO-COLONIAL REACTIONARY IDEAS

This is the second publication of Itikadi: Socialism, Theory and Practice - publication of the Communist Party of Kenya (CPK). The articles in this edition continue to articulate the ideological position of CPK based on Marxism Leninism on various issues about social, economic, political, and cultural affairs of Kenya in particular and the World in general.

The articles analyse the issues from the perspectives of the masses and popular classes that desire revolutionary change. In this regard, Itikadi takes a class stand of the exploited and oppressed and will always remain at the forefront in the battle of ideas with capitalism, always fighting against anything that hinders human freedom and social progress, and revolutionary change.

The articles are dedicated to propagating progressive and revolutionary ideas while exposing and condemning the platitudes and reactionary ideas perpetuated by pro-neocolonial capitalist elites holding political, economic, media, and state power today. The writers fearlessly demystify the myths created by the exploiters and oppressors about history and society since time immemorial, and which are aimed at maintaining the present status quo which prevents the realisation of freedoms and social progress. While doing so the authors of the articles are not afraid of reiterating the truth that the true and genuine road towards freedom and social progress and for the liberation of the majority of the people and societies as a whole is socialism and ultimately communism.

Early this year CPK, in the name of Kenya Venezuela Solidarity Committee (KVSC) and socialist internationalism sent a delegation to observe the just-concluded parliamentary elections in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The delegation was led by the Vice-Chairperson of CPK, comrade Booker Ngesa, who reports about the free, fair, transparent, participatory, and democratic elections that were won by the patriots and revolutionaries of the country and their political party led by President Nicolas Maduro. Booker reports that the elections that were held under and despite the brutal economic, political, financial, and diplomatic sanctions made by the USA imperialism and its allies continued to reveal that the Bolivarian revolution is a popular revolution that is alive and kicking and that will survive the present storms initiated by the internal and external counterrevolutionary forces operating against the people's popular socialist-oriented revolution.

In the article, "The class roots of corruption in Kenya", the author exposes the lies that Kenyan leaders today are committed to fighting corruption. He points out that the root cause of corruption is capitalism which celebrates the values of greed and the system of exploitation of person by person. Kenyan history hitherto has shown that the war against corruption cannot be led successfully by the current leaders who are themselves



Comrade Kevin Oiri sharing revolutionary ideas at a party meeting

beneficiaries and defenders of corruption and the system of exploitation of person by person. The struggle against corruption is and must be, the struggle against capitalism, imperialism, and all systems that breed and nurture the values of greed, egoism, tribalism, nepotism, discrimination, and exploitation of person by person.

The article, "Mtumbaism: How the process of neoliberal globalisation is turning Kenya into a second-hand nation", is about the political economy of underdevelopment of Kenya. Quoting extensively from published research by various persons, the author of the article defines and traces the history and root cause of underdevelopment in Kenya in particular and Africa in general. He shows how the economy of the country has been distorted by dependence on imperialism and neoliberal institutions, policies, and ideas and turned into a secondhand nation that remains trapped in the quagmire of poverty, debt burden, and the plethora of social problems of underdevelopment. After analysing the internal and external dynam-

ics that influence the political economy of the nation, the author concludes that capitalism and neoliberalism have failed to solve the development problems in Kenya and Africa. There is therefore the need to struggle for alternative economic strategies and policies based on socialism and that must address the problem of leadership and the control of political state power.

In "Socialism, theory, and practice: On the application of the methodology of historical materialism on the study of culture and land matters", the objective is to encourage the cadres of CPK, researchers, political activists, and any interested persons to apply this scientific methodology to the study and analysis of social phenomena. Historical materialism not only arms the working class and its allies with the scientific method of comprehending truth, reality, and freedom, it is also the theoretical weapon of the exploited and oppressed that needs to be embraced by all socialist revolutionaries, not as dogma but creatively and as a guide to revolutionary action.

Kenyan politics at the moment are dominated by the coming 2022 national elections and the BBI reactionary constitutional amendments that Uhuru and Raila regime is determined to impose upon Kenyans. The author of the article 'Kenya's 2010 constitution: Myths and Opportunities', explains the Marxist Leninism theory of the state and the constitution. He points out that the state is and has always been a machine of exploitation and oppression of one class by another, and that the constitution is part and parcel of the coercive instrument of the state. Whichever class controls state power imposes its will upon the rest of the society. In the same regard, whichever class dominates state power also uses the constitution - however progressive or reactionary it is - to serve its class interests. The neocolonial capitalist class of Kenya has always used and amended the constitution to perpetuate its reactionary leadership of the country.

The writer argues that the 2010 Kenyan constitution - despite being a bourgeoisie constitution in form and content - has many progressive articles

that could be utilised to realise the wishes and aspirations of the majority of Kenyans for reforms that will ultimately transform Kenya into a developing socialist society and state. But the current regime in power has deliberately refused to implement the constitution effectively and now it is cheating Kenyans that it will implement that which it is imposing upon Kenyans for the benefit of all citizens.

Ultimately, the liberation of the majority of Kenyans will not be brought about by the 2010 constitution or by the BBI imposed constitution but by the revolutionary struggle for political, economic, and state power. It is only when the masses control state power can they be able to interpret and implement the constitution to meet the desire of the majority of citizens.

In this edition of Itikadi, we also publish inspiring articles about class struggles in South Africa. Every day workers, peasants, and the popular masses are organising and struggling for land rights, human rights, civic and political liberties. In articles "COVID 19: 2020 was a Bleak Year for the Poor

and the Working Class" and "on Collective Reading of the Communist Manifesto" we learn about the contemporary history of class struggles in the country which is anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist and that demands and fights for land rights, human rights, distributive justice, and socialism. The movement calls for the unity of all the exploited and oppressed of the country, continent, and the World and teaches about the need to fight against ethnic, sex, religious divisions, and all that is used by the oppressors to divide the masses to oppress them. Furthermore, without revolutionary theory there cannot be a revolutionary movement. And revolutionary ideas become a revolutionary force once they reach the masses - Marxism teaches. That is why the mass movement prioritises the collective studies of Marxism Leninism that is the theoretical weapon of guiding the mass struggle of the working class and its allies.

In "Burundi's descent into hell continues despite an election and death of the dictator President Nkurunziza" comrade Leonard Nyangoma, President of the opposition political party CNDD, describes the ongoing struggle of the exploited and oppressed of the long-suffering people of the East African nation for democracy, human rights, and social liberation. Despite the hard protracted struggle that continues amidst gross violations of human rights, torture, imprisonment of political activists, and all sorts of persecutions akin to fascism, still, the patriots of Burundi remain resilient, and the struggle continues. Since no just struggle can be defeated forever, the people of Burundi will sooner or later triumph to liberate their country. CPK will always extend its solidarity to the struggling people of our sister nation.

It is now hundred years since the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). CPK extends its congratulations and revolutionary solidarity to the leadership and membership of CPC as they commemorate the long history of the party that led the people of China to liberate themselves and the great nation from feudalism, Japanese colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism. The Chinese socialist revolution has succeeded to make immense economic, cultural, scientific, technological, and military achievements that have transformed the country from a poor, backward, and colonial and imperialism-dominated country into a developing World superpower on all fronts. In Africa, we do not forget the solidarity role played by China and the CPC in the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid national liberation struggles of the continent. Thanks also to the contributions of China and CPC the USA is blocked from directly invading and destroying the independence and sovereignty of Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Syria, and Venezuela. We also recognise the contribution of China and CPC in the economic and infrastructural development in Kenya and Africa. We publish the message from CPC to the World in this issue of Itikadi.

Finally, we publish poems celebrations communist revolutionaries, Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba and Samora Machel. In our revolutionary struggle and amidst imminent challenges we meet on the way, CPK is always inspired by such revolutionary heroes.

by Editors

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD ON THE CURRENT CONSTITUTION OF KENYA: MYTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND PROBLEMS



Comrade Mwandawiro Mghanga (left) leaders Members of Parliament in a press conference during one of the heated moments at Bomas of Kenya in the Constitutional Review process in 2005

By CPK Chairman

Itikadi is about socialism, theory, and practice. That is why it is deliberately dedicated to demystifying the myths about history and society that for many years have been created and disseminated by the reactionary classes of exploiters and oppressors of Kenya and the World, consciously and unconsciously. The myths have been perpetuated to hoodwink the masses and distort the struggle for their liberation to conserve systems of exploita-

tion and oppression of one class by another and person by person.

The myth about the state and constitution

Lenin (Lenin, 1975: 200; Lenin, 238 - 327) explained that no other concept has been deliberately mystified by bourgeoisie intellectuals and other previous reactionary classes and made to be misunderstood by whole societies than that of the state. Despite the practical reality that confronts them every day in the struggle against capital and myriad of existing forms of

exploitation and oppression, the Kenyan masses too hardly comprehend the true meaning and nature of the state and assume that it is created for their welfare and that of every citizen in the country. They believe or have been made to believe that the state is always neutral and above classes and that if the constitution and the laws thereof were implemented equitably, justly, and objectively then all Kenyans would be liberated from the existing injustices without prejudice. The same lies are currently being peddled by the reactionary regime in power led by President

Uhuru Kenyatta and ODM leader Raila Odinga that the illegal and reactionary constitutional amendments made by the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) brought by their handshakes will be the panacea of Kenya's political, economic, social, nationality and cultural problems, even while the neocolonial capitalist system dominates in the country.

The Constitution is even more mystical

For the constitution is even more mystical to the masses than any other instrument of the state. An embodiment of democracy - itself part and parcel of the form of the state (Marx, 1967; Lenin, *ibid.*,) - constitutions are made to seem as institutions, organs, or symbols of unity and creations of nation-states that form the cohesion of all citizens irrespective of their classes. Constitutions that are, among other things, the mother of all laws of a nation promise to provide justice and the rule of law to all citizens equitably, equally, objectively, and without discrimination or favour. Like the ongoing debacle - of the so-called (BBI) - constitutional amendments, constitutions are made to seem to be above classes and to promise to solve the nationality question. Yet, the truth is that as long as the nation is divided into classes of the few and the majority, the oppressors and the oppressed, the rich and the poor, there will never be national unity for wherever there are classes, inevitably, there will be class struggles (Lenin, 1975: 16 - 48., Marx, K:1990)

The Marxist theory of the state (Lenin, *ibid.*)

Now, since Marxism is about the liberation of human beings and society from all forms of exploitation, oppression, myths, lies, ideologies, systems, and all that hinder the freedom, progress, and development of individuals and societies, it has always struggled to demystify the incessant myths created by the bourgeoisie and previous reactionary classes about the state, that are imbued to whole societies. It is for these reasons that in analysing the prospects and problems of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 after ten years since its promulgation and the false promises of BBI for the future, I begin by briefly discussing the Marxist Leninist theory of the state in general and that of the constitution in particular to advance the current debate beyond the populist propaganda and platitudes repeated in the country every day.

Marxism Leninism expounds the truth that the government, army, police, prisons, judiciary, constitutions, and laws therein, are part and parcel of the coercive instruments of the state. The state is a machine of oppression and exploitation of one class by another. The state has never been neutral or served the interests of all classes at

the same time in a country divided into classes but instead, it has always been the machine of maintaining - by force - the interests of the ruling classes. In fact, the state arose when private property and classes arose, for whenever and wherever there is private property there will be classes, and whenever and wherever there are classes there will always be class struggles. The state was necessary at the stage when private property and classes emerged for deliberately and systematically sustaining the exploitation and oppression of one class upon another.

Constitutions may be used to hide this fact and pretend to be neutral and to be made to seem to serve the interests of all people in society, yet ultimately, they are part and parcel of the coercive instruments of the state of ensuring the domination of one class over the other (Marx:1967). It is therefore an indisputable fact that constitutions and bourgeoisie democracy are used to neutralise class struggles by pretending or promising to belong to all classes at the same time as objective and neutral institutions of providing justice and participation to all.

Constitutions are made to make the exploited and oppressed believe that their salvation will be brought about by a good and progressive constitution irrespective of the class nature of their society or nation. But the bitter fact is that whichever class controls political and economic power uses the constitution to serve its interests, to perpetuate its political and economic domination over other classes. Furthermore, the ruling classes will always interpret the constitution of any country or society to serve their interests however democratic or progressive or reactionary that constitution is. What is true in general in this regard is also true to Kenya in particular as history and practical everyday concrete experience continue to reveal.

The 2010 Kenyan constitution has not removed class struggles in the country. On the contrary, class struggles that take diverse forms are part and parcel of the life of the country have been defined and continue. The numerous workers' strikes, peasant's struggles for land and better prices for their produce, students' riots, and the uprising of the poor in urban and rural areas - are all manifestations of the ongoing class struggles in Kenya.

History of the state and constitution in Kenya

When British colonialism started invading and colonising our country in about 1885, Kenyans in the interior of the country composed of diverse ethnic groups, were at various stages of human society (did you want to say human society development?) that I describe as mature communalism to distinguish them from primitive communalism. Nyerere refers to this mode or historical stage of

human development as *ujamaa* or family hood (Nyerere, 1974 & 1968).

Primitive communalism

During primitive communalism, human beings were almost totally dependent on nature for survival, having hardly produced any culture (Engels: 1989, Popov: 1984). At that stage, there was complete equality among the existing social groups. All participated in hunting or gathering for their needs or survival that were limited. The labour of men and women, young and old were all necessary and equally required for the survival of individuals, families, and clans that eked their living directly from nature using primitive tools that needed the absolute participation of all. As a consequence of this, all that was produced was shared equally and there was equality in society without any form of exploitation of person by person. In the classless primitive communalist societies, there was no state as the need for it had not arisen since there was no private property. Private property is that property that is made and increased by exploiting the labour of other persons that are deprived of access to the means of production.

Mature communalism

In the mature communalist societies, like most of those in the interior of Kenya before the advent of colonialism, the people were living in large clans of ethnic groups and had developed high material and intellectual cultures, differing from place to place (Nyerere, *ibid.*, Achebe, 1967 & 1964 and Odinga: 1974). The productive forces were at an advanced stage compared to that of communalism. The developed productive forces allowed the accumulation of surplus agricultural and livestock production that led to the division of labour in the societies. But although there was the division of labour and there were persons that were richer than others and different gender and age roles, still there was no class inequality as the basic means of production - land - was still owned in common. Thus, there was no private property which is the basis of class division and the system of exploitation of person by person.

So, when colonialism arrived in the interior of Kenya the vast majority of Kenyan ethnic groups had no states as they were classless societies with the basic means of production, land, communally owned. There was no standing army, police, prison, government bureaucracy, or constitution. All this came with colonialism. The societies were governed by communal democracy led by elders and that involved the participation of all in society. Societies were held together by family values, customs, traditional beliefs based on communalism ethics inherited and passed on



Comrade Mwandawiro Mghanga, then a student leader at the University of Nairobi (left) is led to prison in 1985 for multiparty activism

from generation to generation.

Semi-feudal societies

However, before the arrival of the Arab and Portuguese on the coast of Kenya starting from the twelfth Century, there were already slave/feudal societies that existed side by side with mature communalist societies (Abdulaziz, Mulokozi M.M: 1982). There were Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu nation-states that were powerful enough to resist and fight Arab and Portuguese invasions for many years. The nation-states had higher material and intellectual cultures than the mature communalist societies at the interior of the country. The nation-states were always at war with one another with each trying to dominate others.

The societies of Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, and Pate were class societies. There were slave owners and slaves, feudal lords and peasants/serfs, and mature communalism societies dominated by the states that existed to sustain the system of exploitation of person by person. Islamic feudalism (Mulokozi, *ibid.*) that came to dominate the Eastern African coast completed the structure of the societies that were perpetuated by the state.

The colonial state

The state and its instruments of terror and coercion in most of the interior of Kenya came with British colonialism (Odinga, *ibid.*, see also Achebe, *ibid.* in the case of Nigeria, Cabral A, 1980, in the case of Guinea Bissau). It was used to establish and impose British colonialism in the country that was resisted by the various Kenyan ethnic groups but eventually succeeded in 1920. The colonial constitution was part and parcel of the colonial

state machine that was used to establish and maintain - by force - British colonialism in Kenya. Since constitutions are the mother of all laws, the colonial constitution was the source or mother of all colonial laws that were used to violently impose and maintain colonial rule and system in the country. The colonial constitution and the laws derived from it were part and parcel of the colonial machine of exploitation and oppression of Kenyans by the government and Kingdom of England.

The colonial regime used the constitution to legitimise the colonial rule. It was the constitution of the colonialists of establishing colonial rule in Kenya and of exploiting and oppressing Kenyans in their own country. The colonial laws drawn from the constitution made by the colonial parliament through colonial democracy that excluded indigenous Kenyans legitimised discriminations and racism against Kenyans and allowed the humiliations of the Africans by the Whites. Through the constitution and other instruments of the state, Kenyans were robbed of their dignity as human beings, land, and property by the colonial settlers and government. The colonial constitution established colonial dictatorship and terror in the country. Treason, sedition, and allied laws were made to deny Kenyans democracy and to violate their human rights and political liberties. Thus, Kenyans were denied freedoms of assembly, association, speech, movement, and participation. Colonial democracy in Kenya was for the White settlers and colonialists and the parliament was of the White people for the White people and for making laws and policies for the White people to maintain the British colonial system. Kenyans were denied the right to vote and participate in parliament until when they were close to achieving national independence.

All forms of the national liberation struggle, including the war led by the Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau), were also struggles against the British colonial state and constitution in Kenya (Odinga, O, *ibid.*).

The neo-colonial state

However, it was the same state and system that the Kenyatta regime composed of the sons of colonial chiefs, home guards, collaborators, former civil servants of the colonial state that was inherited almost intact by the Kenyatta regime.

During the Kenyatta and successive regimes, the constitution was amended many times but this was always done not in the interest of progressive reforms but to seal the loopholes that would allow the majority of Kenyans more democracy, political liberties, and human rights. It was amended to entrench the capitalist system and dictatorship and exploitation of person by person in Kenya.

The struggle for democratic reforms

For example, when in 1982 it became clear that Kenyan patriots, human rights, and democracy activists were determined to use the constitution to demand the restoration of multiparty democracy in the country, the Moi KANU regime that was then in power rapidly used parliament at the end of July to introduce article 2A in the constitution to make Kenya a defacto one political party state. Political parties were disallowed by the constitution except the then ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU). It was criminal to form or advocate for multipartism. This was immediately followed by the attempted coup launched by young officers of the then Kenya Airforce on 1st August, 1982.

The persecution of patriots

The Moi KANU regime used the attempted coup as an excuse to brutally crack on the multiparty advocates, progressive organisations, and individuals, and all it deemed as its opponents. Hundreds of patriots and agitators for democracy and human rights advocates including workers, peasants, students, lecturers, business persons, etc. were rounded up, arrested, tortured, brought before Moi's kangaroo courts to be tried, detained with and without trial, and imprisoned by the kangaroo courts. Many were removed from employment while students were expelled from their educational institutions. Others were forced to flee into exile. The constitution and its laws and judiciary system were used to justify and conduct this repression and persecution against citizens. The constitution was also used to hang to death leaders of the attempted coup and hundreds of sons of the poor, peasants, and workers at Kamiti Maximum Prison.

The 2010 constitution came through a hard struggle

Thus the 2010 constitution was achieved through long, hard, and protracted struggles and sacrifices of Kenyan patriots, democracy, and progressive forces. As political parties were banned by the constitution and its laws, those like December Twelfth Movement and Mwakenya who fought for multipartism had to operate from the underground and in exile. Actually, in the 1980s many underground political parties, which besides agitating for multipartism also advocated for socialism, were formed in the country and exile. After years of struggle and mobilisation during which time Moi's dictatorship escalated arresting, torturing, and persecuting, progressive citizens including religious leaders, business persons, and people of his class, the demand for multipartism became a mass struggle with thousands of people joining demonstration demanding the end of dictatorship in the streets of urban areas and rural towns. Hundreds were killed by the Moi regime. Ultimately, the Moi KANU regime was forced by the relentless broad mass struggles to remove section 2A from the then constitution to pave way for multiparty democracy in 1992.

The struggle continued

But the coming in of multipartism did not mean the end of dictatorship in the country. Neither was it the defeat of the reactionary Moi political system. The Moi KANU regime still held on the instruments of state power, imposing its neocolonial capitalist system upon Kenyans which was characterised by state-sponsored interethnic violence, corruption, and gross violations of human rights that claimed hundreds of lives. The regime refused to listen to the call by the broad popular democratic forces for constitutional reforms to entrench multipartism. However, the mass struggles inspired by the gains already made proved to be unstoppable. Ultimately, the Moi KANU regime was defeated in the 2002 elections by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) of the united opposition that made Mwai Kibaki President of the country.

The 'second liberation'

The defeat of the Moi KANU regime from power was hailed as the second liberation of Kenya. This was because the reforms that came about after decades of hard protracted struggles since independence from classical British colonialism ended the post-colonial dictatorship that was akin to fascism.

The Kibaki NARC regime came about with more political liberties including the start of the culture of multipartism and the observance of human rights, including ending the practice of the death penalty. Kenyans breathed better air of freedom than ever before. But despite its pretence to the contrary, the regime too was reluctant to implement the desire of Kenyans for progressive constitutional reforms. The Kibaki NARC regime resisted the constitutional reforms needed to entrench multiparty democracy in the country. It had to take another eight years of hard struggles of the popular democratic forces before the constitutional reforms were ultimately achieved and promulgated in 2010.

Thus the 2010 constitution was achieved through the hard protracted struggle of Kenyans from below. It passed through the most consultative and participatory process in the history of constitutional making in the continent. It was debated by peasants, workers, and the entire nation at the grassroots. As a consequence, it is hailed as one of the most progressive constitutions in Africa.

Yet it is a bourgeoisie constitution

However, despite all this, the 2010 constitution of Kenya is a bourgeoisie constitution (Marx, *ibid.*, Engels, *ibid.*) in form and content and its prospects and problems should be appreciated as such. The drafters of the constitution were petit-bourgeoisie elites informed not by revolutionary ideas expressed and recorded by the popular masses from the grassroots but bourgeoisie ideas from above. The final product that forms the 2010 constitution came from the petit-bourgeoisie elites interpretation and drafting of the wishes and aspirations of the masses of Kenyans expressed during the comprehensive consultative process and the Bomas Constitutional Conference of 2005. The people's views were revolutionary but the drafters watered them down to accommodate their petit-bourgeoisie position and the fears of the Kenyan neo-colonial elites who were then in power and who had earlier abandoned the Bomas popular draft constitution.

I say all this because I participated actively in the Boma's Conference as delegate number 131 and I know from first hand about the class struggles that manifested themselves in the course of the debates and process that culminated with members of the then Kibaki government walking out of the Bomas Conference and thus making it to end prematurely - in fact, many defects in the constitution could be tressed to this. The 2010 constitution drafted by the late Nzamba Kitonga and

his team of elites inevitably watered down the revolutionary wishes and aspirations of the Kenyan masses to produce the present constitution which when all is said and done is a bourgeoisie constitution.

Why is it a bourgeoisie constitution?

Now, why is the 2010 constitution of Kenya a bourgeoisie constitution despite its progressive prospects? To begin with, it is too long (about 280 pages, The Constitution of Kenya, 2012) and is inaccessible to the majority of Kenyans who are peasants and workers as it remains only in English and hitherto has not been translated into the national language, Kiswahili, or other Kenyan languages and therefore remains the constitution meant to be read, understood and interpreted only by few citizens. The majority of citizens have to depend upon others to read and interpret the constitution for them.

The 2010 constitution is deliberately hard to be read, comprehend and to interpret by ordinary people, even educated ones, even ordinary lawyers and even constitutional lawyers will have different understandings and interpretations and have to depend on the magistrates and judges for interpretations and different judges comprehend and interpret the constitution differently.

It is full of ambiguities and contradictions, it gives rights and limits them at the same time, it provides and negates simultaneously while making parallel and opposing articles that are hard to fathom and interpret (see also Marx).

The Bill of Rights

The Bill of Rights contains a very comprehensive list of human rights. Desirable and progressive as they are, when all is said and done, they are bourgeoisie rights as it is assumed that they are realisable in a class/capitalist system to all citizens. Yet the meaning of freedom, equity, equality, right, justice, and human rights to the capitalist is different from that of the ordinary citizens. The rich and the poor cannot have equal rights and freedoms at the same time. To the capitalist, private property and the system of exploitation of person by person is justified, allowed, and right (Engels, F. ibid.).

True, there cannot be equity and equality between the rich and the poor, the capitalists and the working class, the oppressor and oppressed. In a class society like Kenya, the working class must interpret the concept of equity and equality to mean class equity and equality which ultimately means the abolition of classes, capitalism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression of person by person.

That is why the existence of the 2010 constitution has not stopped few families in Kenya from owning hundreds of thousands of acres of land while millions remain squatters or with hardly any land to eke a living on their own country of birth. Neither has it stopped the system that allows a few persons to own the means of production, banks, large businesses, industries, machines and to use them to mint billions for the few while creating poverty for the majority. Because it is founded in the bourgeoisie constitution that is based upon the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression of person by person and class by class the rich Bill of Rights is realised more on the breach than the observance.

The constitution reflects class struggles

The 2010 constitution exposes the class nature of Kenyan societies and the class struggles thereof. This happened clearly during the said 2005 Bomas constitutional conference where I was actively present. All debates of the articles were struggles between those who represented the wishes and aspirations of the masses and those who represented the ruling capitalist elites. The then bourgeoisie Kibaki government in power sabotaged the Bomas Conference by forcing it to end prema-

turely. The government and the ruling class feared the imminent triumph of the majority of delegates from the working classes and the grassroots. I was there and witnessed everything.

Interpretation of the constitution

Since the constitution manifests class struggles in Kenya, whichever class controls state power interprets it to serve its own interests. It is for this reason that the Kenya pro-neocolonial capitalism elites in power today have ignored or only paid lip service to the progressive articles of the constitution that expresses the wishes and aspirations of the majority of the people of Kenya. Many a time court orders are ignored or only implemented at the whims of those in power. The majority of Kenyans during the consultative and Bomas Constitution Conference wished a constitution that would be used to establish a socialist system and state in the country. In fact, should a progressive or revolutionary party like CPK capture state power, they could identify certain articles in the constitution and use them to initiate pro-socialist reforms. These include the following:

The Preamble of the 2010 constitution

The preamble clearly articulates the wishes and aspirations of the Kenyan people of remembering their centuries and decades-long history of resistance and struggle from foreign and colonial domination and for freedom and justice, of the heroes and heroines who sacrificed for the liberation of our country. It celebrates national unity while appreciating ethnic and cultural diversity. The preamble also acknowledges the need for citizens to conserve the environment for the benefit of present and future generations. It commits all Kenyans “to nurture and protect the well-being of the individual, the family, communities and the nation”. It recognises “the aspirations of all Kenyans for a government based on essential values of human rights, equality, freedom, democracy, social justice and the rule of law.”

The problem is that all this can hardly be realised under the present capitalist system but only after the country is liberated from the class divisions and when socialism is achieved. In the meantime, in the ongoing struggle for progressive reforms, and socialism, we will emphasise the significance of the Preamble and the socialist-oriented articles in the 2010 constitution of Kenya, which examples follow below.

Article 10

Article 10 of the constitution that stipulates the national values and principles of governance that must be referred to in interpreting and implementing the constitution shows that the majority of Kenyans aspire for a socialist Kenya and justify CPK’s existence as a political party that expresses the wishes and aspirations of the majority of Kenyans for their nation: socialism.

The national values and principles of governance include:
a) patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy, and participation of the people.
b) human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non - discrimination and protection of the marginalised,
c) good governance, integrity, transparency, and accountability, and) sustainable development.

Furthermore, this article binds all State organs, state officers, public officers, and all persons whenever any of them: a) applies or interprets this constitution, b) enacts, applies, or interprets any law; or c) makes or implements public policy decisions.

However, this article is implemented more in the breach than the observance. The present capitalist government and ruling class only pays lip service to the article as to implement it would be to transform Kenya into a socialist-oriented society and state. Anyway, be it as it may, it justifies our struggle for a socialist state and society.

Article 1 1. and 2

Article 1: 1 and 2 states that:
1. All sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya and shall be exercised only in accordance with this constitution;
d) The people may exercise their sovereign power either directly or through their democratically elected representatives.

All this means that the majority of Kenyans have the constitutional mandate to struggle for and establish the political system of their choice because the choice is vested in them. And the constitution itself shows that the majority of Kenyans desire socialist Kenya. Therefore, the struggle for a socialist Kenya is constitutional.

Article 4:2.

Article 4:2 states that “The Republic of Kenya shall be a multiparty democratic state founded on the national values and principles referred to in Article 10”. We invoked this article when in 2019 we changed the name of our party from the Social Democratic Party of Kenya (SDP) to the Communist Party of Kenya (CPK). A rogue Registrar of Political Parties had attempted to refuse to register the name of our party citing her anti-communist sentiments not understanding or refusing to understand that in fact, the spirit of the constitution is the desire of the majority of Kenyans for political parties with the ideology of socialism. Our members were forced to demonstrate to win our constitutional right to our rightful name: Communist Party of Kenya (CPK).

Article 7 on languages

Article 7 of the constitution empowers the Kenyan patriots and masses

of workers and peasants through language. It states:
7 1. The national language of the Republic is Kiswahili.
7.2. The official languages of the Republic are Kiswahili and English;
3. The state shall:
a) promote and protect the diversity of language of the people of Kenya, and
b) promote the development and use of indigenous languages, Kenya Sign language, Braille and other communication forms and technologies accessible to persons with disabilities.
Unfortunately, the state in power today has hardly implemented this article concerning language. Despite Kiswahili being the national language of Kenya, the language of national unity, and the lingua franca of Eastern and Central Africa, the 2010 constitution has not been translated into Kiswahili and all the national laws are available only in English. Although Kiswahili is used in parliament, all parliament documents are available only in English as most government official documents. The most important speeches of the President during national days are made in English. Hardly any efforts have been made by the government or education system to develop and promote other indigenous languages of Kenya (I suggest you mention something about failure to produce government information in braille and sign language formats). All this shows that the neocolonial capitalists of Kenya are not willing to empower the Kenyan masses in spite of their wishes expressed in the constitution. Neither are they, progressive nationalists.



Comrade Mwandawiro Mghanga, sharing a word with fellow delegate at Bomas Constitutional Conference, Mercy Mwamburi

Article 8: on religion

Article 8 states, “There shall be no state religion”. This is a progressive article as it helps to avoid inter-religious conflicts and gives room for freedom of conscience.

Article 26 on the right to life

Article 26: Every person has the right to life. Life is a fundamental human right that must be respected and protected at all costs. The ultimate goal of all revolutionary struggles is to realise every individual’s right to life. So the state and society must utilise the natural and all available resources to ensure the realisation of the right to life to all. To allow only a few individuals to control the economy and resources of the country while the majority are currently condemned to the life of poverty, slums, want and suffering, is to violate article 26. The capitalist system is the basis of the violation of the fundamental human right, the right to life because it is based on the system of exploitation and oppression of person by person. The struggle against capitalism and for socialism is the struggle for the right to life for all citizens.

Article 43 on economic and social rights

To realise the right to life, the same constitution in article 43 - just as the CPK manifesto, constitution, and other documents - pinpoints the basic economic and social rights that must be realised to ensure the implementation of article 26:

1. Every person has the right to:

- a) the highest attainable standard of health, which includes the right to healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare,
- b) accessible and adequate housing, and reasonable standard of sanitation,
- c) to be free from hunger, and to have adequate food of acceptable quality,
- d) to clean and safe water in adequate quantities,
- e) to social security, and f) education.

Furthermore, article 43.2. states that “A person shall not be denied emergency medical treatment, and article 43.3. states that “the state shall provide adequate social security to persons who are unable to support themselves and their dependants”.

It is clear that the neocolonial capitalist system that is the mother of inequality, corruption, economic mismanagement, and exploitation of person by person and that is privatising every aspect of the economy every day has been unable and will not be able to realise economic and social rights outlined in this article. Privatisation of social services, including health, housing, and educational services is a violation of this article. In Kenya today the poor are condemned to premature deaths because they

cannot access medical care or afford nutritious food or simply die of hunger, slum life, and incessant exposure to an unhealthy environment.

The Kenyan workers, peasants, and all progressive and revolutionary forces must, therefore, unite and struggle to overthrow the capitalist system to establish a socialist society and state to realise the constitutional economic and social rights. For the bourgeoisie will not provide them these rights on a silver platter.

On the land issue

Land is the most important resource of the country. All natural resources and cultures thereof are based on land. That is why land access and rights have always been contested and have been the basis of class struggles and social revolutions. The struggle for independence from colonialism in Kenya was also the struggle for land, thus the Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau).

Since the land problem was not solved after independence but instead escalated, land has always been behind the myriad conflicts and class struggles in the country (Odinga, ibid.). Neo-colonial capitalism and the growth of the Kenyan bourgeoisie class and the creation of the large class of the poor rural and urban classes is the product of the primitive accumulation of land and land resources accompanied by rampant state-sanctioned corruption and land grabbing.

Chapter five of the 2010 constitution addresses the land question. Although it contains populist articles that seem to empower the masses in relation to land, they are actually bourgeoisie gimmicks that compromise the revolutionary wishes and aspirations - that were expressed by popular masses- in favour of private ownership of land. The interpretation and implementation of the articles, like the constitution, also depend on which class controls state power. As it is the capitalist and procapitalist elites that control state power in Kenya today, the chapter on land in the constitution - despite its populist pronouncements - has been interpreted to perpetuate and to entrench, through the legislation arising from it, private ownership of land and land resources - rather than land reforms that empower the people and communities in the control and use of their land and land resources

Article 60 (1) states that “Land in Kenya shall be held, used and managed in a manner that is equitable, and in accordance with the following principles:

- a) Equitable access to land;
- b) security of land rights;
- c) sustainable and productive management of

- land resources;
- d) transparent and cost-effective administration of land;
- e) sound conservation and protection of ecologically sensitive areas;
- f) elimination of gender discrimination in law, customs, and practice related to land and property in land; and
- g) encouragement of communities to settle land disputes through recognised local community initiatives consistent with this constitution.

there would have been progressive land reforms that would have brought the equitable distribution of land stated in this article if the above principles were implemented. But today Kenya is divided into classes of the few rich landowners and the majority poor peasants and landless. And what is “equitable” or fair to the rich is not “equitable” or fair to the poor. The status quo of privatisation of land that favours the rich continues and escalates. In the capitalist system imposed upon Kenyans by the ruling class that control political and state power, it is considered equitable for few local and foreigners to own hundreds of thousands of acres of land while millions have little or hardly any land to eke a living on or are landless or squatters. Those who do not till land or need it for their livelihoods own it and those who till land and need it for their livelihoods are denied access to it. This capitalist land tenure system which is the mother of rural and urban slums and poverty is considered just and fair by the Kenyan capitalist ruling class that is in power today. The 2010 constitution, therefore, has not solved the land problem in favour of the peasants and masses of Kenya.

Article 61 states that, (1) All land in Kenya belongs to the people of Kenya collectively as a nation, as communities and individuals.”

But Kenya is a nation divided into classes, of the few rich and that of the majority poor, the exploiters and the exploited, the capitalist on the one hand, and the peasants, workers, and working-class on the other hand. In fact, land in Kenya belongs to individuals and families who either own thousands of acres or only small pieces hardly enough to eke a living, but all have private titles to their lands or claim the pieces of privatised lands. The talk that “all land in Kenya belongs to the people of Kenya collectively as a nation...” is a wish of the majority of Kenyans but that can only be realised in a socialist Kenya that must be struggled for.

(2) Land in Kenya is classified as public, community or private. Despite the existence of this article, private ownership of land is not only more protected by the constitution and laws emerging from it than community or public land. Laws made by parliamentarians com-

posed of procapitalist elites, not to speak of pieces of papers called title deeds, continue to be used to grab, legalise and protect private lands irrespective of how they were or are acquired by individuals or groups of individuals. What is referred to as public or community land is increasingly privatised despite the existence of institutions created by the constitution to protect the land.

Land tenure is how land is owned and used. The capitalist land tenure system puts more emphasis on how land is owned (title deeds) rather than how land is used. This encourages and protects land speculation creating large parcels of idle land owned by individuals displaying title deeds but not putting the lands in productive use. Yet millions of Kenyans need the land for productive use but cannot access it. Furthermore, the capitalist land tenure impedes the implementation of government development plans such as infrastructure projects of roads, dams, water, housing, research, public utilities, eradication of slums, etc. as the government has hardly any land and has to keep on compensating individuals when it needs the land. Private land ownership in urban areas is the root cause of the escalating growth of unplanned settlements or slums in Kenyan urban areas. The 2010 constitution does not provide for the road map towards the elimination of slums and conflicts over land and land resources remain part and parcel of everyday life in Kenya. The constitution actually documents and summarises the class struggles manifested in the land tenure it describes.

Article 174 on the objects of devolution

The 2010 constitution is a bourgeoisie constitution that promises so many good things that however are neither interpreted in favour of the majority of Kenyans nor implemented for the freedom and liberation of the oppressed and exploited. It pretends to be for the good of all Kenyans, yet it is full of contradictions at the same time that favor private property and the status quo of capitalism.

Communists do not reject progressive reforms that improve the living conditions of the working class and the whole society. Rather we are against the reduction of the reforms to be the end in themselves. That is why even while struggling to overthrow capitalism in Kenya and replace it with a socialist system and state, we shall search for and utilise the progressive articles in the constitution to demand the progressive reforms therein and to advanced the path towards socialism.

Chapter ten of the 2010 constitution is one of the greatest progressive reforms of gover-

nance in the country.

Article 174 points out the objects of the devolution of government which are:

- a) to promote democratic and accountable exercise of power,
- b) to foster national unity by recognizing diversity,
- c) to give powers of self-governance to the people and enhance the participation of the people in the exercise of the power of the state and in making decisions affecting them,
- d) to recognise the right of communities to manage their affairs and further their development,
- e) to promote and protect the interests of minorities and marginalised communities,
- f) to promote social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya,
- g) to ensure equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout Kenya,
- h) to facilitate the decentralization of State organs, their functions and services, from the capital of Kenya, and,
- i) enhance checks and balances and the separation of powers.

Devolution has been implemented for about eight (is it 8 or 10) years now. There are now 47 county governments, 47 county assemblies and 47 county public service boards that are in charge of recruiting and employing civil servants of the counties. Besides, there is the Senate and elected Senators whose major mandate is to represent their counties in the Senate parliament and to deal with constitutional matters of devolution, including representation, approval, and allocation of budgets of counties, oversight, and legislation.

The governments and public services are closer to the people at the grassroots than ever before. Thanks also to the implementation of devolution, there is greater participation of the citizens in the day-to-day affairs of the government that affect them than before the existence and implementation of the 2010 constitution. Citizens more and more participate in the budget-making process and are involved in overseeing the implementation of government projects including prioritising their needs. Thus, citizens are increasingly being aware of their rights to demand services and accountability from their governments.

Although delays in the flow of funds from the national treasury to the county governments are often experienced - thus disrupting the implementation of development plans

of the county governments - at least the county governments do receive more than fifteen percent of the national budget due to them every year. This means that billions of shillings circulate in the rural areas annually, which in turn stimulate local economies and rural development. In fact, the impact of devolution to rural development whether to infrastructure, agriculture, or educational, sports, water, and health services are observed throughout the country, the extent of which differs from county to county. More people are employed in rural areas than ever before. The rural areas are breathing life than ever before.

The head of counties are Governors with their cabinets and civil servants. Devolution has produced more leaders with the practice of running governments than ever before. This adds value to the quantity and quality of leadership in the country in general as more and more people are involved in leadership.

The existence of 47 county assemblies adds to the development of democratic culture at the grassroots.

Challenges of devolution

The objects of devolution quoted above are desirable, if only they were implemented effectively. But the tragedy of the 2010 constitution is that it assumes that progressive reforms such as devolution could be implemented sustainably under the capitalist system. Capitalism with its inherent contradictions of inequality, corruption, greed, marginalisation of the poor, tribalism, and nepotism has been devolved to the counties.

Just like the members of the national parliaments, the members of the county assemblies who receive exorbitant salaries and emoluments are also notorious for fighting for their interests and privileges rather than those of the masses who elected them. The wage bill is huge and is escalated by among others, the too big salaries and allowances of the elected elites and top civil servants, leaving very little for development projects.

As explained in article 174 (e), one of the objects of devolution is to foster national cohesion by protecting the interests of the marginalised and minority persons and communities in the counties. Yet, most counties hitherto employ only members of their dominant ethnic groups in the counties, and thus escalating the problem of tribalism.

But the major problem of devolution is that land and land resources are hardly devolved and remain under the control of the national government. Yet, the single most important demand of various Kenyan ethnic groups that brought about devolution was the right of com-

munities to access, manage, conserve and accrue direct and indirect benefits from their resources.

However, it is the national government that has greater control of land and land resources through the ministries of Land and that of Mining and Petroleum via their officers in the counties. The relevant county government departments and officers have hardly any powers in this regard compared to the national officers and their ministers in Nairobi. As a consequence, corruption involving land and land resources that is notorious in the ministry of lands and mining in Nairobi has been devolved to the counties.

Local communities are still alienated from their lands and land resources while the problems of land and land resources continue to escalate. National land officers who are connected with the ministries of land and mining in Nairobi are in the counties to enrich themselves through corruption rather than serving the local people or solving their problems. The dominant power of the national government over the land and land resources of the counties is a great impediment to land reforms in favour of peasants, the poor and the majority of citizens of Kenya. Devolved governments should call for the constitution to be amended to allow complete devolution of land and land resources to empower the county governments and communities to be in charge of their most important resource. But the BBI report that is being forced upon Kenyans by the government of Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga deliberately ignore the above facts and instead opt to perpetuate the status quo of injustices over land and land resources.

Conclusion

The state is a machine of oppression of one class by another while the constitution is part and parcel of its coercive instruments. In Kenya, a state is a machine of the neo-colonial capitalist class of exploiting and oppressing the class of the majority composed of workers, peasants, and the working class in general. The constitution is also part of the coercive system of the state of performing a definite role for the exploiters and oppressors in this regard.

This ultimately means that it is the class that controls political and economic power that interprets and implements the constitution to maintain and perpetuate its rule over other classes. The working class and other popular forces must therefore struggle to capture and control state power to create and impose its constitution that is for its class interests and that of the poor, exploited, and oppressed.

In the meantime, it is important to note that the 2010 constitution contains many progressive articles that could be utilised to enhance progressive reforms that could improve the welfare of the masses and even charter the road towards social progress and socialism.

That is why CPK joins those who are opposed to the reactionary BBI report that is being forced upon Kenyans by Uhuru Kenyatta, Raila Odinga, and their sycophants and collaborators. There is the urgent need to imple-

ment the progressive articles contained in the 2010 constitution before organising its genuine and participatory review and amendment.

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“The state is a machine of oppression of one class by another while the constitution is part and parcel of its coercive instruments”

CPK'S ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC POLICY: PUTTING THE ECONOMY IN THE HANDS OF THE MAJORITY



By Gitahi Ngunyi

What would Kenya look like economically if the Communist Party of Kenya (CPK) won State power? That is a question that Party members, activists and revolutionaries encounter every day in the course of their work. That question is particularly relevant in the current stage of development of the country where it is clear the neo-colonial capitalist economic policies employed by the current Kenya's ruling elite have failed to end people's misery and economic backwardness and underdevelopment.

This question cannot be answered without first clarifying what is wrong with the current reactionary economic policies. To unpack the CPK economic alternative, we will therefore look at the problems of the neo-colonial economic policies and provide the solutions.

Means of production in the hands of a few

The first act of attack on the Kenyan people by capitalism was the grabbing of their land by the British Colonialists. All the land in Kenya was placed under the ownership of the British Monarch and placed under the management

of the Imperial British East Africa Company Ltd. The Kenyan communities that previously owned the land communally or through their feudal lords as was the case in nation-states in the coastal areas of Kenya lost the most important means of production. All the productive land was placed in the hands of a few white colonialists and Kenyans were forced to work as wage earners in white owned farms and companies under deplorable conditions.

58 years after independence, this economic injustice against the Kenyan people has never been rectified. Today, foreign multinationals and Kenyan political elites control the bulk of the productive land.

Currently, 28 percent of Kenyans or 12.6 million people are landless. 98 percent of Kenyans land owners are crammed up in small and uneconomical pieces of land with an average size of 1.2 hectares (ha) occupying 46 percent of the Kenyan land mass. 1.9 percent of the land owners own medium size pieces ranging between 10 and 60 ha. However, 0.1 percent of the land owners control 39 percent of Kenya's total land area.

This inequitable access to land by Kenyans is the biggest cause of extreme poverty, unemployment and under-employment in Ken-

ya.

It therefore follows that there can be no sustainable solution to the problem of poverty in Kenya if the land question is not addressed with finality.

If CPK wins State power, land reforms will be the highest priority because of the potential it has to ending extreme poverty, creating massive employment and increasing production. The reform package would include appropriation/repossession of all idle and underdeveloped land owned by the foreign multinationals and the Kenyan bourgeoisie which hoards without compensation.

Land appropriated by CPK government would be redistributed to farming groups, cooperatives, workers owned companies, or State corporations for the purpose of putting the land into immediate utilization in agricultural, mining, housing or manufacturing production.

This single action will pull millions of Kenyans from extreme poverty, spur rural development and increase employment to millions of Kenyans currently languishing in urban squalor and rural poverty.

Export driven

Kenya's economy was designed by the colonial to be a supplier of raw materials and markets to British multinationals. From the colonial times, Kenya has depended on export of agricultural products such as tea, coffee, cotton, hides and skins, livestock, to Europe and US.

While the thinking behind this imperialist approach to colonial economies was basically to sustain European economies at the expense of the colonies, neocolonial regimes have continued with the same approach based on the false argument that Kenya badly needs of foreign exchange to finance imports of commodities that it does not produce.

Because of this kind of neo-colonial approach to economic policies, the bulk of Kenya's productive land is under crops that serve European and American food needs. Land under food for domestic needs occupy the least part of the Kenyan land mass.

There are very clear consequences from this policy choice. First, in spite of the abundance of productive land, Kenya is listed as a food insecure country. This is a very embarrassing state and a paradox as well. In other words, the same country producing coffee and tea that are consumed by hundreds of millions of people in the

world cannot produce enough food for its domestic needs. Every time when there is a drought, thousands of Kenyans in both rural and urban areas starve to death because they have no food.

The second consequence is that the country has lost opportunities to industrialise based on the domestic food production and consumption needs. Instead, Kenya with its raw exports continues to support the growth of European and American imperialism while its people continue to wallow in poverty and squalor. It is also because of these suicidal policy choices that we have a pattern of migration where Kenyans are leaving their country to look for jobs in Europe and US because the Kenyan economy is unable to provide employment to the majority of its people.

A CPK government would reverse this policy so that the bulk of Kenya land resources would be used to produce for local domestic needs. This would entail progressive reduction of land allocated to cash crops for food and cotton production to meet local food and textile demands. Such an approach will ensure that the country has enough food to meet the needs of its

people.

In order to realise the full benefits of increased production, the CPK government would invest surplus into development of government owned light and heavy industries. The light industries would use the agricultural products to produce consumer goods to meet the local demands such as food products with longer shelf life, textile products and leather products. The heavy industries will produce equipment and machinery needed in agricultural production, light industry production and housing. Heavy investment in the development of government owned light and heavy industries will also mean that mining products such as iron ore, petroleum and titanium are used to create local jobs and increase national production instead of the current case where such mining resources support the growth of industrialization of foreign nations.

Through this policy approach, the CPK government will not only solve the chronic problem of textile and food shortages in the country, it will also increase employment through industrialization and spurred rural development.

Wastefulness

One of the outstanding characteristics of Kenyan economy is wastefulness. Wastage of human life or labour, wastage of production, and wastage of public funds.

Kenyan unemployed workers waste away in Kenyan slums and rural areas because the neo-colonial capitalist system must maintain high unemployment in order to maintain workers wages low and cart away heavy profits. These workers cannot afford privatized medical services and privatized education for their children. They die of diseases such as Malaria and Cholera because their only value to the capitalist system is being used as an industrial reserve army to scare the employed workers against demanding better pay for their work.

A CPK government will end this cycle of human life wastage by expanding the productive forces in agriculture and manufacturing. To do this, the government will redistribute land resources so that people who are trapped in joblessness in urban and rural areas have a way of engaging in national production through agriculture. Further, those who are left out of employment in agriculture will be absorbed in the value chain developed through investments in light and heavy industries.

Wastage of production, particularly agricultural production, is as old as the post-colonial Kenya. In the current neo-colonial economic policy environment, production is driven by the profit motive or the market forces of demand and supply instead of the domestic needs. Therefore, when the prices of commodities fall because of unplanned supply or dumping of foreign products at cheaper prices, producers are left with commodities that they have no use for. Farmers are demotivated to continue with production, companies close down, workers are retrenched thus falling back to poverty and national production falls drastically.

A CPK government will end this wastage through central economic planning. This will mean that every production aspect will be aimed at meeting the particular consumption

needs of the new Kenyan society. In essence, the amount of wheat produced in the country as well as other agricultural produce will be guided by the carefully analysed and understood consumption needs of the Kenyan society.

In the neo-colonial government, the State wastes public funds to maintain a heavily paid bureaucracy that only serves to suppress the interests of the poor, peasants and working class and promoting the Kenyan bourgeoisie and imperialism economic and political interests. From the Executive, the Judiciary, the Legislature/s, what is visible is the orgy of huge salaries and privileges for people occupying the big positions in these offices. These huge salaries and privileges make the positions coveted in the country not because of the services they render to the Kenyan masses but because of the opportunities they provide to amass personal wealth. These high salaries and privileges contribute to the situation where people who put more time in production earn less and those that put less time in production earn more income. This wastage is a major contributory factor the high levels of inequalities in the country.

To deal with this kind of wastage, a CPK government would abolish the salary differentiation between workers engaged in productive activities and workers in government bureaucracy. To do this, the CPK government would cut the salaries of State officers to the level of average workers wages and abolish the various privileges that go with such State offices such as car grants, mortgages and the hefty sitting allowances for government officials. By doing this, the CPK government will have transformed the positions of State officers from positions of privilege to positions of service to humanity. By removing the privileges and the hefty perks, the government will make the positions less lucrative and therefore accessible to the working-class members who want to serve the workers interests in such positions.

National debt

Kenya was founded on the debt and grants from the British Government to the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). The debt allowed IBEAC and later colonial administration to set up an infrastructure and bureaucracy that would serve the extractive, exploitative and oppressive purposes. The debt from the British government allowed IBEAC to acquire weapons which were used to grab land from Kenyan communities, build the railway line, lease the land to white settlers, force African natives into white owned farms as wage labourers, and set up prisons for dissidents across the country.

In other words, the illegitimate debt by the British government to the colonial administration were aimed at promoting British Imperialist interests in Kenya. That initial debt by the British government served to impoverish the native Africans while promoting the interests of British multinationals and white settlers.

The repayment of the loans during the colonial days was financed by the labour of native Africans who had been conscripted to work in white owned farms under deplorable conditions.

58 years after independence, Kenya is still mired in the debt trap. Economic planners in the current neo-colonial Kenyan regime have been keen followers of the neoliberal policies and have been jumping from one international lender to another with the false belief that a poor, backward and underdeveloped country like Kenya will become developed through debt.

According to the most current publicly available public records, Kenyans national debt had ballooned to Sh7 trillion by July 2020. Annual debt repayment according to Public Debt Management Report presented to parliament in September 2020 is currently at Sh651.4 billion. In other words, out of the Sh1.6 trillion collected in revenues by Kenya Revenue Authority last year, 40 percent went to pay off loans. The repayment for 2020 is more than double the amount allocated to the 47 counties in equitable share of national revenue. Last year, the total amount of funds allocated to county government as the share of equitable national revenue was Sh310 billion.

One does not have to be a prophet to see that the neo-colonial government has put the country into a dark hole where it is impossible to fathom any financing strategy for any meaningful or sustainable poverty eradication program. In fact, the treasury has given the first indication that the government will need to acquire more debt in order to finance its budget for 2021/2022.

A CPK government would get Kenya out of this debt trap. First, the CPK government would reject illegitimate debt imposed on Kenyans through corruption and greed. A lot of the debt in the national debt was incurred to facilitate fraud and corruption. People responsible for incurring such illegitimate debt would be put in jail and their property

auctioned to repay it. Further, the government will declare a 15-year unilateral default on the debt tied to imperialism. At the same time, a CPK government would negotiate for debt moratorium with socialist States such as China and also seek further solidarity support in the country's endeavour to transform people's lives. This would save the country close to Sh400 billion a year and allow the government to use its national revenues to increase production in agriculture, finance light and heavy industries as well as build and equip the social welfare infrastructure.

Privatization

Since independence, the successive neo-colonial capitalist regimes in Kenya have been on a drive to concentrate the country's natural resources and public services in the hands of a few people, mainly foreign multinationals and ruling elite.

To the ruling elite and their advisors from Western imperialist nation nations, public assets and corporation are judged not for the services and the goods they provide to the general public but on the basis of how much profit they make.

Public land including forest land, land set aside for research facilities, aviation land and industrial land has been sub-divided among the political and economic elite robbing the public of the benefits that would accrue from proper utilization of those assets for the purpose they were set aside for.

In the 1990's, with the backing of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the ruling elite set off on the biggest attack on public assets and services through privatization. State corporations that were providing essential services to the public such transportation (Kenya Airways, Kenya Railways, Kenya Bus Service), oil refining, electric power generation and distribution (Kengen, KPLC), banking (Kenya Commercial Bank, National Bank) and telecommunication (Safaricom) were placed in the hands of joint interests of multinationals and the local political and economic elite.

Because of the obsession with the profit motive, workers in the State corporations were retrenched to make the organisations attractive to private interests.

Further, an attack on public education and healthcare was orchestrated through the twin tactic of underfunding of public service institutions and increase in commercial funding for private schools and healthcare facilities.

Currently, the onslaught on public service institutions has been taken a notch higher through funding of the operations of private universities from the exchequer and operations of the private hospitals from the national hospital insurance fund.

The total effect of the privatization drive is that it has pushed majority of Kenyans from accessing critical services such as transportation, health care and education. It has led to a situation where former State corporations are stripped off valuable assets to generate profits for the new owners before they are abandoned as empty shells.

A CPK government would put an end to this privatization and would also work to nationalize crucial public assets that have been put into private hands. To do this, the CPK government will increase funding to public service institution and monitor them effectively to ensure they offer the best service to the public. Further, the CPK government would annul the privatization act and disband the privatization commission. It would also annul the public private partnership act. To guide the process of getting back State assets from private hands, the CPK government would enact a nationalization act.

By carrying out these economic measures, the CPK government will be safeguarding workers jobs and ensuring public services are provided in the most efficient way and by the best human resources available. It will also be reducing the cost of living for the poor and thereby improving the quality of life for every Kenyan.

Conclusion

The alternative economic policies outlined above are revolutionary in nature and seek to put the management and benefits of the economic outputs in the hands of the majority. They are geared towards supporting the eradication of extreme poverty, expansion of the productive forces and improvement of the quality of life for the poor people, farmers and the working class.

They are based on the Party's understanding that neo-colonial capitalist policies have failed to end poverty in Kenya for the last 58 years. With the clarity on the main reasons of failures of capitalism, the policy choices by the party are aimed at transforming Kenya from a neo-colonial capitalist country to a socialist State.

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NAIROBI

EATING THE WORKING CLASS: CLASS ORIGINS OF CORRUPTION IN KENYA

By Booker Omole

In a recent interview, President Uhuru Kenyatta made a shocking revelation and admission that Kenya was losing Ksh2 billion a day to graft. If we were to assume that the theft takes place only between Monday to Friday, it would then mean that the country is losing Sh730 billion yearly. The Kenyan public continues to debate why the head of state is unable to do anything to stop the theft. What the president didn't tell the public is how much of the stolen billions of taxpayer funds are going to the pockets of people close to him. Local media outlets have reported that people close to the president are beneficiaries of corruption.

Every week the press is awash with one case of graft after another. From the looting of funds meant to fight the Covid 19 pandemic to the billions of shillings lost through fake government tenders.

Many Kenyans are aware that corruption is bad for them. They know the leaders in power are corrupt, and that disturbs them. They express their hatred and anger every day through public spaces by organizing demonstrations, publishing anti-corruption propaganda.

We have seen messages like 'corrupt leaders must die,' 'corruption is a genocide against the poor', and many more. Sometimes the capitalist propaganda that corruption is human nature occasionally dampens the peoples' courage to fight.

The bigger question is, what is the root of corruption, and how can it be stopped? The Communist Party of Kenya reaffirms that the mother of corruption is the system that perpetuates it – Capitalism.

Kenya is a corrupt neo-colonial turbo capitalist state. Kenyans are trapped between the corrupt political leaders' interests and the imperialist interests represented by multinationals corporations and non-government organizations.

The Kenyan problem is not only on bad leadership but also in the exploitative relations with the metropole countries. The unequal capitalist system is at the center of our problems. So, we see corruption within the inner life of Kenyan society and its influence from external factors.

Capitalism is the system that encourages the primitive accumulation of land, wealth, and capital, where individuals and families accumulate thousands of acres of land which they don't need while millions of Kenyans are landless and need the land for their survival and development. Let us elaborate on this more precisely. According to Kenya Land Alliance, more than 65 percent of all arable land in Kenya is in the hands of only 20 percent of Kenyans. The mindless land grabbing has left millions landless, while 67 percent, on average, own less than an acre per person. About 80 percent of the population has already been alienated from their national resource.

Capitalism is the system of exploitation of person by person based on greed; individual families are proud to own billions and trillions, which they are pleased to display while millions of people wallow in poverty in urban areas or ache an impoverished life in primitive lifestyles in the countryside. Is this not corruption?

Let us reflect on another admission. Recently, Raila Odinga, the Orange Democratic Party leader, admitted to having a net worth of about Ksh2 billion in a country where the majority of the population are in dire need of food, medicine, and all the basics that comes with a dignified life. This only confirms a country divided between a few haves and the suffering many. In this capitalist system, people are starving and dying of hunger while the class in power pushes the country deeper into foreign debt. The handshake politics has introduced more thieves into the jubilee administration. The jubilee administration did not go beyond the campaign rhetoric and is proving clueless about our country's future.

The capitalist democracy is corrupt; it's a competition of vote-buying exercise, bribery, deception, forgery – politicians compete in rigging themselves. Rulers keep on parroting about fighting corruption to cover their crimes deliberately. Yet, who in the ruling class is not corrupt?



Communist Party of Kenya's lawyer, Gitobu Imanyara, grills Gem Constituency Member of the National Assembly, Elisha Ochieng Odhiambo at Siaya Law Courts in a case involving Sh1.3 million theft of Constituency Development Funds.

Photo: Joseph Kuya

When the election approaches, they start accusing each other of corruption. Every capitalist faction wants to win public opinion by accusing the other faction of more theft. Media outlets widely reported when President Uhuru Kenyatta's statement that he would not hand over power to a thief. What did he mean? If he does not have something to hide, why did he resort to the court of public opinion yet he is the commander in chief, with the instruments of power to prosecute such crimes? To the Kenyan capitalist ruling class, the fight against corruption is just a song, lies, platitudes, drama, and open impunity. How can people who are part and parcel of corruption be expected to lead the war against corruption successfully?

Privatization is theft - Capitalism system is anchored on the robbery of public resources through privatization. This is how the rich can horde billions of monies at the expense of the majority poor. To privatize essential services such as water, to put them at the altar of profit for a few moneybags is corruption. To bankrupt state corporations only to end up buying them through backdoors for a song is corruption. To have an opaque private and public partnership that is anti-people, where losses are passed to the public and profits to businessmen that's corruption.

Capitalism culture is corrupt- the culture of deception and lies; through mass media outlets, the capitalist sells their corrupt pop-cul-

ture. They attack the poor masses, telling them that they have only themselves to blame for their poverty. They disseminate false hope to the masses, to make them meek, and turn attention away from the capitalist chaos. In the same media outlets, the politicians show off their stolen wealth through opulent life. Teaching young Kenyans to aspire for corrupt lifestyles and values of acquiring money at all costs rather than values of hard work, good morals, and changing our country to a better society based on communist values and not corruption?

The capitalist education system is corrupt- it brews intellectual corruption, both in essence and form. Apart from education meant for the rich by the rich, the capitalist education system is designed to condition the Kenyan masses and mold them to be at the capital's service. The loan funding of higher learning makes most Kenyans an appendage of the capitalist system and distracts any thoughts to change the system that has condemned them into poverty. Higher education institutions are lobbyists of reactionary ideas to maintain the status quo of capitalism. The products of these institutions are intellectuals that have sold their souls entirely to capitalism; they are not near professionals but the capitalist zombies living for their greed. Engineering, Medicine, Political science, et al. is not at the service of humanity but the service of capital and individual greed.

To fight against corruption in Kenya is to fight against the capitalist system. The Communist Party of Kenya recognizes that capitalism is inherently corrupt, it's the base of corruption, and without giving it a final dent, corruption thrives. The tough anti-corruption talk among the Kenyan leaders is only a scarecrow to win the masses through lies. Building and strengthening the Communist Party of Kenya and spreading the communist ideology in Kenya is the only reliable and genuine path towards rooting out corruption in Kenya.

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A BLEAK
YEAR
FOR THE
POOR
AND THE
WORKING
CLASS

By Abahlali baseMjondolo

The year 2020 has exposed the cruelty of the corrupt and capitalist ANC government, a repressive and predatory government that makes the political and economic elite richer while making the poor poorer.

During the lockdown, poor and working-class black people were openly murdered in the streets by the army and the police. Our movement faced repeated illegal and violent evictions during the lockdown despite the supposed moratorium on evictions. Live ammunition was used against unarmed people. Most shack dwellers did not receive the Covid grant. Millions of people lost their jobs. Others were not able to continue with their livelihoods. Across the country people went hungry.

The government did not deal with capitalists whose interest in making profit at all costs led them to putting their workers at

risk during a pandemic. The lives of health workers who are in the frontline in the fight against this pandemic were disregarded by the government which failed to provide enough protective gear.

The money that the government allocated to deal with the Covid crisis was stolen on a massive scale. Many companies were started with the sole purpose of looting Covid funds. Huge amounts of money were taken in fraudulent tenders by senior ANC members, including people close to the president and ministers.

Corruption always hits the poor and the working class the hardest. For example the working class in Khayelitsha in Cape Town is unable to travel to work in cheap affordable transport because the thieves in the ANC ran Prasa to the ground. The only affordable form of transport for the working class is no more because of greedy politicians.

We are ruled by thieves. This was not

what was meant when the Freedom Charter said 'The people shall govern'. This is a government of counter-revolutionaries. They have captured the people's struggle to make themselves rich.

We continue to live under difficult conditions in shacks while those in the ANC are living in luxury. The Freedom Charter said that "All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security". However, more people are living in shacks than ever before. Across the country violent evictions are an everyday occurrence.

Instead of dealing with all of these issues the ANC is using this time to fight its own factional battles in the party. Those who are involved in corruption are promoted in order to please a certain faction. The ANC does not care about the lives of ordinary poor black people. We only count during the elections. When we

ask for the promises that were made to us to be kept we are met with bullets. They openly say that we should not be living on land that is near the gated communities of the rich. Why do people continue to vote for these thugs?

Last year's was bleak Christmas. Children who used to have Christmas clothes every year did not receive them last year because their parents have lost their jobs or livelihoods. Many families are now without a bread winner. There are families that went hungry on Christmas day.

Steve Biko said 'Black man you are on your own'. Today if you are black and poor you are on your own. Solidarity is imperative. Building the power of the poor from below is imperative.

We have done our best to build the democratic power of the poor from below, settlement by settlement, and occupation by occupation. Our membership is in good standing and is currently 82,056 with 76 branches

counted so far and four branches still to count.

Last year we celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of our movement. We celebrated all that we have achieved despite serious repression and saluted all the heroes who lost their lives during our struggle. We thanked all those who have been brave enough to stand up for their humanity and resist oppression. We noted that women are in the forefront of our movement as members and as leaders and stressed the need to continue to build women's power from below. We held many meetings to reflect on the last 15 years and to discuss what we have learnt in the struggle.

During the lockdown we resisted evictions, developed a food solidarity programme in four provinces and worked to build the social infrastructure in our occupations and to turn them into spaces of production as well as land for living. We have pushed hard to build food sovereignty from below. We have also done our best to build living solidarity with other organisations and struggles of the poor in South Africa and around the world.

As the poor we are on our own. We will continue to build constructive politics, to occupy, to produce and to resist. We will continue to insist that our humanity and right to dignity are non-negotiable.

Biko said that "We believe that in our country there shall be no minority, there shall be no majority, there shall just be people. And those people will have the same status before the law and they will have the same political rights before the law. In this instance it will be a completely non-racial egalitarian society."

Currently, the government treats us as if we are beneath the law. They just ignore the law when it comes to us. There is no equality.

The ANC was brought to power by the struggles of the people but it has betrayed every tradition of liberation in this country. It is now up to the oppressed to liberate ourselves.

We express our solidarity with the residents of Masiphumelele in Cape Town. Over a thousand homes were lost in a terrible fire last year. More than a quarter of a century since the end of apartheid we are still left to burn because we are still not counted as human beings.

Mqapheli Bonono – 073 067 3274
Joyce Majola – 063 181 9997
S'bu Zikode – 083 547 0474

SOCIALISM THEORY AND PRACTISE: ON APPLICATION OF THE METHODOLOGY OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM IN THE STUDY OF CULTURE AND LAND MATTERS.



The late Thomas Cholmondeley, one of the biggest land owners in Kenya. His land which was inherited from the most ruthless colonialist in Kenya, Lord Delamere, was recently acquired by a leading political family.

By Mwandawiro Mghanga

This essay is an excerpt from a Masters' degree thesis on development studies. CPK is in the process of training cadres from the Marxist study circles that we organize throughout the country. This essay is meant to contribute to the discussion on the application of the methodology of historical materialism to the study and comprehension of social and natural phenomena.

Historical materialism: The basic theory and philosophy applied in the CPK Marxism Study Circles

In this section, I will introduce, briefly, the key issues and concepts that form the theoretical

framework of the research and analysis in the dissertation. The definitions themselves are based on the realisation that comprehending a problem or situation is to see it from its material base that ultimately determines it and within a time or historical perspective, how it has arisen and how it has come to be what it is. Furthermore, neither natural nor social phenomena are static or exist in isolation. While individual properties of matter and life should always be considered, it is in their dynamism and interconnectedness that form the basis of their existence and of analysing and understanding them in social and natural reality. Thus for example while "agriculture was considered a threat to nature and vice versa; naturalists were seen as lobbying against agricultural production. Today, there is growing

recognition that food security and the conservation and sustainable utilisation of agricultural diversity are inextricably linked", (RAFI, 1997:iv). Havnevik, (2001:74) corroborates this as follows:

"Agricultural production has an effect on the ecological system and biological diversity; the quality of water, air, and soil; the well-being of our domestic animals. It shapes the landscape and creates employment opportunities. These products and services can have positive and negative impacts and in this way can either contribute to improving or spoiling the environment, food security, biological diversity, sustainability, and social and cultural heritage."

It is this general theoretical approach, which is also based on the philosophy of di-

alectical and historical materialism (Lenin, 1975:44-48; Marx & Engels, 1968: Chapter 1; Mao, 1977:1-22 & 155-158; Berbeshkina, Yakovleva & Zerkina, 1985) that I apply in the definitions of the major concepts in the study presented in this thesis. Marx summarised the methodology of historical materialism in the following words:

"The general conclusion which I arrived at and which, once reached became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarized as follows. In the social production of their existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production con-

stitutes the economic structures of society, the real foundations on which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness (Marx, 1976:3)". Engels (1979:243) elaborates this as follows:

"The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production (of the means of human life) and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and a society

divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view, the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into external truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought not in philosophy but in the economics of each particular epoch".

Using historical materialism, I will now attempt to provide a broad definition of culture, land tenure, and the related issues that form the subject of this study.

Definition of culture

Culture is made by human beings in society. Culture broadly means all that has been created by human beings as distinguished from that human beings find in nature (Berbeshkina, Yakovleva & Zerkina, ibid.171). It is about life and society, history on earth, land. All human activities and impacts that manifest the presence of human beings, their works and the changes they make upon nature are inherent in culture. This means that in the process of producing their material needs, food, shelter, clothes, etc., people create and recreate culture. In other words, in the struggle for survival, freedom and development, which is in fact the increasing ability to make a living from nature, human beings are ever engaged in the activities of producing and reproducing material culture. And while producing material culture they, simultaneously, produce their intellectual culture. Intellectual culture here refers to the manifestation of peoples' consciousness of nature and society. Intellectual culture is the historical achievements of people in science, education, literature and art. It is about the morals, customs, philosophy, values and relations of the people in a particular society, time and place. Intellectual culture is also embodied and expressed by language that also contains and manifests the psychology of a people.

While historical materialism recognises that material and intellectual cultures exist relatively independently to one another, it at the same time emphasises that they can never exist in isolation. Material and intellectual cultures are organically linked, "with intellectual culture being secondary and relatively independent but developing in organic unity with material culture" (Berbeshkina, Yakovleva & Zerkina, ibid.:175). In other words, intellectual culture is not only a reflection of material culture but is also dialectically related to it, with material culture being the structure and intellectual culture being the superstructure. Although material culture is the basis of intellectual culture, not only has intellectual culture its own identity but it also influences the development of material culture. Cabral (1980: 141) explains this by pointing out "the close, dependent and reciprocal connection between the cultural factor and the economic (and political) factor in the behaviour of human societies".

"In fact, after every moment of life of society (open or closed), culture is the result, with more or less awakened consciousness, of economic and political activities, the more or less dynamic expression of the type of relations prevailing within society, on the one hand between man (considered individually or collectively) and nature, and, on the other hand, among individuals, social strata or classes (ibid.)."

Culture can therefore also be defined as the sum total of material and intellectual achievements of a society constituting its cultural traditions and that forms the reflection

and basis for further development and progress (Odiwuor, 2000:31). It is an embodiment of a definite mode of production at a definite material and historical time and place. Culture is a reflection of a specific society within a specific mode of production. It expresses the material being and the social relations inherent in a particular mode. The study of culture is therefore also the study of the history of the people of the culture concerned.

Furthermore, since society has always been divided into classes in all other modes of production other than various stages of communal mode, culture also manifests the class divisions at all times. Always in history, it has been the masses that have been the backbone of producing culture - especially material culture - but it is always the members of the ruling class who control the means of production and political power, who eat and enjoy the best and most of the fruits of culture. The exploiters and the exploited can never enjoy equal rights to culture at the same time and place.

Culture, land and agricultural biodiversity

Throughout history, land, whether cultivated or uncultivated, has been the most important natural resource, property and the basic means of production of people's livelihoods, wealth and hence material and intellectual cultures. It is for this reason that land as the basic natural resource (Hart & Castro, 2000) has also been contested, being behind many major causes of conflicts in history, whether violent or non-violent (Gutto, 1995:3-22; Fernandez, 1998:21). That is also why land issues, whether concerning access, tenure, use, rights, management, conflict and conflict resolutions, are complex and embrace political, economic, social and cultural dynamics of societies (Gutto, ibid.:25-26; Kanyinga, ibid.:7; Amanour, 1999:10; Havnevik, 1997:7-9; Matondi 1977: 27-32).

When human beings engage in activities of working on land to breed plants and animals, they are in the process of producing and reproducing agricultural biodiversity which, is part of their farming culture that is inherited, conserved and developed from generation to generation. When they get their livelihoods directly from nature then they depend on biological diversity, also known as biodiversty. Biodiversity is the 'diversity of life on earth' (The Crucible II Group ibid.:1) which, besides being the life-support system of the earth, also provides the genetic raw material not only for plant and animal breeding but also of new biotechnologies (RAFI, ibid.:5). Agricultural biodiversity is "that part of biodiversity that feeds and nurtures people – whether it is derived from genetic resources of plants, animals, fish or forests" (RAFI, ibid.1). In the context of my research and study, I was concerned with, mainly, the varieties of crop types found in the land tenure and farming culture in Werugha Sub-Location before and after the land reforms. Notwithstanding this, the erosion of the environment and therefore that of biodiversity, be it through natural or human causes, has as I have observed, direct and indirect impacts on agricultural biodiversity and the livelihoods of the people. For culture, in this regard, is the relationship between human beings and nature. Biological and cultural erosion arising from the vagaries of nature is hard to avoid, and furthermore nature ultimately deals with it in one way or the other. But that which is caused by human beings for whatever reason, as RAFI (ibid.), The Crucible II Group (ibid.) and Mooney (2001 and 1997) strongly contend, can and should be avoided. Interfering with and destroying indigenous resource tenure institutions and farming systems without comprehending their historical, social and ecological contexts, as the land tenure 'reforms' did in Taita Hills (Mkangi, 1983; Mwachofi, 1977, Fleuret, ibid.), are likely to cause adverse impacts on biological diversity, agricultural biodiversity and the culture thereof. All this, in turn, has implications on the food security and livelihoods of the people.

Culture and indigenous knowledge

All societies in the world have always struggled to increase their knowledge of the laws that govern nature to improve their productive forces and means of production[1] in order to make a better living from nature. It follows, therefore, that all peoples must have produced a culture of their own, to a lesser or greater degree respectively, depending on the historical, environmental and other material conditions that exist at a particular place and time. In fact, a people's culture is their way of living that provides them with their own identity (Odiwuor, 2000:31). And while productive forces and means of production develop and change quantitatively and qualitatively, culture also develops and changes accordingly. Like matter, culture is never static but is always in continuous motion and change.

Thus, during their struggles for survival and development, all societies accumulate various experiences over time, indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is an embodiment, a reflection and an expression of the culture of the people concerned. As a matter of fact, I reiterate, all peoples have made a contribution to the process of production and conservation of culture, including agricultural biodiversity, which is necessary to human progress and survival. All peoples in the world have something to offer to human knowledge that is part of the invaluable

cultural diversity that is being eroded at an alarming rate (Mooney, 2001:13-18; The Crucible II Group, ibid.9-10). History has proved that ignoring these facts in the name of science, technology, modernisation, privatisation, prejudices against other peoples, etc., are harmful to life on earth. It often leads to the erosion of the environment, agricultural diversity, livelihoods, social justice and human rights (Mooney, 1997 and 2001:9-22).

Culture and colonialism

To appreciate the question of culture and the current socio-economic issues in Africa, one must recognise the reality of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and accept the full implications of the recognition (Thiong'o, 1983). Historically, wanton plunder of natural resources, prejudices against indigenous knowledge and the erosion and destruction of the cultures of the colonised peoples, including their agricultural systems and diversity, was inherent in colonialism. That is why many of the problems in Africa and other 'developing' countries, including environmental degradation, food insecurity and erosion of livelihoods are rooted in colonialism (Lappe and Collins, 1977: 75-90; Timberlake, 1985; George and Paige, 1982; Sankara, 1988:155). Writing on the role of culture in the struggle for national liberation Cabral (ibid.:139 – 140) explains:

"History teaches us that, in certain circumstances, it is very easy for the foreigner to impose his domination on a people. But it like wise teaches us that, whatever the material aspects of this domination, it can be maintained only by the permanent and organised repression of cultural life of the people concerned. Implantation of domination can be ensured definitively only by physical elimination of a significant part of the population. In fact, to take up arms to dominate a people, is above all to take up arms to destroy or at least neutralize and paralyse their cultural life".

Like other places in Africa and the world (Rodney: ibid.; Mlama: 1991; Ajayi: ibid.), colonialism deliberately targeted for destruction the material and intellectual cultures of the Kenyan peoples, including that of the Dawida. While the missionaries concentrated in destroying indigenous knowledge and intellectual culture in general, they, at the same time collaborated with the colonial state and colonial settlers in physically oppressing and eliminating the people, alienating their land and labour and their material cultures based on agricultural production (Mwachofi, 1977: 38-48; Mkangi, ibid. 37-47; Mghanga, 1997:4).

To make the colonised people despise and forget their cultures is to deny them their historical heritage in order to control and dominate them. This is in fact what imperialism and Christianity did to the peoples' of the world under its domination. I agree with Cabral (ibid.) and Fanon (1967 and 1963) that as long as dominated people are made to believe that they had no history before the coming of colonialism, that they had not created any culture, and that their ways of life were primitive, sinful and barbaric, then their identity as a nation and as human beings is compromised. By denying the historical and cultural achievements of the African peoples, imperialism aims at destroying their personalities, it imbues them with inferiority complex, dependency and prevents them from realising their creative potentialities and being masters of their own natural and social environment and destiny.

But all this does not absolve the African and 'developing countries' themselves from the problems of underdevelopment in their countries. For the greatest tragedy today, that is the subject of my study, is that the same harmful colonial policies, including those on culture (Thiong'o, 1979, 1981 and 1983), land, environment and agriculture (Gutto, ibid.:35-40) continued to be practised in most African countries today, and what is worse by the same governments that claim to be victims of colonial policies.

Culture and land tenure

Land tenure system, "the terms and conditions on which land is held and used" is a key embodiment of the culture of the society concerned (Birgegård, 1993:1). It is inherent in the mode of production of the society in which people develop definite social, economic and political relations in their definite environment and time in the process of working and procuring their livelihoods. In this regard, land tenure is the most important social and cultural institution in both past and present Dawida society. The change of a land tenure system, especially in a situation where agriculture is the basic source of livelihoods, inevitably brings about cultural change in the society concerned.

Apart from public and state land tenure systems in socialist countries (see for example, Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 1986:5-9), there are generally two land tenure systems in the world, communal and private, that contain various forms within themselves (Fernandez, ibid. 19). Quoting Hendricks, Fernandez (ibid. 21) observers:

"Land tenure does not exist in a vacuum. Particular forms of land holdings are intimately connected with different modes of social relations." Communal land ownership is not just a form of owning land, but also a way to produce and reproduce the peasantry. Thus, ownership itself is always attached to social subjects, constituting, as a form of agricultural social production, a socio-economic organisation. An agricultural community is, in this way, an institution organised under a form of communal, or semi-communal land ownership, whose multiple members are the land owners".

The term 'communal land tenure' is complex and should not be interpreted literally just as indigenous natural resource tenures in general should not be seen in a simplistic way or romanticised. Instead, attempts should always be made to examine the internal dynamics of specific indigenous land tenure systems of specific societies and cultures (Amanor, 1999:7-11; Bruce, 1988:24-26). This is in fact what this study attempts to do.

Communal land tenure in theory may mean common ownership, use and management of land and its resources but in practice in most African societies farming is usually done by individual families. It may also mean the right of each member of a group to use independently to the full extent of certain land belonging to the community, so called right of commons. This includes forests, pastures, wastelands, land set aside for traditional ceremonies, or special needs for the community, etc., but usually not arable land. Communal land tenure may also mean control of land, reflecting some group interests, over land that is set aside for use by individuals who are usually families belong to the group. The group may be extended family, lineage, clan village or tribe, which is usually based on common decent, common residence or a combination of the two principles. Furthermore, communal land tenure is about the community's expression of land where as in the case of the Dawida, individuals are constrained from selling land outside their group. The group right may be framed as property right or expressed in political and administrative terms (Bruce, ibid. 24-25; Engels, 1979: 274-293; Marx, 1979: 294-297). As the same authors (ibid.) show, since land tenure and farming systems do not exist in a vacuum but in nature and society, all land tenure systems including private ones are communal to some extent. Given the fact that land is the basis of life on earth and that all human beings live on it, die on it and depend on it in one way or the other, land use, management and access is always inevitably influenced by the society to one degree or the other.

In general, in most rural Africa, acquiring and disposing of land continues to be determined by traditional land tenure systems even where there has been land tenure reforms leading to privatisation of land as in Kenya (Bruce, ibid.:23). As the same author explains (ibid.), the development of land tenure systems is conditioned by various factors that include local climate and ecology, the quality of the land resource, population density, level of agricultural technology, the crops grown, markets, kinship organisations, religious significance of land in the society concerned and pattern of ethnic conquest, dominance and rivalry.

Summary and conclusion, my hypothesis

Having said all this, it is important to conclude and summarise this chapter by restating my position based on historical materialism. Culture is always based on definite material conditions of a definite mode of production and, like society itself, is always dynamic and is never static. In this study I do not, therefore, romanticise indigenous land tenure or traditional knowledge or culture. For neither empiricism nor dogmatism produce real and useful knowledge but knowledge that arises from a dialectical relationship of practise and theory, experience and science, while solving definite problems in definite historical circumstances (Lenin, 1972; Mao, 1967: 295-309). That is why, I advocate a critical attitude towards indigenous land tenure, farming systems and culture in general and that of the local communities in particularly based on the reality on the ground and the fact that change is the essence of history and is not in itself necessarily destructive, as Ajayi (ibid.: 160) puts it.

In this respect, I am not opposed to land tenure reforms and the introduction of new farming technologies if all this is meant to settle or resettle people, provide them with more access and right to land, increase agricultural production and generally improve their livelihoods while conserving the environment. My theoretical departing point is that land tenure reforms should not destroy indigenous tenures and farming systems but should instead build upon them (Birgegård, 1993). Furthermore, the land reforms introduced in Taita Hills both by the colonial and post-colonial governments were not about providing the people with more land in spite of the obvious need for it. Neither were they about redistributive justice as advocated by Gutto (1995). The land reforms were about changing the terms and conditions under which the Dawida held and used land, i.e.,

imposing a capitalist land tenure system upon that of the Dawida based on their communal culture, (Mkangi, ibid. and Mwachofi, ibid.).

The main theme of this study is cultural change in Dawida society in general and Werugha in particular. The sub-theme is land tenure reforms with focus on agricultural change. As we shall find out, the mode of production of traditional Dawida society upon which their way of life was based was what I refer to as mature communalism [2](Mghanga, 1997:2). The basic means of production was and still remains land and both the material and intellectual cultures of the Dawida revolves around agricultural production. Land in traditional Dawida society was owned by the community as whole but managed by individual families organised around patrilineal clan or lineage system. The culture of traditional Dawida society was an embodiment and reflection of this reality. Land tenure reforms that change the indigenous land tenure to private land tenure is likely to change the values or morals and ways of life of the people, what and how they produce for their livelihoods, how they relate to one another and to nature in the process of production, in short their culture. This is my theoretical point of departure and hypothesis.

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[1] The means of and the people who set them in motion through their skills, experience and knowledge are called productive forces of society... All that people use to produce material benefits, be it work implements (machines, mechanisms, instruments), auxiliary means (industrial premises, roads, canals, energy, fuel, chemicals), or objects of labour (ores, timber, plastics), constitute the means of production" (Berbeshkina, Yakovleva & Zerkina, ibid.: 51). [2]In the thesis I coin the term mature communalism to describe the socio-economic relations of traditional Dawida society. Nyerere (1974:162-171) defines the same relations as ujamaa or familyhood while Amuta (1989:130) describes them as pre-literate communalism in reference to Ibo society which Achebe describes in his famous novels Things Fall Apart (1967) and Arrow of God (1964). Both societies described by Nyerere, Amuta and Achebe are basically similar to traditional Dawida society. But the social relations of communalism (see Popov-1984:58-62) were of complete equality while those of traditional Dawida society (and those described by Amuta and Nyerere) were beginning to show signs of class divisions. Historically and culturally, mature communalism was thousands of years ahead of first stages of communalism mode where people had hardly developed tools and wer by b

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MTUMBAISM: HOW THE PROCESS OF NEOLIBERAL GLOBALISATION IS TURNING KENYA INTO A SECOND HAND NATION

By Mwandawiro Mghanga

Mtumba is a Kiswahili word that was originally used to refer to second hand clothes. This is because the first second hand commodities that were sold at a large scale were clothes. Now that today second hand commodities have become the norm rather than the exception in East Africa, mtumba refers to all second hand items, clothes, shoes, utensils, vehicles and machines. In this essay, I also take the liberty to refer to as mtumba all foreign ideas or ideologies that are aimed at preventing progressive change and that serve to maintain the political, economic and cultural order of poverty, dependency and underdevelopment in Africa. In Kenya, like in many parts of Africa, the importation, buying, selling and consumption of all sorts of second hand items has become a culture. It is this culture and process of dependence on second hand foreign goods, values and ideas that I call mtumbaism.

Mtumbaism is a consequence of the implementation of neoliberalist economic policies in the African continent and contributes directly to the phenomena of immigration.

In this essay, I will analyse the impact of mtumbaism on the economy, culture and psychology of Kenya and Kenyans from the perspective of globalisation. This will be based on my own experiences, observations and reflections as a Kenyan who has been in Kenya and Europe.

I will attempt to demonstrate that neoliberal globalisation is contributing to the underdevelopment of Kenya and compromising its national freedom and sovereignty.

Increasingly, many Kenyans both professional and ordinary people, are immigrating to Southern Africa, Europe and the USA hoping to find opportunities of earning better living. The brain drain from Kenya to the more prosperous or promising countries is inherent in the process of immigration and neoliberalism while it also contributes to the vicious circle of underdevelopment. What is true of Kenya is also generally true of most of Africa, Asia and Latin America, subject to the specific conditions of each country.

The reality of the phenomena of mtumbaism in Kenya

The trade in second hand clothes

Kenyan markets, whether in the rural or urban areas, are today full of all sorts of mtumba, second hand commodities, most of which are imported from Western Europe, USA, Canada and Japan. In the 1960s, there



Run down: A front view of the the dilapidated walls of the entrance to the factory floor of what was a thriving Kisumu Cotton Mills (KICOMI). **Photo/File**

were hardly any mtumba in the Kenyan markets. Then second hand clothes were referred to as Marehemu George, meaning the clothes of dead people personified by the dead King of England, George VI. This was in order to discourage people from wearing them. It was only desperate people who had to wear clothes left behind by the dead.

One, therefore, had to be extremely poor in order to wear mtumba. In those days, the material circumstances allowed Kenyans to hold on to their pride. Then the economies of African countries were performing well and causing positive development. This was more so in Kenya where the people were enjoying one of the highest standards of living in the continent. Emigration due to poverty or unemployment was hardly known. The vast majority of Kenyans who went to study abroad would rush back to Kenya as soon as they finished their studies. As for ordinary Kenyans, the idea of immigrating in search of a living did not exist. Not so nowadays!

Today the trade in mtumba has grown to be one of the largest informal sectors of the economy in the country. One of the biggest import commodities of the country is mtumba. The largest markets in Kenyan urban and rural areas deal with second hand clothes and other mtumba items. Thousands of people earn their living through buying and selling mtumba. The majority of Kenyans now wear second hand clothes. While in the beginning one considered it a shame to wear second hand clothes and if they had to they would not reveal the fact, nowadays second hand clothes have been accepted as part and parcel of life and are sold and used openly and without shame.

The harsh living conditions brought about by the deteriorating economy, that as in most Sub-Saharan Africa began in the mid-1970s, are eroding the pride of Kenyans. This includes using all means possible and enduring all types of risks and degrading conditions to immigrate to foreign countries and do the kind of jobs they would not accept to do in their country of birth.

Today the majority of Kenyans are so poor that they cannot afford to buy new clothes. As poverty escalates and the neoliberal economic policies cut more and more jobs through retrenchment brought through the 'rationalisation' of the civil service, privatisation of state enterprises and the closure of local industries unable to compete with foreign industries, the number of those who rely on mtumba is increasing rapidly. Second hand clothes are seen and even accepted as the solution in a situation where millions would practically go naked without them. The problem is that while mtumba may alleviate the

immediate problem it is certainly not the long term and sustainable solution to poverty. It is in fact part and parcel of the problem that constrains the development of local industry, trade and agriculture. Its implication to the cultures and humanity of Kenyans and the future of the country is horrendous, to say the least.

Other mitumba commodities

Again, in the beginning mitumba was only about clothes. However, today the majority of Kenyans buy and use all sorts of mitumba commodities: shoes, socks, inner-wear, blankets, bed-sheets, curtains, utensils, etc. Many vehicles and most cars on Kenyan roads are mitumbas imported mostly from Japan and also from Europe, the majority of which enter the country via Dubai and are therefore also called dubais. The cars also use second hand tires and other second hand spare-parts imported from Europe and Japan. All sorts of food-stuff, milk, eggs, sugar, meat, fruits, a lot of which is considered as mitumba in their countries of origin, are sold in the Kenyan supermarkets and open markets. Food that today in the West is regarded as junk food[1] and therefore unhealthy has of late appeared in the Kenyan markets and is becoming more and more popular among the middle class, thanks to economic liberalisation. Here I refer to the food sold by multi-national corporations such as Macdonald's that are increasingly being criticised for their unhealthy foods. One of the impacts of globalisation and trade liberalisation is the coming of Nandos, a South African food company equivalent to Macdonald's. Fast-food restaurants have increased in the food markets in Kenyan towns where they sell frozen chicken, meats, and hamburgers, some imported from outside the country. This is having a negative effect on the eating habits of Kenyans as fresh and health foods are becoming more and more expensive. Tobacco multinational corporations that are prohibited from advertising in the Western countries advertise freely in Kenya and encourage the youth to the dreadful smoking habit. Unilever and Nestle, for example, the multi-nationals that have a giant share in the food and beverage industry in Kenya, have committed themselves to reject "genetically modified ingredients for their European products". It should be noted that the commitment of the corporations is to European markets and not African ones. So even in a situation where the question of the impact of transgenic organisms and food to health, safety and the environment has not been resolved, the corporations regard Kenyans as mitumba citizens of the world and can therefore afford to gamble with their lives with impunity.

Kenyans are consuming mitumba ideas and culture

Mtumbaism is not about material goods alone. It is also about education, ideas and culture. In the era of great scientific and technological revolutions in the world, particularly information technology, Kenyans import mitumba knowledge from the West through the print media, radio, television, the internet and other electronic media. To make it worse, this is happening when knowledge is increasingly being privatised and commercialised in the name of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), and in the process underdeveloped countries like Kenya are marginalised in relation to scientific research and information (The Crucible II Group, 2000).

Yet today, in the era of globalisation, knowledge is deemed to be the most important factor of determining the development of a nation (ibid., 2000:4). Books that are no longer needed in schools in Europe, USA, Canada, Japan etc. are either sold or donated for use in schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions in Kenya that are too poor to afford up to date ones. Kenyan scientists and researchers in Kenyan institutions of research and higher learning use second hand equipment bought from the northern countries or donated to them. In the age where computers are invaluable in the search for knowledge, there are hardly any computers available to universities and institutes of research and higher education in the country, leave alone schools. But the scarce resources available disappear through corruption or are squandered through importing luxurious cars and other goods for the Kenyan elite. The professors and lecturers at the institutions of higher learning are either too busy dealing with too large classes of students or are engaged in money minting activities and cannot find time to renew and develop their knowledge through research.

In the process of privatisation of universities - including public ones - the university administrators are more concerned in making money for the universities (and for themselves of course) than production of good knowledge for the students and the country. As a consequence, education standards have gone down alarmingly. Thugs who find fertile ground in the corrupt institutions impose themselves upon other students (transformed into zombies) to be student leaders with the connivance of

university administrators. Academic freedom that is seen as a threat to the stability of the institutions by the corrupt and reactionary professors that administer them is not tolerated in the universities that are governed through imposition of the culture of fear, threats, intimidation and silence. Ironically, there is more democracy in Kenyan society in general than inside the educational institutions that continue to expel students arbitrarily and prevent robust intellectual discourse. This process produces mitumba graduates who enter the cycle of mtumbaism going on in the country that is also reflected in the Kenyan leaders today. The exiting mtumba education teaches students and pupil's values of individualism, greed, selfishness, corruption and worship of money rather than those of creativity, hard work, honesty, modesty, patriotism and commitment to the common good and humanity. They are not encouraged to search and struggle for truth, social justice and a better Kenya and world.

The Kenyan mass media depend on foreign news agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press, AFP, etc. for the global news they print and broadcast to Kenyans. The majority of the Kenyan journalists, whether from the print or electronic media, write and broadcast bourgeois platitudes on democracy, human rights, governance, gender, etc., that only strengthen capitalism and imperialism in the country. The mass media that is mostly owned by foreign and local capitalists, exists to make money and to defend the status quo of neoliberalism. Their content is riddled with lies and permeated with corruption and gives voice only to those in power, with money and defenders of bourgeoisie ethics and platitudes that are repeated daily and weekly. They have no space for those who challenge the status quo of the capitalist and imperialist system established in the country. Besides, American and British films, many of which are outdated, dominate Kenyan national television and the videos seen in private homes. And while this is happening local films made by local artists are rejected, ignored and hardly popularised. Second hand commercial advertisements are preferred to local made ones to the detriment of local advertising companies. Mtumbaism and neoliberalism fight against the growth of local art and artists.

Under mtumbaism and neoliberal globalisation the importation and consumption of pornography has increased. Gender and feminist activists led by the petit-bourgeois women and men, the majority of whom are in NGOs sponsored by Western countries do not find it necessary to struggle against pornography in the country. Pornography is extremely humiliating and dehumanising, especially to women, as much as it is allowed by bourgeois freedoms. At the same time, anti-social habits that are regarded as anathema by the cultures of Kenyans are today being imposed as agendas for discussion by donor nations through the media and some local NGOs. Instead of, for example, struggling to change the material conditions that force people, especially women, into prostitution, some people especially in NGOs, are now making money by making seminars to organise prostitutes whom they call 'sexual workers' to form trade unions and thus legalising sex as a commodity. Yet prostitution is one of the worst manifestations of the degradation and exploitation of the poor, especially women.

NGOs, that are supported by the imperialists' aid in all ways and that are presented as an alternative to the state, are strongholds of bourgeois ideas and values in the country. Many are led by extremely greedy 'professional' beggars and con men and women who are experts of writing proposals for 'aid' money, rubbing shoulders with foreign diplomats or donors, organising seminars and workshops in urban areas and publishing books, mostly in English, that remain in their luxurious offices. Corruption, tribalism, nepotism, cronyism, lack of transparency and accountability, intrigues, etc., are characteristics of the majority of Kenyan NGOs. The foreign donor organisations that in many cases are led by people who are just as greedy and corrupt, know this, but as long as the local NGOs continue to embrace neoliberalism in theory and in practice, they will continue to receive funding from them.

Thus in the process of mtumbaism, like most of other African peoples under the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) imposed upon the nation by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) through the government, Kenyans are made to depend on the Western definitions of democracy. They are taught that bourgeois democracy is not only the Alfa and Omega of democracy but also that it is above classes, states and nations. Today terms such as 'human rights', 'good governance', 'transparency', 'accountability', 'gender', 'peoples participation', 'grassroots', etc., have become platitudes that are only paid lip service by the governments and non-governmental

organisations who parrot them. For as long as they remain devoid of history and class analysis, as long as they are not integrated in the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle, they will remain as hollow and elusive as the bourgeois democracy itself.

Neoliberalism, assisted by the Kenyan state, pro-capitalist NGOs, electronic and print mass media and bourgeois intellectuals and politicians of all sorts, strives to make Kenyans believe that there is no alternative to the capitalist system and the neoliberalism imperialist world order. In this way, foreigners and their stooges in power in our country shape the everyday worldview of Kenyans. So it happens that Africans are made to view and measure their cultures from standards set by outsiders who advocate for the globalisation of bourgeoisie values - mtumbaism.

Mtumbaism is a manifestation of the effects of neoliberal globalisation to the cultures of developing countries

Mtumbaism is yet another testimony about how neoliberal globalisation has made a large section of human beings into second hand citizens of the world. It is about the inequality between the North and the South, the rich and the poor, in the era of globalisation based on capitalist ideology and praxis, and how this relationship impacts on the livelihoods, economies, cultures and psychology of the people of both countries. It is about the struggle for survival of the people whom Fanon (1967) has called the "wretched of the earth", people who today have to depend on things and ideas produced and disposed of by other people. In the face of economic globalisation that worships the power of money and the 'wisdom' of market forces, the creative potential and humanity of billions of marginalised people is being squeezed out.

Within the rich countries, it is the poor or people from the working class and immigrants who are reduced to the depending on mitumba material goods. Mtumbaism has therefore a class character both at the national and international level, with the poor and marginalised people being reduced to consuming things used and not needed by other people. Consumerism is a characteristic of capitalism. In a system based on competition, exploitation of person by person and the worship of material things rather than human values, there is the culture of buying, accumulating and disposing of things even when they are still useful. For example, one would buy a shirt or a blazer and use it for one week and throw it away to buy a new one. There are second hand commercial and charity shops where people can dispose of their mitumba "to help the poor people of Africa and the Third World" and clear their conscience in the process. This is what starts the process of the accumulation and globalisation of mitumba as I witnessed it in Sweden. Mitumba cannot accumulate from the poor people of the South and the North who cannot afford to throw away things until they are sure they are no longer useful. That is why in Sweden, for example, the majority of the consumers of mitumba are immigrants, mainly from the Third World, who also form the vast majority of the poor and marginalised, or whose cultural roots, values and obligations cannot allow them to engage in bourgeoisie consumerism even when living in foreign countries.

Mtumbaism and 'Aid'

Mtumbaism has a parallel with the phenomena of foreign aid. Like foreign 'aid', mitumba flows from the North to the South, from rich to poor nations and not the other way round. But decades of foreign aid to Kenya have not brought about self-reliance and development. Instead, the country has become poorer and more dependent. That is why many people in Kenya would subscribe with the views expressed by the likes of Yeebo: "What passes off as 'aid' in the third world is nothing but a form of economic control aimed at keeping poor countries on a political leash. It is only when this form of containment does not hold out the advance of progressive forces, as it happened in Grenada under the New Jewel Movement, that direct and crude forms of intervention are used".

When there are calamities such as drought, floods, famine, war, etc., it is normal for those not affected by the calamities to donate things, including second hand items, to the victims. Such charity is humane and is driven by the desire to reduce suffering, to save life and to help fellow human beings in need. Under these circumstances one should not be ashamed to give or accept such aid, even in the form of used things.

However, when one becomes perpetually dependent on things used or not needed by other people - mitumba - under all circumstances then certainly there is something wrong. A government that allows its country, economy and people to be dominated by foreign aid or imported mitumba cannot be relied upon to lead the country towards liberation and development. Therefore, those philanthropic individuals and charity

organisation both in the North and in the South that participate in the business of flooding poor countries with imported second hand clothes and other items are, whether consciously or unconsciously, helping global imperialism to harm the economies, cultures and humanity of the poor, dominated and exploited people of the world. What they need to do instead - if they intend to contribute to eradication of poverty in Africa and the so called third world - is to provide moral and material support to progressive forces struggling against capitalism and neoliberalism and ultimately for socialism.

Aid is not inherently bad

It is important to point out at this stage that I am not arguing that aid is inherently bad. Aid plays a positive role when it is given to a country in order to help it start off on the path of development. Such aid based on internationalist solidarity is progressive, genuine, desired and is in fact, an embodiment of the coping strategies of African societies.

For example, among the Wadawida, my ethnic community that live in Taita-Taveta County of Kenya, there existed a traditional system called kuturuyana. This system was a form of aid of helping less successful members of society to move towards success. A person without a cow would be given a cow by his relative, friend or neighbour to look after. The first calf of the cow would belong to the person given the cow. The second calf would go to the original owner of the cow, then the third calf would go to the person given the cow to look after. In the meantime the one looking after the cow would be using the milk and manure from the cow. This applied to all domestic animals and it ensured that every member of society would own cattle, goats, sheep, chicken, etc. at one time or the other. If we think of the Chinese proverb, this was the type of aid of teaching others to fish rather than giving fish to them all the time.

There was also ngua and ngambi based the communalist traditional culture of the Wadawida. A person who needed to build a house or till a large piece of land would prepare food (and sometimes also homemade traditional beer) and request his relatives, friends and neighbours to come and help him or her. He would also expect to help others in the same way in return. Other times friends - especially the youth - would organise to work for each other in their parent's farms in turns continuously for a certain period of time. This was called kiko. I consider this to be genuine aid, as it is reciprocal, is based on the principle of equality and solidarity and is devoid of paternalism and is also intended to ensure mutual progress. The popular harambee movement in Kenya that has been the basis of Kenya's rural development has its roots in the culture of ngua, ngambi and kiko which is also found in many Kenyan and African traditional societies. Unfortunately, the spirit of harambee has been abused by the successive corrupt regimes that have ruled Kenya since independence. Just as imperialism distributes 'aid' and 'loans' to the same nations it exploits and impoverishes, and just as the capitalists and feudalists everywhere use charity and sympathy to the poor to win their love, confidence and trust and to ensure the stability of their reactionary system, in the same way today the ruling classes of Kenya amass their wealth by exploiting the poor and then bribing them (their victims) with a few crumbs of the wealth taken from them by giving them harambee donations. This is akin to the trickledown economics of neoliberalism that give false promises to the exploited and oppressed while escalating inequality.

There was a time Kenya was free from mtumbaism

In order to comprehend the impact of mtumbaism and dependency to the Kenyan society today, it is necessary to make a more detailed historical analysis of culture and development in Kenya. After all, we can learn from history about what to do and what not to do, that is if we do not wish to repeat history. Again, it is impossible to fully comprehend the issues and problematics of development in Africa without appreciating the role of culture in the process of development and the impact imperialism has had and continues to have on African cultures.

Historical analysis of Kenya like that of the rest of Africa based on the writings on African history and socio-economic development show that the culture of mtumbaism - dependence on things produced and made by foreigners for our basic needs - was never the culture of our people. The reactionary culture of resigning to fate and losing faith in our own creativity and ability to solve our own problems; this chronic disease of dependency - believing that we can never develop without foreign aid; this was never the culture of our ancestors. It was a culture imposed upon the Kenyan people first by colonialism and



then neo-colonialism, and perpetuated by the mtumba regime classes controlling economic and state power. Today, in the era of neoliberalism, a new form of capitalist globalisation, this negative culture has taken even stronger roots as evidenced by the phenomena of foreign 'aid' and mtumbaism.

Historians explain that thousands of years before Europe invaded our continent, we African people had a rich and dynamic material and intellectual culture. Before colonialism arrived in Kenya our ancestors were not living in caves, under trees or on top of trees. Neither were they sitting and waiting for foreign aid or God to come to provide them with shelter or to teach them how to build houses, toilets, etc. Our people had developed their own housing systems. They were living in well built houses which not only provided sufficient shelter to them commensurate with their environment and stage of development, but which were also designed and built with the aesthetics that considered and appreciated their concrete material needs, customs, morality and philosophy of life. I actually saw this housing system among my people, the Dawida, when I was growing up between 1960 and 1969, before the land consolidation destroyed the villages. I have described a typical Dawida house in my MA thesis in Literature (Mghanga:1997). The unpublished thesis is available at the Department of Literature of Stockholm University, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, and University of Nairobi Library. Dawida's historical and cultural heritage, philosophy, property and land tenure, food and drink, agriculture and animal husbandry, natural resources use and management, medicine and health, social customs, political and legal systems, material culture, etc., is summarised by various researchers in Were and Soper

(1986).

From wood, our people were making different kinds of furniture, utensils, tools, works of art, weapons, etc. They were skilled in pottery, using clay to make many sorts of pots and household objects, which are still used and commended by science.

Thousands of years before the coming of colonialism in Kenya, our people had an agricultural system that was developing. They had managed to tame all sorts of grain, root, stem, fruit and vegetable crops and they were increasing their quantity and quality to meet their food needs. In the same way, they were already breeding different varieties of animals and birds. Bee keeping was common while fishing was part and parcel of the culture of those communities that lived near the sea, lakes and rivers. All this means that our people had agricultural diversity that assured them of variety of foods that provided them with not only plenty to eat but also with a highly balanced diet which was composed of several delicacies.

It is this farming system that has been described by Rodney (1974:40) in the following words: "In the centuries before the contact with Europeans, the overwhelming dominant activity in Africa was agriculture. In all the settled agricultural communities, people observed the peculiarities of their own environment and tried to find techniques for dealing with it in a rational manner. Advanced methods were used in some areas, such as terracing, crop rotation, use of green manure, mixed farming and regulated swamp farming. The single most important technological change underlying African agricultural development was the introduction of iron tools, notably the ax and the hoe, replacing wooden and stone tools. It was on the basis of the iron tools that new skills were

elaborated in agriculture as well as in other spheres of economic activity...Most African societies raised the cultivation of their own particular staple to fine art. Even the wide spread resort to shifting cultivation with burning and light hoeing was not as childish as the first European colonialists supposed. That simple form of agriculture was based on a correct evaluation of the soil potential, which was not as great as initially appears from the heavy vegetation; and when the colonialists started upsetting the thin topsoil the result was disastrous".

Thus traditional agricultural systems of the African peoples was organised to meet the food and other needs of the family in particular and the society in general. The culture of farming for the market far from our land to meet the needs of foreigners at the expense of the local requirements, was not the culture of our ancestors. Neither was the culture of malnutrition, hunger and eating the same food day and night all the year round. Even now as I write, I remember, with great nostalgia, the number of our traditional foods which I used to eat during my childhood and that are today disappearing, or have already disappeared, as the culture of cash crops for foreign markets is imposed upon the Wadawida like all other Kenyan nationalities.

Long before British colonialism invaded Kenya, our ancestors were progressing in the field of science and technology. Science and technology was developing to meet the increasing material and other requirements of the societies. Our people, for example, already were identifying and extracting iron, copper and other metals from their ores. At the same time, they had developed the technology of producing high temperatures that

enabled them to smelt the metals and to make copper and iron tools and implements. To hunt and to protect themselves from their enemies, they were developing weapons and perfecting the art of war. In the field of astronomy they were able to study and to provide names to several heavenly bodies. Through this observation they could recognise the changes of the seasons and predict the weather to enable them to plant and harvest the right crops at the right time.

My kinsmen and women the Dawida, for example, could predict the weather by observing the behaviour of Kirema (the Dawida name for Mount Kilimanjaro). Thus our people were advancing in physics and chemistry and were creatively using the sciences to add to the quantity and quality of their productive diversity. While our ancestors were using science to make the things they needed, today Kenya's mtumba education system produces graduates of physics and chemistry who cannot produce the things produced by our ancestors.

In the field of biology, our ancestors were able to classify many living things into plants and animals. In turn, they were also able, to a large degree, to classify the animals into mammals, birds, insects, fish, reptiles, etc. In the field of botany, they knew and gave names to many different species of plants. They also identified several plants according to their use values. They were also moving forward in the field of medicine and health. They could identify, classify and treat many types of diseases. They were increasing their abilities to combat many types of viruses that were affecting human beings, their animals and crops. Long before contact with foreigners, the Kenyan people had made their contribution to the global cultural and biological diversity analysed by The Crucible II Group (2000:9-10). By losing our linguistic and cultural diversity through the emphasis on education alienated from the local reality and from production, we are also losing the invaluable indigenous knowledge that ought to be the basis educational development.

In short, as time moved on, our people were increasing their knowledge of the laws of nature and were using them to improve their lives in their specific environments. This also indicates that they were developing their productive forces, they were increasing their material culture both quantitatively and qualitatively. Yes, contrary to what is happening today, we were not static, we were making history, we were moving forward, we were developing and we were doing so depending on mobilising our internal human and natural resources.

In the area of intellectual and social culture, long before colonialism, our people were living in organised societies that were geared to ensure that they lived in peace and harmony. They were governed by definite codes of conduct, morals, philosophies, and customs, values and beliefs. For example, the institution of the elders had the responsibility and the authority of leading the society and ensuring conflict resolutions, observation and conservation of the environment and cultural values, and unity and development of the families and societies. This is, in fact, the basis of the indigenous institutions whose role in development is discussed by Havnevik (2000:38-48).

In the arts, literature, music, dances, theatre, pottery, handicraft, curving, painting, etc., we had made a lot of achievements that survive to this day.

We had our own education system which had the aim of teaching different skills needed by the family and society and to pass the cultural heritage of the society to the younger generation to ensure continuity.

Nyerere (1968:45) describes this education:

"The fact that pre-colonial Africa did not have 'schools'-except for short periods of initiation in some tribes - did not mean that children were not educated. They learned by living and doing. In the homes and on the farms they were taught the skills of society, and the behavior expected of its members. They learned the kind of grasses that were suitable for which purpose, the work which had to be done on the crops, or the care which had to be given to animals, by joining with the elders in their work. They learned the tribal history, and the tribe's relationship with other tribes and with the spirits, by listening to the stories of the elders. Through these means, and by the custom of sharing to which young people were to conform, the values of society were transmitted. Education was thus 'informal'; every adult was a teacher to a greater or lesser degree. But this lack of formality does not mean that there was no education, nor did it affect its importance to society. Indeed, it may have made the education more directly relevant to the society in which the child was growing up".

In the above quotation, Nyerere shows that traditional African education embodied the culture of the societies. It united theory and practice and was aimed at meeting the material and intellectual needs of the people. It was delivered through participatory and interactive methods in which all parents and adults played the role of teachers or facilitators. In this regard, not only was the education democratic by involving everyone in acquiring and sharing knowledge and experience, it was also able to preserve and sustain the cultural heritage of the society through bringing together the young and old generation in the process. In this way, the formal or school education introduced in Africa by European colonialism, is wasteful and inimical to the culture of the people since, as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1979) argues, not only is it alienated from social production, but it also does not involve parents and the community outside the school system in the education process. School teachers become the sole experts and medium of the 'formal education' that implement curricula that ignore or look down upon local or indigenous knowledge that has been developed for thousands of years (The Crucible II Group, 2000:9-10). Yet in the end it has always turned out that it is the 'formal education' that is irrelevant to the needs of the society for failing to integrate the new and the old, tradition and modernity, science and intuition, theory and practice, the community and the school system. This was also my own experience (Mghanga, 1997) when I conducted research on Dawida oral narratives.

I have attempted to point out that Kenyans had rich and dynamic cultures long before the invasion of colonialism. However, I have not said that the culture was complete and more developed than it is today. For development is a continuous process. My argument is, like all human beings in the world, Kenyans (and Africans for that matter) were creating and developing their material and intellectual cultures. We were determining and shaping our own destiny long before colonialism or contact with Europe. And this is a challenge to Kenyans and Africans today when we depend on foreign aid and mtumba for our livelihoods. It is the basis for self-criticism: there was a time in our history when we were independent and acted accordingly, we were relying on our creative work and labour and our own resources to solve our own problems, fulfil our needs, develop ourselves and societies. Back then we believed in our abilities and ourselves, we were free and increasing our freedom. How come today we have resigned to poverty, dependency, and mtumbaism and accepted to be a second hand nation and people? It is for this reason that the late Babu (1980:52) found it necessary to remind us: "This mentality of dependency, the mentality of asking for alms and charity, which is becoming universal in our countries, must be combated vigorously before it evolves into a habit".

Unfortunately, the negative mentality pointed out by Babu has become a habit and a culture. Hundreds of thousands of people migrate from Africa to Europe, North America and other continents in search of good life that their governments have failed to provide to the citizens due to bad governance, corruption and imperialism. In the process of migrating, thousands perish in the high seas and deserts. They are forced to risk their lives to cross legal and physical barriers made by states to prevent the poor and oppressed from entering the so called developed countries. When they arrive in the countries they migrate to, they are confronted with problems of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, humiliations of all sorts, unemployment and poverty that is growing in the developed nations. Yet human beings have a right to move and settle wherever they wish to on our planet. However, escaping from your country of birth for political and economic reasons and settling in another country without making a contribution in the struggle of changing the situation for the better should not be embraced by conscious citizens and human beings. Conscious citizens and human beings should instead struggle against dictatorship, violations of human rights, corruption, capitalism and imperialism in their countries and also in the world that are the basic causes of the problems that trigger the crisis of immigration. Conscious citizens and human beings should join or form progressive organisations/social movements and socialist/communist political parties to struggle against reactionary ruling regimes, capitalism and imperialism, in their countries and regions and also in the world.

In so doing, it should always be emphasised that the economic problems in our countries are not only due to internal factors. There are global dynamics that continue to impact negatively upon our nation, destroying our sovereignty, underdeveloping our nations and

reducing us into mitumba countries. What follows is a brief analysis of these internal and external processes of underdevelopment.

The internal and external factors that force Kenyans into mtumbaism

The impact of neoliberal economic policies

Today, manifestations of neoliberalism are found in Kenya as well as in every African country. Bourgeois economists - themselves beneficiaries of the system - take pride in the economic growth that in most countries of the continent are more than five percent. Modern infrastructure of planned housing, roads and supermarkets that provide all types of consumer goods, mostly imported, are available for the high and middle class citizens engaged in the consumerism that is now a culture. Roads and other transport infrastructure are being constructed mostly in urban areas and also to connect towns and the countryside to facilitate the market economy that is part and parcel of the modernisation of neoliberalism. Lorries ferrying imported goods from port cities to the interior cities and empty containers from the cities in the interior to the ports cause traffic jams in the roads and highways. For the dominant economies in the cities of most African countries are based on trade of imported goods with little local manufacturing. In the cities the traffic jams are caused by the thousands of large gas guzzling flamboyant cars driven by the high and middle classes.

Everything is being privatised including common resources such as water and energy. Private health facilities, schools and luxuries of all sorts are available to those who can afford them - the high and middle classes. Plush hotels, pubs, restaurants and guesthouses where the high and middle classes spend their free time eating, drinking and making merry have mushroomed in the cities and exclusive suburbs. The gap between the rich and the poor, the plush suburbs of the few and the slums where the majority of the urban people live, and the towns and the countryside's has widened as the process of the implementation of neoliberal economic policies continues to unfold. The economic growth has hitherto failed to trickle down to the majority of the citizens contrary to the promises of the trickle-down economic promises of neoliberalism.

As a matter of fact, like in other African countries (Hamrel, S. and Nordberg. O., 1992:7), from the mid-1980s and particularly in the 1990s and hitherto, Kenya has registered a lot of growth in corruption, mass poverty, crime, slums, unemployment, all forms of violence, violations of human rights and class inequality. Most of Kenyans live in abject poverty, want, and suffering. Today, Nairobi like other Kenyan cities and towns, has become a symbol of the dilapidation, crime, ruin, corruption, exploitation, oppression and loss of all the achievements Kenya had made before it started implementing SAPs (Hamrel, S. and Nordberg. O., 1992:7). Thieves, robbers, con men and women, tribalists, traitors, suspected illicit drug dealers, people charged with crimes against humanity and idiots are now in charge of the highest affairs of the country[2]. The leaders practise corruption and nepotism openly, without shame or apology (the Star, Wednesday April 29, 2015).

A farmer who today is suffering from hunger can only have hope of defeating it tomorrow if he or she can see the seeds he or she has planted growing. As far as the Kenyan economy is concerned, nothing positive is being done hitherto that can provide hope that after three, four or five years the economy will be transformed into the path of delivering development to the majority of the Kenyan people. There are no indications yet that at one point or the other we shall begin to get more employment, better medical, health, housing, water and educational services for the Kenyan masses. Neither are there any signs showing that the present state of insecurity and corruption will end soon. All successive regimes that have governed Kenya including the present one have continued to implement similar political, social and economic policies based in capitalism and imperialism that plunge the majority of citizens in the cycle of poverty. They have refused to learn from history since they are in power to maintain the status quo of exploitation of the majority of Kenyans and primitive accumulation.

History informs us that the right wing economic policies being implemented by the government today together with their populist platitudes have not improved the lives of the majority of Kenyans for the better. I remember that about 15 years ago the World Bank and International Monetary Fund appointed a team of civil servants, popularly known as the "Dream Team", and that was initially led by Richard Leakey, and that was directly responsible to the twin Bretton Woods institutions and not to the Kenyan government or nation. Apart from Leakey (who two

months before then was Head of the Civil service and Secretary to the Cabinet) the IMF-WB dream team that was supposed to heal the economy included Martin Oduor-Otieno (Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance), Mwaghazi Mwachofi (Financial Secretary Ministry of Finance), Shem Migot-Adhola (Permanent Secretary Ministry of Agriculture). Otieno was hired by the IMF-WB from the Barclays Bank where he was an Executive Director; Mwaghaai was a senior employee of the IMF while Adhola was an employee of the WB. All of them were part of the conditionalities of the IMF-WB for resumption of loans to the country. They received exorbitant salaries and benefits that were many times more than that of other civil servants of their ranks who were paid directly by the Kenyan government. However, the IMF-WB as explained by Olukoshi (1998:34) attributed the failures of SAPs to lack of technocrats who had the knowledge, ability and will to implement the neoliberal economic programs. Thus it was argued that the dream team deserved all their financial support (including exorbitant salaries) in order to be committed to overseeing the implementation of the SAPs by the government of Kenya.

The dream team did nothing significant that provided the solution to the economic, political and social problems bedevilling the country. Instead, the 'dream team' tried to implement the neoliberal WB-IMFs SAPs that had failed to solve the problems of underdevelopment anywhere in Africa (Olukoshi, 2000; Olukoshi, 1996; Olukoshi, 1998; Havnevik, 2000; Moyo, 2000:11-16; Gibbon, Bangura and Ofstad, 1992; Giles, Brown, Milward, and Azck-Williams, 2000). And the conditionalities were imposed upon Kenya by the then were harsh. They compromised even the little national sovereignty that was left to the country (Redfern, 2000; Kisero, 2000; Ochieng, 2000; Munaita, 2000).

That aside, the point here is that the Jubilee government in power today several years later also believes that by appointing technocrats committed to neoliberalism it will steer the country towards the development path of solving the plethora of economic and social problems bedevilling the country. But history continues to show that this is as much a pipe dream as that of the said dream team.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss why SAPs continue to fail to deliver economic development, poverty eradication, and participatory democracy and generally improve the welfare of the majority of people. In any case, this subject has been researched and discussed extensively, including in the literature quoted in this essay.

My point is that, the implementation of SAPs based on the global capitalist ideology, i.e., anti-statism, privatisation, trade liberalisation, rationalisation of the civil service (retrenchments), cost-sharing and cutting government expenditure on public social services, etc., continue to drive the majority of Kenyans deeper and deeper into poverty and therefore to dependency on mtumbaism for survival.

Take the cost sharing in medical services for example, in implementing these anti-social policies no measures are taken in favour of the already over-burdened poor of the poor. The consequences are disastrous. As I write, Kenyans are dying of hunger in the rural and urban areas. Unable to even afford medical consultation fees and the cost of medicine, many Kenyans have turned to quacks or are simply dying in their homes. Today even hospitals are prisons for those unable to pay medical fees after treatment, which is if they are lucky to be admitted in the first place. While public hospitals are collapsing, private hospitals are mushrooming in rural and urban areas driven by the desire to squeeze as much profit from sick Kenyans as possible. Even nurses are opening private hospitals. Medical ethics of saving or prolonging life are no longer valued, it is money that counts. Even medical prescriptions by doctors and drugs from private chemists cannot be trusted entirely to cure diseases as all is only about profit and nothing else counts.

The education front is no better. More and more pupils and students from poor families are dropping out of universities and other institutions of higher learning simply because they are unable to pay fees. Privatisation, lack of educational facilities, poor working conditions of teachers and lecturers, poverty among students and members of staff are contributing to the low standards of education in Kenya's educational institutions. Coping strategies in the form of harambees[3] organised by families, relatives, friends and communities to pay for hospital bills or fees for education are part and parcel of everyday life. But the problems are such that the coping



strategies are unable to cope, living things to fall apart.

Impacts of SAPs to the economy - trade liberalisation

The neoliberal economic policies of 'live everything to market forces' being implemented by the Kenyan government today are destroying the country's agriculture, industry and commerce.

On the sugar industry

Sugar cane farming has altered land use in western Kenya. Many of the peasant farmers who were using their land to produce food crops, mainly for subsistence but also for sale, used a lot of their prime land for planting sugar cane since the beginning of 1970. While in the 1970s this reduced agricultural diversity and food security, it at the same time raised the standard of living of the peasants of western Kenya that became a sugar zone through the payments they received for selling their cane and also employment in the factories. The sugar factories in Mumias, Nzoia, Miwani, Muhoroni, Sony, fed by cane from small-scale and large-scale farmers were operating well and employing thousands of workers both directly and indirectly.

But starting from mid 1980, and particularly in the 1990s, Kenya's sugar industry has been in trouble. This is blamed on many factors, including corruption, mismanagement and climate change. The greatest share of the blame, however, is attributed to neoliberal

globalisation. Before the country started implementing SAPs, the sugar industry was protected from foreign imports. With trade liberalisation Kenya's sugar industry faced unfair competition from cheap imported sub-standard or mitumba sugar entering the Kenyan market, often smuggled through the Mombasa Port by all types of crooks connected to the ruling class, including Al Shabab. Unable to sell their sugar and therefore to buy and pay the cane of farmers, the factories started laying off workers. Increasingly, the dilapidating and often unserviced machines for crushing the cane were unable to absorb the crop. Cane began to dry in the farms uncut. Burning of the cane in the large-scale farms by the workers and small-scale growers were common. Kenya is now importing sugar, often of low mitumba quality. While the rich elites benefit from importing the sugar, the collapse of the sugar industry has increased poverty, particularly in western Kenya, and therefore the number of those who have to rely on mitumba consumer goods.

On the textile and shoe industry

I entered secondary school in Nairobi in 1974. Starehe Boys' Centre, my former school is located around Gikomba, one of the largest open markets in East Africa. I remember that until the time I completed school in 1979, most of the clothes sold in the market were new from the then Kenya's growing textile industry particularly at Thika, Eldoret, Kisumu but also Nairobi, Ruiru and Nanyuki. The Bata shoe

factory at Limuru also employed thousands of Kenyans, apart from utilising the animal skins from the country. The factories were a source of employment for thousands of Kenyans, including many from my village, caused the towns to grow very fast. Cotton production in the country was growing to meet the demand of the factories.

However, the 1980s saw the dominance of imported mitumba clothes in Gikomba Market, all other Nairobi popular markets and of all the urban and rural areas in the country. It is at this period when Kenya's economy started falling rapidly, increasing the number of poor Kenyans. Now the import of mitumba is the dominant business in urban and rural areas. Unable to sell their textile and shoe products to the growing masses of poor people who cannot afford new clothes and shoes, many Kenyan textile industries have closed and the remaining are at the brink of closing. The Limuru Bata Shoe Company which now specializes in selling imported shoes is tottering at the brink of total collapse. The implication is the increase in the number of unemployed and therefore more poverty and mitumba customers. It also means the destruction of Kenya's cotton agriculture and the livelihoods involved. What is worse, it means that the country is losing the skills of making clothes and shoes. Tailoring, shoe making and repairing that formed an important informal economic sector is also disappearing as people wear ready-made mitumba clothes and shoes. Mtumbaism is therefore also destroying the creativity of Kenyans as they are



made to depend on designs and choices of the clothes and shoes they wear - this has negative implications on their culture.

Impact on local businesses

Trade liberalisation has forced Kenya to remove or reduce trade restrictions to imports of all kinds and to stop the protection of local industries and businesses. This means that apart from global second hand clothes and shoes, the Kenyan markets are now flooded with cheap imported commodities of all sorts. Many of these commodities enter the country through corruption, i.e., without paying import duty or without being certified by the Kenya Bureau of Standards. They are therefore sub-standard goods or mitumba-type. Foreigners are allowed to engage even in retail trade, including selling fish, chicken, eggs, fruits, ugali, chips, meat, beer and all types of hawking while Kenyans close businesses or go unemployed. With hardly any meaningful employment opportunities, the vast majority of the residences of our towns have been turned into hawkers and petty traders who merely eke a living.

Impact on import substitution industry

Kenya's import substitution industry that was seen as a strategy towards the industrialisation of the country is now threatened with extinction. A good example is AVA, a motor vehicle assembly industry that used to be one of the largest employers in Mombasa (Econews, 1999). The company grew due to the government's policies of the 1970s of nurturing local industry. Following neoliberal reforms including trade liberalisation, tariffs on imported vehicles were lowered. It became cheaper to import new cars directly from Japan or Europe than to buy the ones assembled locally at Nairobi, Mombasa and Thika. Again, mitumba vehicles mostly imported from Japan but also Europe via Dubai, dominate the Kenyan markets. As a consequence of this AVA was forced

to close, adding to the economic problems of Mombasa that is already ravaged by the falling of the tourist and hotel industry.

Thus instead of developing towards industrialisation by realising our agricultural and manufacturing potential, we are being reduced into a nation of only selling all forms of imported goods, including garbage. The effect of this is seen in the increasing unemployment, underemployment, poverty, insecurity and escalation of the vicious cycle of mtumbaism.

Summary and Conclusion

No country in the world has achieved freedom and sustainable development through dependency on aid or loans from imperialist countries. Neither has any country developed by relying on exports of unprocessed agricultural and mineral goods while importing all manufactured goods from foreign countries. All industrialised countries of the world initiated their development by first protecting and nurturing their local industries, agriculture, trade and targeting them to harness the human and natural resources of their countries, to develop the home market and to integrate them in the production process. That is why countries like China, Cuba and North Korea that do not depend IMF-WB loans and strategies for development, countries that have rejected the neoliberal economic path of development being imposed upon Kenya, African and other Third World countries, these anti-imperialist countries have made unique progress towards human development despite the challenges they still face. They have preserved their national sovereignty, are respected for what they are and are not regarded as mitumba nations, as much as they are hated by the imperialist system.

The basis of Chinese enormous development was the revolutionary economic strategy of self-reliance, harnessing its own natural and human resources and building and organising its economy to meet the needs of its people

(Sison, 2000:7-13; Babu, 1979:85). China jealously protected its industries from foreign domination, rejecting capitalism and imperialism and opted for socialism from 1949 up to the 1990s when it started implementing capitalist economic reforms based on the socialist system. Still with strong state control of the economy and politics of the country, with its national sovereignty still intact, China is participating in economic globalisation from the position of strength. It is in fact a superpower today.

Countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have now joined Africa and other Third World countries in the path of underdevelopment, dependency, exploited and dominated nations by rejecting the socialist path and opting for capitalism. The process of capitalist restoration in the countries took 35 years, from 1953 up to 1989. After fully entering the arena of the market economy dominated by global imperialism, these countries that used to provide aid to the Third World before 1989, have today become beggar (mitumba) nations, are losing their sovereignty and are infested with all the social, political and economic contradictions of the third world countries (Martens 1953:3).

In short, my contention is that until we start focusing our political and economic policies towards self-reliance strategies, producing our basic needs and sustaining the primary economy (industries and agriculture) and secondary economy (tourism and the services sector) we cannot start developing. Populist and parochial economic policies being implemented by the Kenyan government purportedly to create employment, so called youth funds and women enterprise funds, are only conduits for corruption and creation of false hopes. Rather than investing in social development and distribution of wealth, the government is instead investing in a salaried economy of rewarding the elites of all sorts with huge salaries at the expense of the poor masses and development.

The widening gap between the few rich and the majority poor is a ticking bomb that will explode sooner or later. Already the worsening insecurity in the country and the growing workers strikes is a manifestation of the social explosion that is coming.

Kenya will continue to sink deeper and deeper into mtumbaism as long as the country continues to allow its economic policies and affairs, and destiny, to be determined by imperialist nations, institutions and ideology, i.e., neoliberal globalisation. After years of misleading the country to follow the path of capitalism and neo-colonialism that has not brought about development to the majority of the people of Kenya (Kaniaru, 2000), the present regime that worships neoliberalism continues to force us along the same painful path of slavery and stagnation. Clearly, therefore, the leadership of Kenya has neither the will nor the ability to liberate us from imperialism and lead us towards economic and social progress. It must be removed from power and replaced with a patriotic and progressive state.

The former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, used to remind Tanzanians and Africans, that while dependence on other people for material needs is bad, it is even worse to be dependent on other people's ideas. Mtumbaism is destroying our humanity; we are being made to think we are lesser human beings than others whom we are increasingly depending upon for our livelihoods. When Kenyan men and women wear mitumba inner-wears, for example, psychologically they cannot regard themselves as the equals of the original users of the items. Liberating ourselves from mitumba ideas or decolonising our minds as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1991) puts it, is a necessary step towards social and national liberation - the road towards poverty eradication, freedom and development. Decolonising our minds will lead us towards focusing the struggle primarily at empowering the people politically and economically to remove the corrupt and reactionary regime, in order to remove the neo-colonial capitalist system being imposed upon the country by the process of neoliberal globalisation. This is the path of liberating Kenya and Africa from mtumbaism and of moving towards freedom, social justice and progress.

That is why I find it necessary to end this section by quoting the late Babu (1979:7): "At UNCTAD V in Manila in May this year, Prebisch courageously admitted his error of the 1960s and told the developing countries, 'We have lost the way and taken the wrong path'. He said that after 30 years of development in Latin America, differences between the privileged consumer classes and others were increasing and 40 percent of the population was below the poverty level. This was because of the system of development based on imitation of capitalist production of consumer goods in marginal areas. He said that as long as development was based on the existing models with the support of the centre (that is advanced capitalist world), any attempt to link with the centre is a pipe dream that will ultimately lead to explosive social consequences. He emphasised that the mere play of market forces could no longer solve the problems of development. He advised developing countries not to wait for the centre to solve its problems and then tackle theirs, but to act on its own, by setting up autonomous development processes, mobilising their own national resources, human and material, and establishing new industries and technology."

The explosive social consequences mentioned in the quotation above are not only happening in countries under imperialist domination - so called developing countries - but in imperialists countries - so called developed countries as well. The present crisis of immigration and terrorism escalated by neoliberal globalisation and the increasing cycles of financial and economic crises in the West tell the whole story. In other words, capitalism and imperialism has failed to solve the problems confronting the majority of the people of the world. They must be replaced by the socialist system, i.e., globalisation based on peace, equality, justice and human solidarity.

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Mwandawiro Mghanga

[1]
[2]Kenyan electronic and print media report about all this daily.
[3]Here harambee refers to fundraising activities, as they are popularly known in Kenya.

GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN BURUNDI.



Burundi police attacking protesting civilians. Photo/File

**By Leonard Nyangoma
CNDD Chairman**

Burundi continues the descent into hell since 2005 despite the investiture of a new president after the last electoral masquerade of May 2020 and the death of Nkurunziza

General background.

Presentation of Burundi. Brief reminder underpinning the enticement of neocolonial powers towards Burundi

Burundi is a country spanning the central and eastern parts of the African continent. It is

located in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in the south of Rwanda and in the West of Tanzania. It is a member of the East African Community (EAC), the La Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs (CEPGL) and the CEAC. Burundi has a surface area of 27,834 square kilometers, and a population estimated at 11 million. Like Rwanda, this tiny country is of an important geo-strategic interest for the imperialistic powers.

This position helps them to control minerals and the other natural resources that the great lakes are crammed with. The colonization of Burundi started at the end of the 19th cen-

tury by Germany at the end of World War. After their loss, Germans were compelled to give away Burundi and Rwanda colonies that were from then on transferred to Belgium tutelage. As a strategic approach to maintain themselves in power, these colonial powers introduced divisions and hatred based on ethnicity. This ethnic viral gangrene had never existed before the colonial period in Burundi.

Brief overview of social relations in Burundi before colonization

Precolonial Burundi was a monarchy characterized by a mode of production with feudal features. The king was the almighty own-

er of the land and cattle and had the right of life and death over his subjects. The country was populated as today by four social groups who lived together in harmony, speaking the same language and sharing the same culture: the Baganwa, the Batutsi, the Bahutu, and the Batwa. The Bahutu and the Batutsi groups were the most numerous. Identity traits attributed to Ganwa, Tutsi, Hutu and Twa do not correspond at all to a linguistic, cultural or geographical differentiation. While they always spoke the same language and shared cultural and spiritual values, those social groups were only distinguished by the social internal relations.

Indeed, the social component of wealthy owners of cattle and vast land (means of production) and kraal delegates were identified as Tutsis while the social component exclusively involved in the labor and production industry (producers) was identified as Hutu. Both components had an outstanding economic influence at the kraal. The social relations were of the feudal type based on the tradition-based contract of "ubugabire" and "ubugererwa". This was a system of dual clientelism based on the ownership of cattle and the land. At the highest level of the social pyramid was the class of the nobles or the Baganwa social group as a ruling class mostly encompassing descendants of the king. Tutsi and Hutu were respectively the upper and lower middle social classes while the Batwa were the group at the bottom of the ladder and the lumpen proletariat. Like any class society, the Burundian society was characterized by upward and downward social mobility.

The king as the owner of the land and cattle, often demoted brilliant chiefs to install those of his reign. Interestingly, a Hutu who acquired a considerable amount of means of production (land and cattle), could obtain the status of Tutsi and thus join the upper class of the nobles. But in general, grassroots population of Hutu, Tutsi and all the Batwa shared the similar life conditions and indistinctly underwent the multifaceted exploitation of the ruling class.

The Transformation of Social Groups into ethnic Groups

Colonists deliberately decided to favor the Tutsi social class and the ruling class of the Baganwa and completely excluded Hutus and Batwa from education, administration and decision-making, thus contributing to triggering Tutsi superiority and Hutu inferiority complex respectively. The colonial system also purposely initiated and exacerbated antagonisms and ha-

"the social component of wealthy owners of cattle and vast land (means of production) and kraal delegates were identified as Tutsis while the social component exclusively involved in the labor and production industry (producers) was identified as Hutu"

tred between these two main social groups by identifying them with ethnic labels. In reality and scientifically speaking, Burundi has only one ethnic group, the Rundi ethnic group.

We have previously seen that the four social groups were social classes, they spoke the same language, Kirundi, practiced the same religion before colonization and shared the same culture, lived intertwined on the same hills. The ethnic cleavage that plunged Burundi in cyclical tragic wars that took more than 600,000 lives since the proclamation of independence has its roots in the colonial system, with its classical imperialistic logic of “divide and rule”.

Unfortunately, the propaganda and the analysis by influential Western media restore Burundian and Rwandan dramas as massacres of one ethnic group by another. The causes of the wars would be ancestral hatred and not economic or geostrategic interests. Controlling Burundi and Rwanda to keep control of Congolese strategic minerals is the real issue of the civil wars that ravaged these two small countries after independence. During the colonial period, Burundi was gradually integrated into the mode of capitalist production system.

Burundi independent

Burundi has been independent since 1962 and after the assassination in October 1961 of the Prince Louis Rwagasore, a progressive man and the hero of independence, it has known governments that were led by comprador elites who accumulated wealth through corruption and plundering the natural resources of their countries. The immaturity of Burundian elites as well as the manipulation of socio ethnic sensitivity by some powers created loopholes that have since the day after independence created conditions that brew ethnic political massacres in Burundi.

In 1993 the democratically elected first president Melchior Ndadaye of the FRODEBU party was assassinated by the army as well as many of his collaborators in an attempt of a putsch which prompted popular resistance and the disapproval of the public opinion. The putschists faked surrendering power but hindered FRODEBU party’s ability to govern. Comrade Leonard Nyangoma, in charge of popular education of propaganda and the mobilization for the party who also doubled up as the minister of labor and refugee repatriation in Ndadaye’s government, created in 1994 the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) with its armed wing the Forces for the defense of Democracy (FDD).

Despite multiple sabotages, the CNDD was able to force the government to adhere to Arusha peace talks. The negotiations and the signature of Arusha Peace Agreement allowed for narrowing the gap between the main social groups (Hutu and Tutsi) and shift from their ethnic conscience to social class conscience of the Burundian society. Unfortunately, the arrival of Nkurunziza Pierre and his militaristic party the CNDD-FDD (a split from CNDD) in 2005 on power did not permit Burundi people to benefit from that reconciliation viewed in the socio-economic dialectic.

At certain levels, the situation has even worsened. The oligarchy in power which governs the country has now initiated another extremely dangerous strategy. It has reached the stage of engaging and keeping the population in dormancy through an obscurantist political speeches and practices and the president of the republic is the one who always sets the tone. He spent the three quarters of his time in prayers and evangelizing a starving population that is also 58 percent illiterate. This oligarchy controls the total political and economic power and uses those means to maintain the status quo of the exploitation and regression of the majority of Burundi citizens.

Burundi experienced since independence in 1962 to date, several periods of intense political and armed conflicts and many of them count among the deadliest in the recent history of humanity.

Under the auspices of the International community, the warring parties in Burundi since 1996 engaged in several political and military talks that culminated in the signing of several agreements and military policies. The most important are: *The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Burundi, signed on August 28th 2000; *The Global Cease-Fire Agreement between the Transitional Government and CNDD-FDD, signed on November 16th 2003; *The Global Cease-Fire Agreement between the Government and the FNL signed on September 7th 2006. These various peace agreements bear many principles which are broadly incorporated in the current constitution of Burundi. They have also provided guidance for the key policy upon which the nation of Burundi would rely upon to eradicate conflicts to start the era of democratic governance, peace for all, national reconciliation, and integrated development of the country.

The period from the year 2002 to 2005 corresponded with a transitional period and early implementation of peace accords principles. It was during that period that the Transitional Government, which included political parties, negotiated and signed the cease-fire with the CNDD-FDD (a party created by imperialist forces to destabilize the original CNDD created by Leonard Nyangoma) and organized the latter to make integration in the Institutions. It was during the same period that the current constitution was drafted and submitted to popular referendum. This period was concluded by the organization of general elections in 2005 that led to the establishment of new institutions.

The socio-political situation since the 2005 to date.

2.1. The political situation

During his regime, and despite the pressure from an active democratic opposition, the late president Nkurunziza Pierre and his CNDD-FDD party oversaw massive violations of citizens ‘fundamental rights, and relentless violation of the constitution, denounced by the national and international community. The citizens became enslaved by a regime whose principal characteristics included: Permanent and systematic massacres of civilian populations; Politically driven eliminations carried out on a scale of crimes against humanity; Institutionalization of a minority, totalitarian and undemocratic regime which systematically violates the citizen’s fundamental rights; Destruction of the nation and its economy by corruption and looting of its resources; Destabilizing security, contempt and arrogance, nepotism, incompetence, laxness and bellicosity.

Since CNDD-FDD conquest of power in 2005, the regime has intensified repression against opposition parties and the civil society, and all means are utilized to this end. This is done through: Arrests in violation of legal procedures; Torture and extra-judiciary executions; Targeted killings by the police including the National Intelligence Service behaving as political police. The ruling regime also has total control of the judiciary system. More dangerously, the CNDD-FDD party’s youth wing “Imbonerakure” act as militia and are an actual terrorist organization supported by the powers in a bid to systematically eliminate political opponents and human rights advocates. The latest reports by the UN Commission of Inquiry on the situation of human rights in Burundi and other internal organizations indicate that political crimes consistently increase due to the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators.

In effect, violations of the right to life and physical integrity are committed and observed daily. According to defenders of human rights, at least 600 people are killed in Burundi every year, and a bigger number of Burundians are arrested and tortured. More than 11,000 people are in prison and among those 4000 are political prisoners. Additionally, an overwhelming number of 500,000 Burundians fled to refugee camps in Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda Congo, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya and other countries and continents and the majority of political leaders are in exile.

The socio-economic situation.

Burundi is characterized by a permanent and generalized corruption and misuse of public funds. According to reports, corruption and privatization of state enterprises and misappropriation of public funds have disastrous consequences on the life of the population. 60 percent of the people suffer from starvation and unemployment has hit hard on the youth. Burundi is among the five poorest countries in the world. Everything is attained by corruption including political positions, public employment, judiciary services or even participation in peacekeeping missions for soldiers in neighbouring countries. Minerals are exploited and illegally exported by the country’s dignitaries and no tax is paid to the state.

In its nature, corruption is one of the signs of a failed state governed by the rule of the jungle, absence of accountability in public affairs and public wealth management. There is injustice because the public wealth that belongs to everybody becomes the property of the oligarchy. Although political predators in power have ruined the country, Burundi still has chances for rescue and for a better. In fact, besides arable land and the abundant available water, Burundi has plenty of nickel, uranium, gold, cassiterite, iron, cobalt, oxides of rare earths, natural gas, petroleum, and other resources. In short, the socioeconomic situation in Burundi is characterized by a contradiction between the impoverishment of the popular masses and the concentration of more and more capital in the hands of the leading oligarchy that turned into a comprador and parasitic bourgeoisie.

The ongoing current crisis.

The crisis began with the third term of the late President Nkurunziza Pierre in 2015. In fact, the corruption, the locking of every space for political expression, the majority of the population becoming poorer and poorer on one side, and the wealth of the leading minority ended in revolting a population which had hoped to enjoy benefits from peace accords after a long civil war. The people hoped for change to take place after the end of the second term of Nkurunziza.

It is true that the third term was unconstitutional and contrary to the Arusha agreement but the consented sacrifices by the Burundian population namely its youth go beyond the defense of Arusha peace agreement and the constitution. It is the willingness to change and the keenness to put an end to assassinations, poverty, unemployment, starvation, corruption, ransom, embezzlement and the arrogance of a minority of leaders that motivated the struggle against this regime.

It is difficult to imagine that the CNDD-FDD and its system will survive today’s crisis with people. The population cannot not revert to ancient ethnic antagonisms. It is undeniable that the system which will succeed the current one will have the duty of respecting the will of the people, improving people’s life standards and setting up a strong foundation for a true democracy. The big problem is that op-

position is scattered and some opponents’ ambition is just removing the CNDD-FDD and replace them with no plans to restore peace, democracy and embark the country on the journey to prosperity.

There are among the opposition some liberal democrats and some can also be capable of manipulation and would like to do business as usual. However, a significant portion of opposition and the population in general, are democrat and progressives. Most of them are fully determined for positive change under the leadership CNDD party led by Comrade Leonard Nyangoma.

Burundi continues its descent into hell

Despite the accession to the presidential throne of Major General Ndayishimiye Evariste following the last electoral masquerade of May 20, 2020, Burundi has continued its descent into hell since 2005 at an accelerated rate. This electoral comedy characterized by violence and massive fraud revealed the unpopularity of the CNDD-FDD regime throughout the national territory.

This fascist party obtained less than 20 percent of the vote. That is no surprise because in his electoral campaign, General Ndayishimiye used to declare publicly and loudly that he will strictly follow his predecessor’s (Pierre Nkurunziza) footsteps. In his actions and practices, he appears more zealous than Nkurunziza. Having come to power without a political vision, Ndayishimiye gives empty speeches and makes demagogic promises just like Nkurunziza.

As a hobby, he tirelessly pursues his electoral campaign in Catholic churches every Sunday. Political space has remained inaccessible for opponents while human rights violations have increased. During the first 100 days of the Ndayishimiye regime, human rights organizations counted more than 300 assassinations and all the victims were murdered by agents of the government defense and security forces or by the ruling party’s Imbonerakure militias.

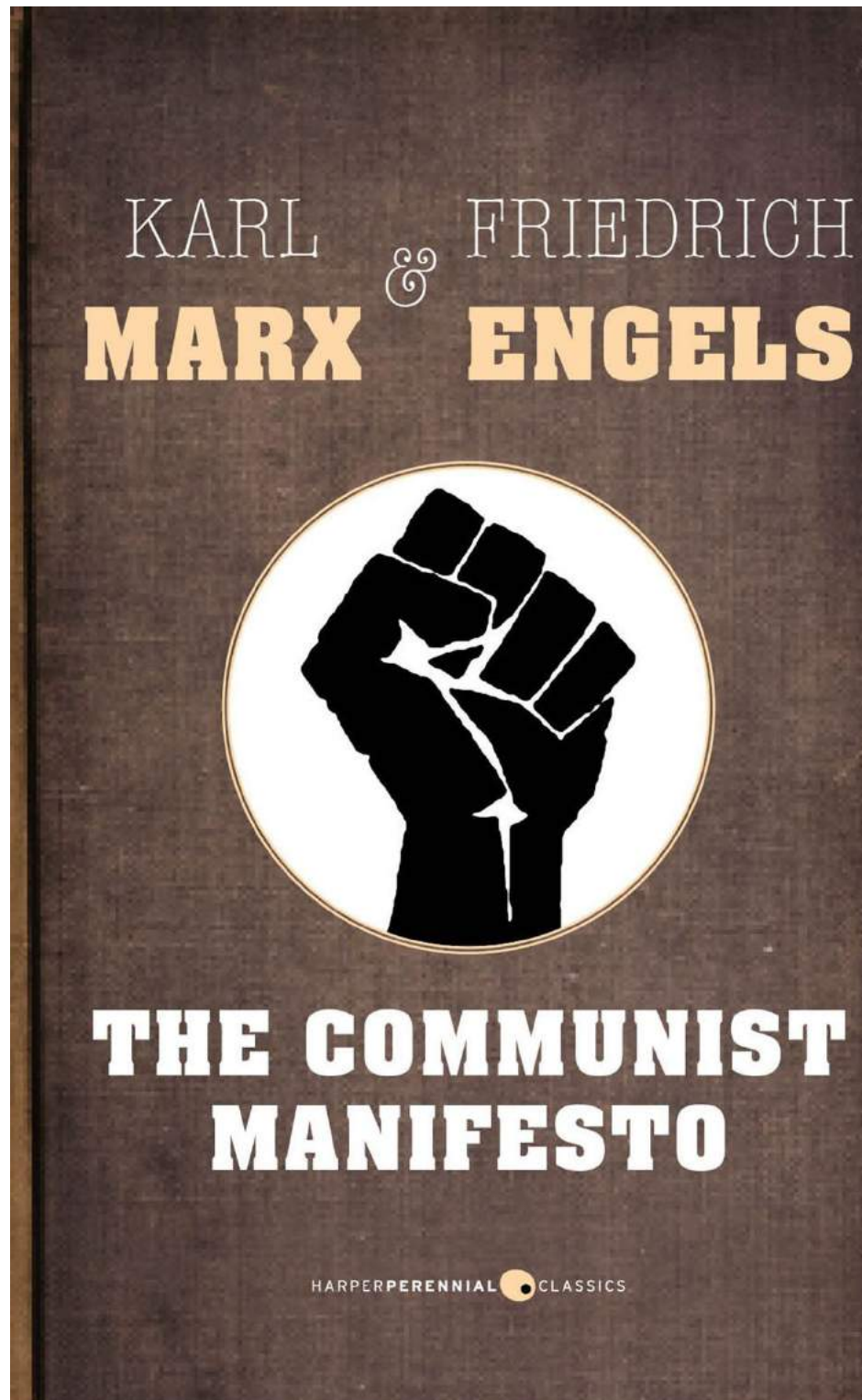
Conclusion.

Confronted with various harmful situations, the people of Burundi do not allow any room for resignation and despair. Whether among political parties in general, and especially the CNDD, or within civil society organizations, Burundi people demand the end of political repression, mismanagement and corruption. Disappointed by persistence of insecurity, killings, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, continuous illegal detentions, corruption, the CNDD will not stand by and look on.

The party pursues its fight for restoration of democracy: a political system which is not limited to elections as long as they are democratic, but also that respects human rights, values dignity, justice and patriotism. It advocates for a form of people centered governance and leadership. The CNDD and parties engrained with values of democracy, justice and prosperity continue to urge the government in power in Gitega to sit around the peace talks table to discuss ways and means of finding a lasting solution to the catastrophic situation.

In response to our appeals, the government responded with the revival of the illogical ethnic antagonisms of the past. This is an issue of great concern considering tragedies that undermined our country due to unresolved ethnic conflicts. As in the past, it is our duty as Burundians to find solutions to our own problems.

POLITICAL EDUCATION: THE VALUE OF COLLECTIVE READING OF THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO



By Abahlali baseMjondolo

On the 21st of February 1848, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels published the first edition of the Communist Manifesto. Progressive movements and organisations around the world are holding workshops on the Manifesto, and as part of this global project our movement held a political education workshop at the Frantz Fanon School at the eKhenana occupation in Durban from 21st February to 1st March.

Our members in eKhenana have faced with brutal armed attacks from the state through evictions. In most cases these evictions were carried out by the city's Anti-Land Invasion Unit. They have also come under serious pressure from ANC thugs. On 22 December 2018, when the occupation was in its early stage, Senzo Gumede was murdered after he was threatened by the local ANC councillor and the taxi association.

Despite all this the comrades on the occupation have developed a democratically managed vegetable farm, as well as a poultry project, built a youth centre and a community hall, and built and established the Frantz Fanon Political School to enhance knowledge of Ubuhlalism and socialism. All of this has been planned, developed and run by the community. This is self-management. It is also important to note that in eKhenana there is no selling or renting of shacks. Land and housing, as well as food production, have been de-commodified.

Fanon had a very clear understanding of political education. He argued that:

"To educate the masses politically does not mean and cannot mean making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a hero that will save them with his magic hands, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the hero is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people."

In our movement we are clear that it is only by building the democratic power of the oppressed that the world can be humanized. Ubuhlalism is the philosophy that we developed in our struggle. It has carried us through fifteen years of struggle, and enabled us to organise many land occupations, win many victories and

build a membership that now exceeds 80 000 people.

When our movement first started there were discussions about how Ubuhlalism, the philosophy of humanism that we had built as a form of praxis, could lead to something like a living communism, a democratic communism of the people, by the people and for the people, built from the ground of the occupations upwards and outwards.

Today our movement is no longer on its own. We have comrades around the world. The seeds that were used to start the planting by the co-operative that runs the farm on the eKhenana occupation were given to us by the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), the Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil.

Our struggle has led us from the shacks of Durban to the world. Ubuhlalism – which has always held that land, wealth, cities, power and, indeed, the world, must be shared – is leading us into an ongoing engagement with communist ideas in conversation with comrades around the world.

Our struggle is against the colonial way of thinking which still means that we do not count as human beings. That we can be left to live like pigs in the mud and be murdered when we organise to defend our humanity. It is also against the political gangsterism of the ANC and it is against capitalism.

Ubuhlalism, which draws a lot from African ideas and practices, has always said that land should not be bought and sold, and that it should be allocated on the basis of human need rather than private profit. This idea connects very well to communist thought. So does the view of Marx that communism is an expression of humanism at the global scale.

Theory does not necessarily lead to struggle. The insistence on human dignity in the face of oppression leads to struggle, and struggle leads to theory. At this point theory can change struggle and struggle can change theory.

In our movement we believe in building the democratic power of the oppressed, which is why we work to try and ensure that the people on the ground are able to engage in constant political discussion. We need to work and think together to become more fully aware of the systems of oppression. This is revolutionary work.

The political education workshop that happened earlier in the year included performances by the Abahlali Choir, a discussion on Ubuhlalism, a discussion on the thought of Frantz Fanon and a close and collective reading of the Communist Manifesto over several days. We have an isiZulu translation of the Manifesto we read and discussed it in isiZulu.

Just as Ubuhlalism connects to communist ideas, it also connects us to thinking about political education in terms of Paulo Freire's theories, theories which have grounded the MST political school in Brazil, which a number of our comrades have attended. Our political education workshops are run on Freirean principles, principles that are very similar to the ideas that we developed about living and learning as a part of Ubuhlalism.

Capitalism, which is always a racial system, allows a small elite to become rich while making the majority poor. It is an economic system that developed from slavery and colonialism. It continues to put private profit before the needs and dignity of the people. The struggle against the gangsterism in the ANC is a local and national struggle. But the struggle against capitalism has to be global. We need to ensure that we all are armed with the knowledge of how to deal with capitalism.

The great African leaders like Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar

Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah, and Thomas Sankara accepted the mission that confronted their generations. Every generation must do the same. We cannot rest until the working class and the poor in our society receive full emancipation. Economic emancipation cannot mean the replacement of one elite by another. It has to mean the end of poverty.

Our close and collective reading of the Communist Manifesto happened on the ground where the people are, and where the people are in struggle. It happened on a land occupation that is a democratically and self-managed community, a community with elected leaders subject to the right of recall and where there are weekly meetings to discuss issues together. The land occupation is a commune.

It is often said that Marxism is an ideology that is too complicated for an ordinary person from the shacks. This is because those who are regarded as scholars are often detached from the people on the ground. They often want to think for the oppressed instead of humbling themselves to think with the oppressed. They fail to understand Marx's point that 'communism is the real movement that abolishes the present state of things'. Theory without struggle does not change anything. Genuinely radical thought must be worked out in struggle, in the movement of the oppressed.

Comrade S'bu Zikode, a founding member of our movement and our elected President, often says, "We must break down the complicated politics so that even an old Gogo from the rural areas can understand". Theory must enable people to understand the world and their struggle better. It must never be used to make the people seem ignorant and to monopolise knowledge just like how land, cities, wealth and power are monopolised by a small elite under capitalism.

The workshop will take place at a very difficult time when our country is faced not only with the pandemic, but also with an economic crisis where the unemployment rate continues to rise. Many people have been retrenched and as a result many households are without a bread winner. We are in a state of social disaster.

We are urgently in need of a way to lift us out of this situation. The ANC is a mixture of political gangsters and neo-liberals. Both of these factions are anti-poor, and can only make the poor even poorer. There has to be a democratic and radical alternative.

This is why we are embarking on a programme to learn and discuss together. We need to understand how the capitalist order operates so that one day we can, working with movements around the world, be able to overthrow it and build an economy and society that starts and ends with human dignity.

In South Africa the people that call themselves communists have been captured by the ANC. They have become part of the system of oppression. We do not see them on the ground and in struggle.

This is why a new communist politics has to be built from the ground up, and in struggle. We all need to be able to understand and analyse politics in the languages that we speak in ways that make sense to us and fit with our lives.

EXPOSING THE WESTERN PROPAGANDA AGAINST CHINESE INFLUENCE IN AFRICA



Photo/File

President of People's Republic of China and a section of African Heads of State at a past meeting.

"In 2002, the value of Kenya's export to China was as low as US\$5.7 million. By 2019, the volume of exports had increased by 2500 per cent to US\$ 150 million"

By Gitahi Ngunyi

A trend has been growing among Western leaning intellectuals in Africa in last one and a half decade regarding the continent's relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC). These intellectuals grab every opportunity in the media to push the view that the relationship between China and Africa is exploitative and oppressive. Without adducing any concrete evidence, they throw in terms like Chinese imperialism referring to the economic ties between the continent and China.

Faced with this type of imperialist propaganda, what should be the attitude of a Kenyan communist or progressives forces towards PRC? This question can only be answered after a careful analysis of the historical foundation of the relationship between China and Africa in general using Kenya as a case study.

Diplomatic relation

When Kenya achieved independence from British colonialists in 1963, the People's Republic of China was on its fourteenth year after since the declaration by Chairman Mao Zedong at the Tianamen Square following a successful workers and peasants revolution led by the Communist Party of China (CCP). Before the revolution, the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party had engaged in decades of struggle against Japanese colonization and American imperialism on their own land. It was therefore natural that China would identify with the struggles of a new Africa emerging from colonisation and, understandably, support the liberation movements in the African states that were still under colonisation as well as seek deeper relationship with the newly independent African states.

In the case for Kenya, People's Republic of China was the fourth nation in the world to establish bilateral relations with the new independent state in 1963. Unfortunately, the Kenyan political elite with the nudging of Britain and United States of America (USA) adopted a neo-colonial direction and therefore squandered the opportunity of harvesting the full benefits of international fraternal

solidarity that China was offering the new independent African states.

Cold war

It is worth remembering that China relations with Kenya started when the Cold War was at its height with the Imperialist world (US and Western Europe) fighting every effort of Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and China to forge a new world order based on human solidarity, equality and freedom. African nations such as Kenya that projected the veneer of non-alignment yet secretly offered the West the platform to wage war against USSR and China lost decades in which they would have developed their economies to pull their people out of poverty, underdevelopment and backwardness.

In the 1990's when USSR fell, the African nations begun to realise their mistakes in a painful way. The West had heaped heavy debts on the young independent nations and development had been choked. Yet the West wanted to firm its control over the African resources at the expense of the people. Trapped in debt, the African states were forced to accept the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from the World Bank which forced them to open their economies further to the Western multinationals and placing the natural resources of the African nation in the hands of the West.

It is at this time that African states, including Kenya begun seeking to deepen bilateral ties with Chinese government as a way of escaping from the harsh position they had been pushed into by the neoliberal policies of the West.

With the Chinese support, the African states begun to emerge from underdevelopment with the heavy investment in infrastructure that opened up hinterlands to economic advancement. This marked the start of the rising influence of China in Africa.

Chinese influence in African states is remarkable is several aspects. First, development loans from the Chinese government to African states is processed quickly thus shortening project turnaround time. In Kenya for example, most of the road networks and the Standard Gauge Railway have been com-

pleted in the last two decades. This short project turnaround time has resulted in the country's gross domestic product increasing substantially over the period. It has also pulled many people from poverty and transformed many hinterlands into thriving commercial centres.

Secondly, the development support from China is based on the priorities established by the African states. In the case of Kenya, this is the first time that the country is getting development support from another country based on its own priorities. Since independence, successive Kenyan governments have had expatriates from the West working in government offices to influence policy direction. The expatriates who usually draw salaries from the World Bank, EU, USA or other Western European governments ensure that they drive policy positions that promote neo-colonialism and imperialist interests in Kenya. On the other hand, China development support which is based on the priorities of the Kenyan government provides Kenyan technocrats with the space to make independent policy decisions on the development of their own country.

Thirdly, Chinese solidarity with Kenya has contributed to the growth of industrialization especially in light industries. From 2002, machinery and equipment importation from China has grown substantially. According to the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution, Kenya's machinery and transport equipment imports from China currently stands at US\$ 864 million making the far east country the biggest supplier of industrial machinery to Kenya. The result of this is increased production of commodities for domestic and export markets, higher returns for raw material producers, and increase in employment.

Finally, China is growing as a major export market for Kenya products over the last eighteen years through a process driven by Chinese government to open its market to goods and services from African states. In 2002, the value of Kenya's export to China was as low as US\$5.7 million. By 2019, the volume of exports had increased by 2500 percent to US\$ 150 million.

Struggle against imperialism

Fundamentally, a Kenyan communist attitude towards should also be informed by China's role in the world stage. In a world sweltering under the weight of US imperialism, China continues to struggle against imperialist attacks on independent nations. China for example continues to trade with Cuba, thus rejecting the 60-year economic blockade by the US government on the Caribbean socialist state. China is also providing essential support to Venezuelan people and their government at a time when the US government has intensified its efforts to destroy the South American nation economically and socially through unwarranted and illegitimate economic sanctions. At the UN Security Council, China has used its veto power to oppose resolutions aimed at legitimising US imperialist aggression against independent states such as Cuba, Venezuela, Vietnam, Iran and Syria.

In conclusion, China has demonstrated through policy and action that it is a force for advancing a human, just, equal and free world where all human beings enjoy better quality of life.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF KENYA WAS PART OF THE AFRICAN OBSERVER MISSION TO VENEZUELAN 2020 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.



Venezuela President Nicholas Maduro casts his vote during the general electionsPhoto/File

The Communist Party of Kenya can assert that the Venezuelan electoral system has a lot to offer for the people of the world. An election used as a tool for participatory democracy away from over-publicized western democracies that only help to consolidate power in the hands of a few rich criminals. The election process was made simple and obvious, making it easy for the masses to participate. The United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) government, under the leadership of President Nicholas Maduro, has had tremendous success in the front of political education and organizing. The literacy program has been helpful to the Venezuelan population to effectively use the election process to exercise people's popular power. The resounding victory of the PSUV by winning 253 out of the 277 was a vote of confidence on the Bolivarian Socialist project and a humiliation to the far-right fundamentalists led by the western puppet Juan Guido.

The process was inclusive and diverse. Both the indigenous population and the afro-descendent people had their right of representation supported by the Bolivarian Socialist project.

Venezuela Election held a mid-USA aggression

The election was held in the context of a country besieged by the criminal blockade imposed by the government of the United States and by permanent threats of intervention by the leading military power of the world. Since the Venezuelan people elected Comandante Hugo Chávez as President of the Republic on December 6, 1998, the United States developed a strategic doctrine that has dominated relations between the two countries ever since. This doctrine of "regime change," has led to coups d'états, financing of the terrorist opposition, attempts at assassination of the President and the imposition of a parallel government, and periodic launching of a mercenary invasion. All of these actions constitute a massive violation of the human rights of the Venezuelan people and a flagrant transgression of international law

The Election System Audit as a Guarantee of Transparency

The election was subjected to more than ten audits. This was conducted one day to voting, during, and after the vote in order to validate each of the key processes of the electoral system, which allows certifying its quality and invulnerability. In these audits, technicians of the National Electoral Council (CNE) participated directly, together with representatives of all the political parties, national and international experts, African delegations, independent ob-

servers, and the citizens themselves. The Communist Party of Kenya was pleased with this high level of transparency. The technology delivered with simplicity the possibility of the Venezuelan people to exercise their right to vote. The entire voting act was in accordance with the biosecurity protocols required for the prevention of Covid-19

The Venezuelan electoral system is solid and sound with an automated system that has been refined and strengthened during the Bolivarian Revolution. The results released by the National Electoral Council was a faithful reflection of the free will of Venezuelan voters. The Communist Party of Kenya highly recommends the Kenyan Government to benchmark their system with the Venezuelan system instead of traveling to those backward capitalist democracies that have designed opaque systems to help them usurp peoples' power.

The Aggression against the People of Venezuela

The Venezuelan people have resisted with dignity and firmness the imperial aggression of the blockade and the so-called sanctions, which have intensified during the Covid-19 pandemic. See below an extract from the UN rapporteur report 2020

The United States has imposed sanctions against Venezuela since 2015.

A 2014 U.S. law led to sanctions against Venezuelan officials and foreign policy. In 2017, the United States denounced the election of a Constituent Assembly in Venezuela as illegitimate and imposed sanctions against the government and its entities. In 2018, after Venezuelan presidential elections, the United States tightened its sanctions against the government, citing economic mismanagement, corruption, repression of political opponents, and efforts to undermine democracy. In January 2019, after recognizing the newly elected President of the National Assembly as Venezuela's interim President, the United States imposed further sanctions against PDVSA, the Venezuelan Central Bank and key government officials, and it imposed a total economic embargo in August 2019. U.S.

The European Union imposed sanctions against Venezuela in 2017, including an arms embargo, a ban on exports of other goods that might be used for internal repression, a ban on exports of technology and material made for telecommunications monitoring or interception, and travel bans and asset freezes on individuals. It was also reported that \$1.2 billion in Venezuela Government funds have been frozen by a Portuguese bank in 2019. Nearly \$2 billion in gold owned by the Central Bank of Venezuela and held in the Bank of England is also frozen as a case proceeds in British courts. In 2017 and 2018, Canada froze assets and banned dealings in the property of Venezuelan officials. In 2019, thirteen of the fourteen Lima Group countries agreed to ban Venezuelan officials' entry and deny them access to their financial systems. Also, in 2019, a majority of parties to the Rio Treaty approved a resolution allowing targeted sanctions, including asset freezes against Venezuelan officials

The Kenya Venezuela Solidarity Committee and the Communist Party of Kenya will remain in solidarity with the people, government and President of Venezuela, comrade Maduro, as they struggle to build the Bolivarian revolution. We condemn US imperialism and its allies that are using all means possible, including brutal and unjust sanctions against the Bolivarian Republic. The imperialist counter-revolutionary war against Venezuela will never succeed in defeating the popular democracy and mass revolution of the Bolivarian revolution. This was proved by the results of the free, fair and participatory elections that the Communist Party of Kenya, African and World political parties and organizations observed.

Reference:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26747&LangID=E>



President Nicholas Maduro and a section of Venezuela government officials.

Photo/File



An electronic voting machine used in the general election

Photo/File

WORLD POLITICAL PARTIES EXPRESS SOLIDARITY WITH CHINA AMIDST WESTERN ATTACKS UNDER THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRETEXT



The International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (IDCPC) and the Communist Party of China Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Regional Committee co-hosted the “Stories of CPC” Thematic Briefing on Xinjiang on 22nd February 2021 in Urumqi.

During the event, over 310 leaders and prominent persons representing more than 190 political parties and organisations from more than 80 plus countries engaged in an in-depth discussion on the theme of “A Better Life for All” and reached broad consensus. Over 100 participants were drawn from Islamic countries.

The parties declared that it is the common goal and responsibility of political parties of all countries to work towards a better life for the overwhelming majority of the people. Political parties of all countries should take the improvement of people’s wellbeing as their mission and strive to uplift the sense of fulfillment, happiness, and security.

They noted that COVID-19 has hit over 200 countries and regions, affected more than 7 billion people around the world, and claimed over 2 million lives. They called on all countries to continue to put the lives, safety, and health of the people above everything else by deploying medical expertise and critical supplies to places where they are needed the most, saving lives with all might and main, and further promoting global joint epidemic response so that the pandemic is brought under control at an earliest possible date and the vision of building a global community of health for all appears on the horizon.

The parties stressed that COVID-19 has plunged over 200 million people globally into extreme poverty and inflicted a serious impact on the economic and social development of most countries, casting a dark shadow on the prospects of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They called on all countries to continue to strengthen coordination on macroeconomic policies, remain steadfast in maintaining the stability of the global financial market as well as that of industrial and supply chains, and to take measures to reduce debts and boost the flow of trade, so that the world economy could soon recover and grow, which will help bring global poverty reduction back on the right track as speedily as possible.

While subscribing to the protection and development of human rights, the parties pointed out that the right to subsistence and development rights are principal and fundamental. Poverty constitutes the chief obstacle to the realisation of human rights. The interests of the people should be placed in the paramount position and development should deliver greater benefit to the entire population in a more equitable manner.

The parties emphasised that as there is no one-size-fits-all model

to advance and protect human rights, the diversity in the paths of human rights development should be respected and any attempt to politicise human rights, apply double standards thereof, or to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of human rights should be opposed. They called for the concerted efforts of all countries to promote the establishment of a global governance architecture on human rights that is more equitable, just, and inclusive.

The parties acknowledged that the Thematic Briefing has enabled them to acquire a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of China’s system of regional ethnic autonomy and the development of areas with large ethnic minority populations, including the actual situation in Xinjiang, where social stability, as well as equality and unity among various ethnic groups, prevail, people’s livelihood keeps improving and the economy develops constantly. They expressed appreciation of what the Chinese government has done to promote the economic and social development of areas with large ethnic minority populations, and to respect and protect the right of people of all ethnic groups to freedom of religious belief and to use their own spoken and written languages.

They expressed opposition to the odious behaviour of a fragment of individuals from certain countries in misleading the international perception and smearing other countries with distorted and fabricated facts and disinformation of cooked-up rumours of so-called China’s “ethnic cleansing” in Xinjiang.

Extending their best wishes to the CPC and the Chinese people on the eve of the centenary of the CPC, they applauded the CPC for its commitment to the original aspiration and founding mission of seeking happiness for the people and rejuvenation for the nation, for its leadership under which the Chinese people have created the miracle of rapid economic development together with the miracle of long-term social stability, and most recently, the major achievements in both COVID response and economic and social development. They commended the important help China has offered to the global fight against the virus, in particular the honouring of its commitment to make vaccines a global public good. They expressed their willingness to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning with the CPC on governance experience and to promote the deepening of mutually beneficial cooperation among countries towards the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Courtesy of Communist Party of China

US HAS NO RIGHT OR LEGITIMACY TO DESIGNATE CUBA AS A TERRORIST STATE



a section of Cuba Medical Brigade in Kenya during an induction at the Kenya School of Government (KSG) Photo/File

The government of Cuba has released a statement condemning the move by the US government to designate the Caribbean socialist state as a terrorist state.

We reproduce the statement below as part of our duty to condemn the continued attacks on the people of Cuba by the US governments. It is also reproduced as part of the Communist Party of Kenya (CPK) solidarity with the government of Cuba in the struggle against US Imperialism and also in the spirit of internationalism.

“STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CUBA

Firm and absolute condemnation of the fraudulent designation of Cuba as a State that sponsors terrorism.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba condemns, in the strongest and most absolute terms, the fraudulent designation of Cuba as a State that sponsors terrorism which, in a cynical

and hypocritical move, has been announced by the government of the United States.

For some months now, there have been speculations about the possibility of including Cuba in a unilateral list issued by the State Department that designates countries, without having received any mandate or having any legitimacy whatsoever to do that and without having any genuine motivation in relation to terrorism and its sequels, in order to use it as an instrument to denigrate and implement economic coercive measure against other countries that may refuse to indulge the whims of the US imperialism.

The announcement made by Secretary of State Michael Pompeo is an arrogant action by a discredited, dishonest and morally bankrupt government.

It is well known –and there is little doubt about it– that the true motivation behind this action is to impose additional obstacles to any prospective restoration of bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States.

Cuba is not a State that sponsors terrorism and this is a truth that has been widely recognized by everybody.

Cuba’s official and well-known policy and impeccable behavior has been that of rejecting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, particularly State terrorism, wherever and by and against whoever committed.

Cuba has been a State victim of terrorism and our people have suffered from it first hand, at the cost of 3 478 fatalities and 2099 persons with disabilities due to the actions carried out by the government of the United States or that have been perpetrated and sponsored from the territory of that country with the acquiescence of the US official authorities.

We Cubans disdainfully deplore every maneuver aimed at manipulating such a sensitive issue to achieve gross politically opportunistic goals. (CubaMINREX)”

TOWARDS A UNITED FRONT OF LEFT-IST POLITICAL PARTIES, MOVEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN KENYA

Even while building CPK and as part and parcel of building CPK, our party should with immediate effect, play a proactive role in the issue of organizing a United Front. It should be at the vanguard of creating such a coalition or alliance or a United Front. CPK is a vanguard and mass party, and therefore creating or participating in a United Front is one of the methods of mass recruitment and mobilization, mobilizing the masses, and popular forces of Kenya for political power.

Subject to the content or the aim and objectives of the perceived United Front, it may take various forms or names based on the initial spirit of the United Front or Coalition. Whatever form, or name it may choose to be called, the aim is to bring together and unite all Kenyans; Kenyans who, genuinely and honestly, wish to make a positive contribution to the politics of Kenya to move away from the contemporary politics dominated by JUBILEE, ODM, ANC, FORD Kenya, WIPER, which are political parties popularized by the press every day.

What should the content of the perceived United Front be?

What is our understanding as a political party of the United Front in this regard? The United Front must be as a minimum about creating and agreeing upon an alternative and progressive political coalition or United Front aimed at organizing the Kenyan people to struggle for a government that will implement an alternative and progressive social, political, economic and cultural system based on the national values and principles of governance described by Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya.

The national values and principles of governance include patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people; human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized; good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability; and sustainable development.

Justification of United Front: fighting against the present status quo

How should the United Front differ from the present status quo? To begin with, the present status quo is the JUBILEE ruling coalition and the already dead opposition called ODM and what they stand for ideologically, including and not limited to killing the present Constitution of Kenya through the dirty politics of handshake and the so-called Building Bridges Initiative (BBI). Together the two coalitions form the status quo as they are just one coin with two sides. History continues to reveal that the two political parties have no will to implement



the national values and principles of governance embodied in the popular Constitution of Kenya.

Kenyans fought for multiparty democracy but not the democracy of a few political parties. There are now about sixty registered political parties in the country. This is good for the country in the current historical context because it is a manifestation of the hunger of Kenyans to actively participate in building the culture of democracy in the country.

But, unfortunately, JUBILEE, ODM and other few political parties such as WIPER who control the Executive, are united in their selfish conspiracy to kill other political parties in Kenya and remain the only political parties so that together they can dominate and manipulate the politics of the country to fit their common ideology of capitalism/neoliberalism. They have started this process by conspiring to grab and share only among themselves the millions of shillings meant to fund political parties to nurture multipartism in the country. In this, they also count on the support of imperialist governments and pro-capitalist NGOs operating in the country to purport to support and teach Kenyans about democracy and human rights, particularly multiparty democracy.

The two political coalitions that dominate the country's parliament all worship bourgeois

democracy as it is practiced in the USA and United Kingdom (but again only when it is convenient for them to do so). They see it as the Alfa and Omega of democracy. In the United States that pretends to be the most democratic country in the world, political parties are suppressed, and the citizens are forced to choose to be governed by either the Republican or Democratic parties, both of which are capitalist and imperialist in ideology and practice. Similarly, in the UK, all political parties are suppressed, and the citizens have to choose from the Labour, Conservative or Liberal Democrats parties - all of which represent capitalism and imperialism. The aim of this is to use the political parties to conserve the democracy of the ruling capitalist classes and to use it to dilute class struggles by creating illusions of political changes through regular elections that ensure the capitalist and imperialist system remains intact. This is the democracy that JUBILEE, ODM, and partners are importing for Kenya. It is not the democracy the Kenyan masses wish and aspire for as the spirit of the constitution of Kenya manifestly reveals.

The JUBILEE and ODM, or to be precise Uhuru and Raila, used to present themselves as antagonistic, one in charge of the government and one in the opposition. Yet their

antagonism has always been only in form and not in content. In practice, it is a political gimmick meant to hoodwink voters and supporters who propel them to power through corruption, tribalism, and the media propaganda they control. The truth is that the two political parties and their affiliates are both committed to imposing the democracy of capitalism, neo-colonialism, corruption, tribalism, cronyism, greed, primitive accumulation, dictatorship, and exploitation of person by person in the country. Yet, just as Kenyans are made to believe that there is no alternative to bourgeoisie democracy, they are also made to think that Kenyan politics will always be determined by either JUBILEE or ODM and the capitalist ideology they stand for.

CPK is sure that the democracy of JUBILEE and ODM is not what the majority of Kenyans struggled for or desire for the present and future of our country. To struggle for genuine democracy - participatory democracy - social and national liberation - today also means to struggle against the status quo represented by the two political parties, their political affiliations, and what they represent. Thus, the relevance of working towards forming an alternative way: United Front of the Left.

The nature of the proposed United Front

The United Front we conceive should be about organizing to fight for political power through participating in national elections to provide to the Kenyan people alternative social, political, and economic policies away from the present status quo. It should be a United Front of registered political parties and social movements. Individuals participating in the Front must belong to political parties or social movements/organizations that will be members of the United Front.

The question that follows is, what brings together the political parties and social movements/organizations to form the United Front? In general, it is the desire or commitment of the political parties and movements/organizations to agree to form a coalition or alliance to fight the status quo and offer alternative progressive politics and ideology for the liberation and development of the country. Details about the criteria for qualification of the political parties and social movements/organization for joining the conceived United Front, modalities, and rules of engagement should also be discussed comprehensively by the parties and movements/organizations involved.

In any case, specifically, those who will be members of the United Front will agree on a common program that brings them together to form the coalition and that they will use for campaigning in national elections and that they will implement immediately when they form the government. This should be conceived as the minimum program of the United Front.

CPK's proposal of the minimum program for the United Front - for discussion by would-be members

CPK will propose to the would-be members of the proposed United Front the following points of the minimum program of the United Front for discussion and adoption:

1. Creating conditions for the development of providing social security for all Kenyans by building a three-tire democratic and complementary economic systems composed of the state, cooperative and private sectors.
2. Struggling against the illegitimate debt burden imposed upon the country through unequal power, trade, and other relations by foreign powers.
3. Working to defend and consolidate the progressive political reforms and democratic gains won by the struggle of the people, and that is embodied in the Constitution of Kenya. In this regard, we will collaborate with other progressive Kenyans, parties, and movements to struggle for the realization of the basic tenets of the constitution on the sovereignty of the people, human rights, national values and principles of governance, separation of powers, checks and balances and devolution of governments with popular participation of the people at all levels of government.
4. Providing and guaranteeing, progressively, basic needs and services to the individual and the family such as security to a person, shelter, food, water, health, education, and employment that are also entrenched in the Constitution of Kenya.

5. Reinstating the freedom and sovereignty of our country, people, and resources rather than surrendering our nation to imperialism.

6. Fostering partnership with the Kenyan people in the ownership and provision of services by the commanding heights of the economy, such as money/banks/financial institutions, transport and communications and infrastructure, major natural water towers and waterworks, power generation.

7. Engaging in the most suitable technologies available in the provision of services and implementation of development and maintenance of projects. We need not invent the wheel; we need only adopt it and make it work for our purposes.

8. Mobilizing and facilitating Kenyans to conserve, protect, develop, and utilize our natural resources and environment sustainably for the present and future generations of Kenyans. We will make and implement policies that will ensure investment in natural resources brings direct and indirect benefits to the local communities as envisioned by the Constitution of Kenya.

9. Providing public-funded universal and compulsory primary and secondary education as a first stage. It will also provide high quality, affordable and subsidized college and university education, with the ultimate objective of making education free at all levels. At the same time, we will mobilize Kenyans to formulate an education and cultural policy that aims at eradicating illiteracy, poverty and underdevelopment while producing conscious, creative, and independent social beings capable of realizing their talents, knowledge, and skills in the service of the nation, society, and humanity.

10. Implementing policies of fighting tribalism and of building national cohesion. We will mobilize Kenyans to celebrate their rich cultural and linguistic diversity in the interest of national unity. We will develop the national and official languages of Kenya as well as those of the various Kenyan nationalities.

11. Implementing policies of combatting and eradicating corruption and misuse of public resources.

12. Adopting a class and gender approach to development in all spheres of life.

13. Implementing vigorously chapter eleven of the Constitution of Kenya to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas, to lead to equality between the various regions and Counties of Kenya.

14. Carrying out progressive land and agrarian reforms based mainly on the principle of land to the and for the tillers.

15. Carrying out a progressive defence policy to ensure human and national security.

16. Implementing a foreign policy based on peace, solidarity, and friendship with all nations and peoples of the world while adhering to the principle of the right of all nations to self - determination. This will be our commitment to the realization of the East African Federation as fast as possible together with progressive Pan - Africanism and African Union.

**Central Committee
Communist Party of Kenya (CPK)**

FIDEL CASTRO RUZ+

I love the land of Cuba, its people, economics and politics
The system of love, geared towards socialist development
Of carrying forward all citizens, to participate in social progress
The system of removing, the vestiges of exclusion and marginalization
To enable all to meet their needs, that's the aim of their economy
Yes, they have a lot of problems, but they courageously struggle with them
How I wish to live in Cuba, but lo! Our struggle in Kenya needs me.

Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, he is famous all over the World
The log of revolution, symbol of bravery for a just cause
Champion of the struggle for love on earth, of all to live well
Searching for a good leader? Look in Fidel Castro!
He continues with revolutionary struggle, despite his age
He has retired from state leadership, but he is still in the journey
Revolutionary education, of social justice and peace on our planet
He is still committed to the work, theoretically and ideologically.

Socialist ideology and theory, he contributes to everyday
He interprets and expounds Marxism, in the present conditions of the World
He thinks about technological development, and science for human security
To Fidel education and health, should be prioritized
And in the utilization of natural resources,
Humanity must end greed and waste, conserve the environment or perish!
Fidel condemns capitalism and imperialism, while exposing its injustices
He advocates for socialism, the system worth struggling for
He has made a contribution to revolutionary struggle, he continues to do so

They have tried to assassinate him, the US imperialists
They have targeted his life over hundred times, capitalists are evil
Because Fidel has prevented them, from continuing to colonize Cuba
Exploiters and oppressors hate Fidel, they wish to bury him in the grave
But to the wretched of the earth, Fidel is their beloved hero
Hundreds of millions of people pray for him, that he lives a long life
Yes, Fidel motivates, he lights the fire of revolution in us.

In the freedom and liberation war, the two Cuban people's heroes met
Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, believers of the same ideology

Through the revolutionary struggle, the comrades united
The brothers in combat committed themselves to the work,
The members of the party struggled together
Until Cuba was liberated, and the whole World witnessed
From then on the roots of socialism, continue to grow and grow
True, the Cuban revolution lives and will continue to live
Fidel Castro Ruz, we thank you Cubans for him

Socialism marches on triumphantly, in spite of the neighboring enemy
US imperialists hate Fidel with passion, they are still bitter of the past defeat
Because they invaded and occupied Cuba, exploiting the country as colonialists do
Even today they still conspire against Cuba, they are strangling it with blockades!

But Cuba insists on going forward, forward ever
Cuba will not give up or turn away from the true path of freedom
Fidel maintains: socialism is the hope for Cuba and the World
We cannot liberate ourselves, by returning to the past, capitalism!
Yes, we hear you Fidel we hear you clearly,
Yes, the masses listen to you even in Kenya and Africa

It is not in my habit, listen to me, it is not a good habit
To praise as a hero a person who is still alive
Fidel does not like it either, I am aware
For as long as you are alive you have not grown fully,

Our ancestors taught us, I remember
Still I shower praises on Fidel, many big praises, he is a hero
He has embraced being humane, he does not worship money
As for remaining firm in the cause, I do not doubt Fidel for a second
He will die fighting for the common person, come whatever may!

That is why I dedicate this poem to him, long live Fidel!
Your life is an example to follow, Fidel Castro Ruz
Good health, dear comrade!

Mwandawiro Mghanga,

Nairobi, Dream Hotel Ngara,

Thursday, May, 17 2014

*The poem was written in Kiswahili then translated in English.

SAMORA MACHEL

Death!

Death ... damn it!

Were death like a kite

I would have made a catapult

To use it to kill it

To prevent it robbing us of people like Samora;

Were death a lion

I would have looked for a gun

To hunt it day and night

Until I kill it

To ensure it does not strip us of patriots

Like Samora for ever;

Were death able to listen

I would have advised it

To kill the Dlakamas

And the Savimbis and Buthelezis

And Mobutus and Bandas

And all exploiters and traitors

But leave us with the Samoras;

Were death a wild-cat

I would have made a trap to trap it

To catch and kill it

So that it may never steal from us

Heroes like Samora;

Were death a magistrate of justice

I would have lodged an appeal

Against the harsh and brutal sentence

Imposed upon the people of Mozambique

And all African patriots

By the Magistrate Death

Who is merciless

Who has oppressed us

With the accident that has killed Samora!

Were death democracy

We would have demonstrated through out the world

And even beyond

Demanding the return of our beloved Samora!

Were it capable of responding to prayers death

We would have assembled all religions in the world

Praying non stop day and night

Making all sorts of sacrifices

Repenting all sins including those we have not done

So that Samora is returned to us, the great African;

Were God there

Together with the power over death

He or she would not have allowed death

To snatch Samora Machel, the hope of the oppressed

The voice of the poor, the torch of the fighters of justice

At this time

When we really need him

While we depend on him so much;

Sooo ... ah what can I say!

Of all the people in the world

It chooses you, you Samora!

Surely death is brutal

It has neither shame nor love

Death ... death is death!

Were it to have manners and pity and love

It could not have robbed the people of Mozambique

Of Samora Macheli

Today, at the present situation of Mozambique!

Oh my dear brother

The symbol of a revolutionary

The image of patriotism

The example of the leaders we need in Africa

The voice of the exploited and oppressed

Great enemy of the apartheid regime

Communist

Samora

Samora Machel

Is it really you, is it you they have killed?

How can I mourn you brother

How does one cry for such as you!?

Ahhhhh ... what can we say!

Oh valiant soldier of the struggle

For the liberation of our continent

What can I say about you

The beloved and famous hero

Of all who love justice and peace

In the world!?

How should I mourn you

The star of African revolutionaries?

How will I weep for you fellow youth?

They have really hit us hard

The oppressors have stricken us in the heart

True the beasts who rule South Africa

Imperialists and fascists and their puppets

Have hit us hard, too hard

The death of Samora is a great blow to us!

Oh what a great pain!

What should we think what should we say

How should we mourn!

The agony you have left us with comrade Samora

How will we deal with it!?

You criminals, the state of traitors in our country

The fort of Renamo bandits, dogs of imperialism

How can we forgive you traitors of the Black people

For participating in the plot

Of killing Samora Machel?

Dear comrades of Mozambique

Comrades of Frelimo

Patriots of Southern Africa

This death of Samora is not light

It is very hard indeed

It is too heavy to carry, this matter of missing Samora suddenly

But you will carry it, you will carry it all the same

For you must carry it, there is no alternative ...

The cloud of sadness has covered the world of socialism

Wherever there is struggle in Africa

It is raining tears of grief

For us patriots in prison, our hands are on our cheeks

For we will not see Samora again

Although he will be with us for ever our brother

But we will not see him in the same way we used to

In the short life he lived in the world

Samora lived as a human being ought to

He performed his duty

He carried out his responsibilities

He will always be an example to follow

He has a good place in history, he will live for ever

Samora Machel

A true son of Africa

We can't cry over spilled milk

But the breaking of the cooking stick

Is not the end of cooking ugali

The blood of a hero does not coagulate

And the corpse of a patriot stinks not

The picture of a beloved deceased

Is never erased in the brain

We are Samora we are

African revolutionaries we are

We are African communists we are

We are and we will always be

To continue with the struggle

You have left for us

Beloved comrade Samora Machel

Sleep well, rest comrade rest in peace

Aluta continua!

Kamiti Maximum Prison

19-10-1986

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СРК