

THE GHETTOES OF PAN-AFRICANISM

Fictive Sovereignties, Contingent Nationalisms, Distorted Spritualities and Identity Defections



As dysfunctional sub-African socio-economic and accidental haphazard political constructions, these African monstrous political entities have no discernible *raison d'être*.

By Ademola Araoye

Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief.
– Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Africa, indeed the black race, is burdened: trapped in the ghettoes of its Pan-African longings. The challenge is to reorient its misguided, misaligned and dilapidated consciousness that is integral to the entrenched indolent fixations underpinning the current deleterious fictions: the incontinence of assumptions of possessing numerous sovereignties that emanate from the travails of its encounter with hegemonic forces; reconstruct the many externally inspired and internally legitimated impositions and distortions associated with the broken template on which its horrible existential realities now rest; and, critically, reaffirming the unassailable validity of the singular historic compass designed to navigate the intricate extrications from an ancient quagmire, including survival in only tangential relevance.

Alienated from the vision of a sacred consecration of a peoples' oneness, a broken and subdued Africa is bound to a counterfeited constancy of a long moment of convenient rationalisations in the service of a dominant historic fallacy. The construction of the universe of the African state and society and the concrete expression of this state and the associated multiplicity in the unceasing bifurcations of the one community of its humanity constitute a stout quotidian nightmare that perpetually survives. This survival persists at a horrendous cost to the people in the continued alienation from the peoples' historic sense of oneness. Indeed, that the real intellectual origins of Pan-Africanism have been located in the Caribbean¹ or even if in the United States as conventionally thought, suggests its true essence as a holistic counter poise by a unified black humanity even if far flung in and by its ancient travails. Africa is in a constant location along dissipated thresholds as one singular global community strenuously charting the difficult terrains of the process of an imposed and distorted modernity.

Dominant contemporary interpretive formulations and dedicated structural phantoms that detract from the wholesome fullness of the vision are tragic. The same Pan-Africanism that made visible to Africa the fundamental qualities and potentials of modernity

and served as the black philosophy of redemption to navigate the horrendous denials of the essential humanity of blackness, systemic inequities and challenges of the process of modernity, has been vacated and upended to serve the very opposite ends of consolidating Africa's location in the margins of irrelevance and the brutalised periphery of an elusive modernity. In building structural edifices to perpetuate the permanence of this tangential status, the tensions between core Pan-Africanism and the counterfeited contemporary expressions of the vision are palpable and defining of the falseness of the powerful currency of the ghettos; both intellectual and political.

Cheikh Anta Diop anticipated the fatal pathologies of the ghetto. The ghettos, as the very antithesis of Pan-Africanism, were to be constituted by a proliferation of dictator-ridden little countries without organic ties to one another, ephemeral, afflicted with chronic weakness, governed by terror with the help of outsized police forces, but under economic domination of foreign countries. He adumbrated that if Africa was to be protected from such a fate, the idea of a continental federation must actually constitute a method of survival by way of an efficacious political and economic organisation, and not just a dilatory demagogic formulation receiving merely lip service. He called for an end to fooling the masses with a patchwork of minor states and bring about the ultimate break with all the fake structures (Communaute, Commonwealth, Eurafrika), that, he noted, held no future for Africa. Black Africa, he urged, must be started up the slope toward its federal destiny.

About the same time, one of the earliest home grown attempts to codify the intellectual responses to the oppression of black Africa by alien structures of knowledge and the institutions emanating from them into a conceptual framework for holistic African emancipation can be traced to the work of Anton Muziwakhe Lembede.² By 1946, Lembede perceived among Africans a clear sign of national awakening, national renaissance or rebirth on the far-off horizon. Accordingly, he enthused

that Africa had to "realize its own potentialities, develop its own talents and retain its own peculiar character."³ Lembede's starting point for his vision of African nationalism was the recognition of the fundamental reality that Africans had to transcend their ethnic divisions and accept responsibility for their common destiny.

Anta Diop was very prophetic about the very real potential of a hopeless descent of Africa into the ghettos. But he underestimated the tenacity of Africa's prurient leadership to mortgage the interests of the people for their personal gains till the end of time, as the contemporary state of Africa demonstrates. He had hoped that in the years ahead Africa, in surveying the overwhelming bleakness of its evolved circumstances, will be forced progressively to strengthen their organic federal ties while ridding themselves of the remains of those that still bind them to their former mother countries.⁴ Anta Diop's fear of the emergence of this ghetto, constantly rationalised by a formidable academy of entrenched hypocrisy and sychophancy and conniving quasi-intellectual accessories, has been Africa's existential nightmare. The challenge of our age thus is to institute epistemological pillars in progressive excavations toward a re-appropriation of the legacy of the core compass and engage to infuse Pan-Africanism with its original defining redemptive impulses.

The strategic deficits of Africa are therefore in its fractious geopolitical structure that is mainly constructed to advance the status quo and the absolute absence of that elusive dedicated human agency for progressive and constructive change. A long journey thus beckons to a historic and predictably turbulent odyssey in the creative deconstruction and revolutionary reconstruction of their odious present. As Jean-Paul Sartre notes in situations like this, the necessary reinvention of man cannot be accomplished by tinkering, patching and mending in the dark. It can be done only by constructing guided by principles, by breaking and melting down all our shackles. Otherwise, the trenchant reconstruction of the dolorous African reality may remain

permanently barred. The narratives however must begin from the alienated and denounced beginnings.

In the beginning there was only one concept and incontestable authentic expression distilled in the Pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey to which the last true apostles including Kwame Nkrumah and Cheick Anta Diop remained faithful. The latter day Pan-Africanism of the many vacuous strands of 56 fictive sovereignties and contingent nationalisms is the very antithesis of the true vision of one Africa in the service of black humanity. The intellectual and political undertakers of the funeral of this sacrosanct aspiration of the people are gathered in temples that are consecrated to the subversion of the spiritual quintessence of a whole humanity. But the eternally simmering pulse of the inalienable union of the African people is a transcendental force that in periodic constancy would flaunt its incontestable supremacy over the many mere temporal expressions of the upended vision. These charging slides are supported by the mercantilist appreciations of hollow and quack intellectualism that serve as handmaidens of dominant villainous systems and structures of the moment. They spin their nebulous epistemic props dedicated to the horrific denunciations of the true and deferred spirit of the one people of Africa.

At a basic level, pan-Africanism is a belief that African peoples, both on the African continent and in the Diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny.⁵ Yet, in the place of a singular consolidated vision of one people ineluctably linked to a common destiny in a natural logical emanation from the horrendous travails of its peculiar evolution, Africa carries the weight of fictive sovereignties and associated contingent nationalisms of fifty six parasitic rag-flag states. These are largely weak and unviable monstrous sociological constructions. 45% of all Africans live in five states, who between them control at least 5% each of Africa's traumatised people. 56% of Africa's 56 pretend states are obscure and mere political enclaves that do not even contain 1% each of the 1.16 billion humanity resident in Africa. 9 of the 56 are rag flag states

with a population of less than a million each. They constitute the true soft underbelly of Africa. No grand or strategic plans, including Agenda 2063, rehashing all the previous grand blueprints beginning with the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, can redeem them from dependency on hegemonic forces. They are neither configured nor primed to advance either the public good of their Lilliputian enclaves or of that of the continent. They represent a recurring debit on Africa's comprehensive ledger; social, economic, developmental and political. They exist only so that another egomaniacal African can be addressed as president and for him/her to build a dirty fiefdom for himself and family. As dysfunctional sub-African socio-economic and accidental haphazard political constructions, these African monstrous political entities have no discernible *raison d'être*. They merely wear the pretentious garb of state entities that entrap an alienated and disaffected billion plus humanity within a crushing global order. Meanwhile, that systemic order is founded on the norms, values, preferences, prejudices, protocols and prerogatives of a hegemonic External Other driving the systemic order in absolute discountenance of any interventions or inputs from Africans and the continent in their subservient locales.

In actuality and entrapped in its self-absorbing ghettos, the African universe is a complicit net absorber of impositions and a willing object of systemic diktats. Compromised and ensnared in a tangential location with scant locus in this oppressive global structure, the urgent salience for holistic emancipation as well as the debilitating challenge of Pan-Africanism in the new millennium could not be more starkly expressed or more daunting. The situation, compounded by massive distortion of the African spiritualities instigated to align with the dominant order, is also driving a process of ferocious defection from black and African identity. The African burden is thus total: across the main arteries of timelessness and traversing every realm of futuristic human endeavour and in the whole of quotidian life expressions. Together, the fictive sovereignties,

contingent nationalisms, distorted spiritualities and the consequential identity defections of a defeated people surviving in a zone of a rationalised compromise of their human essences and undervaluation of their integrity, constitute the contours of the ghettos of a truly defined emancipatory Pan-Africanism.

With these self-repudiatory processes unfolding across the board, Africa is holed up in the ghettos of a future long abandoned to the precarious vicissitudes of a replicating old past still outside its control. Its feeble response to the oppressive context of its contemporaneous being is gripped by counterfeited articulations of platitudes. The core principles and immutable tenets of Pan-Africanism across vital existential realms – intellectual, political, economic, cultural and

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spiritual – have suffered such grave and convenient distortions. The related epistemic firmament is suffused with the irreverence of denuding interpretive formulations peddled by revisionist apologists in often poorly researched scholarship. They survive as convenient pseudo-intellectual cheap barmaids in the taverns of an extant destructive continental establishment and a deleterious status quo. The outcome has been a steady and incremental attempt to vacate the authentic and historically validated substantive and normative delineations of the core essences of Pan-Africanism. This has been the major task of the purveyors of the dominant quackery of all times. But there is the incontestable proclamation of time and hindsight.

There is and can only be one historically sanctioned and consolidated concept of Pan-Africanism. The Pan-

Africanism of its early propagators and disciples, from Henry Sylvester Williams, through Marcus Garvey, WEB Du Bois, Alain Locke, the Panamanian Marie Du Chatellier, Edward Wilmot Blyden, originally from the Virgin Islands, the lawyer Casely-Hayford from the Gold Coast (Ghana), and the Sudano-Egyptian Dusé Mohamed Ali, all envisaged one cathedral of the common whole in a permanently interwoven and unionised communion for the total emancipation of black humanity. This dedicated aspiration was to counter the real threat of the rise of monstrosities and contrivances that proved prescient in the emergence of the burden of unholy socio-political configurations and betrayals of the long moment that have kept the spirit of the whole dilapidated and in perpetual torment. These have been in confrontation with the vision of Pan-Africanism.

The early internal challenge to the integrity of the Pan-African vision was through the insertion of black fifth columnists, representing and in the service of the French establishment, mostly from francophone colonies in Africa and the Caribbean into the discursive space. Early in the critical years of the formulation of Pan-Africanism, Blaise Diagne and Gratien Candace, both French politicians of Senegalese and Guadeloupien descent respectively, challenged the expressed commonality of the destiny of blacks and Africans. They raised the only dissenting voices at the 1921 Second Pan-African Congress that convened in sessions spread across the cities of London, Paris and Brussels. Both were representing Senegal and Guadeloupe in the French Chamber of Deputies. Acting as a proxy of white France, they abandoned the idea of Pan-Africanism instead advocating equal rights inside French citizenship. They declared that the future of blacks in French colonies in black Africa and the Diaspora lay as incorporated elements of French civilisation. Diagne was the intellectual precursor of his compatriot Leopold Sedar Senghor's strand of Negritude that amplified that same thesis, while at the same time weeping that the white France should treat blacks as equals. His Negritude was the nadir of self-imposed black indignity. While

Senghor was at it, France was being taught lessons on racial and national pride elsewhere in Algeria and Indo-China. With the crushing influence of the likes of Senghor, Francophone Africa is one large consolidated expanse of the ghettos of Pan-Africanism. It has produced a galaxy of minions in obscure African state houses under the inflexible influence of France. It is not a coincidence that not one of the five winners of the Mo Ibrahim prize has come from Francophone Africa. The most loyal are rewarded with false accolades and honours like the France instituted Sedar Senghor peace prize.

Predating the formation of the African Association in 1897 was the struggle instigated by Absalom Jones and Cyril Allen in Philadelphia in 1777 to re-infuse some modicum of dignity to the physical expression of the Black being even in death and in life's terminal minutes. It is supremely ironical that the final voluntary capitulation of Africa was at the cusp of national independence and in Africa by Africa's opportunistic villains. The Accra 1963 watershed in the triumph of the dolorous existent dissipated the outcome of centuries old sacrifices in a timeless struggle for holistic emancipation that taxed every black human being. The struggle predated this infamous club of men whose life careers were ultimately proven to be driven by self-aggrandisement that was far divorced from the singular spiritual cause of black humanity for the validation of the integrity of its being. Through their actions to advance infinitely narrow personal agendas, they bankrupted history and black humanity.

In 1963, the great derailment of the historic aspiration of black humanity occurred. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), a caricature that was born through this incubus, reflected the triumph of petty personal ambitions of conservative forces over the ultimate unfathomable historic and timeless African public good. That was exactly what the enemies of Africa wanted. Half a century and a decade after, the defunct OAU and its latter day scant metamorphosis in the so-called African Union provide the evidence of the countermanding of a people's destiny.

We look no further than to the pitiable role of these parodies of Pan-

Africanism to validate their credentials as a historic emasculation of the true pulse of the African people. The constituent constituencies of an organisation bonded and defined by orgiastic affinities in a closed circuit of corrupted individual cultic traducers of a broken black humanity as their common platform determined to wreck the future of black humanity was horrible enough. All monstrosities, self-acclaimed stinking local heroes with feet of clay, are welcome as members in good standing. No moral compunctions. The killing state is the normative expression in the ghettos of corrupted Pan-Africanism. Idi Amin, Mobutu Sese Seko, Sani Abacha, Omar Bongo, Sassou Nguesso, Robert Mugabe, Bernardino Viera, Charles Taylor, Obiang Mbasogo, Houphouet Boigny, Pierre Nkurunziza, Joseph Kabila, and Paul Biya are all in good company. Notwithstanding the exceptional leadership of the likes of Pedro Verona Pires of Cape Verde, who was awarded the Mo Ibrahim prize because he had helped transform the tiny island country off the West African coast into a "model of democracy, stability and increased prosperity" and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, with membership mostly of the former cast, the OAU became the validator of the emasculation of the African spirit. Their latter day African Union has not fared any better.

So as then and famously now, the undercurrent of the challenge of institutionalising authentic Pan-Africanism would seem to be the internal politics and the personal ambitions of the major actors. These considerations that hampered the institution of true Pan-African structures and institutions have remained the permanent impediments to progressive advances. Every champion of the authentic Pan-African vision from Marcus Garvey through to Kwame Nkrumah and Muammar Gaddafi has been denounced on grounds of self-aggrandisement by opponents of the true Pan-Africanism. They have also largely suffered sorry fates. The horrible end of Pan-Africanists of the authentic strand has included savage elimination in conspiracies almost always instigated by and involving local rivals beholden to foreign interests. Marcus Garvey,

abandoned in a London flat, lonely, died sick and in penury. The pantheon of Pan-African heroes includes Cheikh Anta Diop who had to contend with his nemesis in the person of the preeminent French stooge and negritude exponent Senghor who incarcerated him. Frantz Fanon, reputed for his theory that some neuroses are socially generated,⁶ was an early critic of post-colonial administrations which failed to achieve true freedom from colonial institutions and also wean the population people from the trauma of colonialism by instituting a new consciousness from the newly liberated from colonial enslavement. For Fanon, a descendant of enslaved Africans and indentured Indians, born on the Caribbean island of Martinique, which was then a French colony, the rise of corruption, ethnic division, racism, and economic dependence on former colonial states resulted from the mediocrity of Africa's elite leadership class.⁷ Fanon literally suffered the same fate as Marcus Garvey, dying lonely in the United States. Kwame Nkrumah fell to the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA)-inspired coup led by infamous men who were later executed in Ghana's revolutionary moment. Thomas Sankara was betrayed and murdered by another French poulain in Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore. Compaore later fled the wrath of burning Ouagadougou streets after helping to crush the revolutionary ferment in West Africa by springing the French instigated Forces Nouvelles in Côte d'Ivoire against the Pan-Africanist couple, Simone Ehiwet and Laurent Koudou Gbagbo. In this pantheon of grace are Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, Muammar Gaddafi, and Samora Machel. All of them were brutally murdered in plots orchestrated by hegemonic forces, France, Portugal, the United States of America and the murderous machinery of the Apartheid South African state. Living Pan-African legends include Laurent and Ehiwet Gbagbo. Both have been incarcerated by proxy institutions of hegemonic forces, the International Criminal Court, (ICC) that is acting out the scripts of their extra-African controllers. Thabo Mbeki is visibly the last man of his generation standing for the cause. They struggled against and

denounced the evolution towards 56 little personal chapels and little sects perched on their governing pitiable canticles of doom. There is no denying, even by the traducers, the palpable torment of this long moment of Africa's internment in the ghettos.

In the context of this pervasive fundamental violence against the revolutionary ferment of authentic Pan-Africanism and the associated convenient and partisan devaluation of its historically legitimated frame of reference for practical action, the vitality of black humanity in the pursuit of its holistic emancipation is compromised. Accordingly, the acknowledgement of the irreducible commonality of the destiny of black humanity flowing from a sense of a unified and common being forged in the crucible of the blunt horrors and sharpness of an ancient historicity is integral to absolute re-appropriation of the complete wholeness of this strand of humanity. These constructions of a defining irreducible denominator in the commonality are validated by the ancient assault against this being.

The peculiar historicity imposes the imperatives to robustly negate the strangulating existential realities in the certain descent of black humanity into the very nadir of insignificance and irrelevance in the schemes of human affairs. This can be achieved by instigating a movement to oppose the continued entrapment in the ghettos of these de-legitimated visions. The imperative challenge is a radical repudiation and final revolutionary rejection of the horrors of the existent in all its manifestations; political, economic, social and spiritual. This comprehensive rejection would entail the revalidation of the authentic original and axiomatic principles of Pan-Africanism through a deconstruction of the existent weighed against the wholeness of the understandings of the oneness and commonality of the destiny of the race.

Minka Makalaki traces the antecedence of Pan-Africanism to African diasporic activist-intellectuals who convened the first Pan-African conferences. He dates the first of these to the Chicago Conference on Africa of August 14, 1893. Lasting a week,

conference participants are cited as including among others, Henry McNeal Turner and Alexander Crummell, the Egyptian Yakub Pasha, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church bishop Alexander Walters. Makalaki observes that a few years later, the Trinidadian barrister Henry Sylvester Williams seized on a political movement organised around a series of conferences that would draw representatives of the "African race from all the parts of the world." Toward this end in September 1897, Williams established the African Association (AA) to "encourage a feeling of unity [and] facilitate friendly intercourse among Africans," and "promote and protect the interests of all subjects claiming African descent, wholly or in part, in British Colonies and other places, especially in Africa. Significantly, the AA's leadership was representative of the African diaspora: Rev. H. Mason Joseph of Antigua served as chairman; T. J. Thompson of Sierra Leone was deputy chairman, while the South African woman A. V. Kinloch was treasurer. As honorary secretary, Williams quickly directed the African Association into politics. The seamless articulation of the common interests of the black race was notable.

Tracing the evolution of the Pan-African movement, Ramla Bamidele observes that by 1900 only two African nations had escaped subjugation: Abyssinia (Ethiopia), which had roundly defeated the Italian army in 1896, and Liberia, which had deployed diplomacy and its historic alliance with the United States to stave off imperial encroachment. It was against this background that the first Pan-African Congress took place in Westminster Town Hall, London, from July 23rd to the 25th, 1900. The objectives of the Pan-African Congress were clear. The aims and objectives of the Pan-African Association were: to campaign for effective legislation to secure civil and political rights for Africans throughout the world; to encourage educational, industrial and commercial enterprise among peoples of African descent; to produce information and statistics about peoples of Africa and African descent; and to raise funds. Moreover, the delegates hoped to establish a united front of independent

black African states, an objective that would later be resuscitated by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Concrete results of the congress were few, however, and the high hopes for effective Pan-African unity failed to materialise.⁸

The significance of the 1900 Pan-African Congress lies in its deployment of the term "Pan-African" as central to its organising principle. The Congress for the first time brought together leaders of black opinion for the common cause to protect the interests of independent and colonised Africans and peoples of African descent. It is also significant in contributing to the ideas of race unity and a common political organisation, which acquired centrality in the later Pan-African Congresses. Bamidele credits the Pan African Congresses with starting one of the most important dialogues among blacks in global black history.

After Accra 1963, it was the deluge for the authentic Pan-African vision. In its stead counterfeited appropriations of the vision have emerged in many consolidated counter revolutionary structures and institutions. These display their mangled values, devalued ethics, horrible norms and are tended to mainly by caricatures and pretences of statesmen. The defunct Organisation of African Union (OAU) and its nomenclatural transformation to the African Union (AU) express the convenient corruption of Pan-Africanism. They represent the very antithesis of the anticipated seamless unity of the people.

Against this inglorious background, the post-colonial state that emerged post Accra 1963 is thus a weakly institutionalised political environment. The African state largely depends on coercion to assure compliance. Paradoxically, the post-colonial state survives at the expense of the international community. Whatever their limitations in terms of internal contentions about its domestic sovereignty, the basic rule of international legal sovereignty is that recognition is extended to entities, states, with territory and formal juridical autonomy. This state is thus treated by other actors in the international state system in the same manner as individuals treat each other as equals

consistent with the liberal theory of the state.⁹

The African state, like every other state, is an artificial creation. Created in an era of more refined sensibilities at the international level, the Westphalian transplant is unable to impose the development of a loyal citizenry and continues to lack organic roots in society. It is thus an imposed aberration that has sought from its very creation to find a *raison d'être* to legitimise its problematic existence. The embryonic social and political orders born out of the impositions lack legitimacy, since there are no legitimising principles on which the state is anchored. In fact, there is systemic value dissonance, given the lack of convergence in basic values and worldviews around which any legitimising principles could evolve.

The African inter-state system is a product of an attempt at crisis management by hegemonic forces. These powerful elite actors are as engaged in Africa in the post cold war as during the cold war. While the practical expressions of this engagement have altered with the display of greater circumspection, it has not diminished in the manner in which some analysts have posited in the post cold war era. Basically, the African state was designed by its foreign creators as an instrument for the articulation of interest of hegemonic forces. The broad outline of the African state system is a reflection of the perceived historical claims of colonial forces on the continent. The growth, or a lack of it, of the institutions of the post-colonial African state and the lack of evolution of state system is largely the consequence of the pattern of engagement of these states with their original creators. The state lacks an organic will for its very existence as its creation did not result from a manifest will of its people. On its own, this state is not grounded on any principles nor underpinned by any philosophical understandings commonly share by the peoples. The state is thus an alienating political construct that has trapped peoples in them. The boundaries of the quasi Westphalian are thus dehumanised.¹⁰ The nationalisms of these artificial rag flag spaces are dubious. Basil Davidson laments this alienating impact of the post-colonial

states and observes that “instead of building new states from the foundation culture of Africa’s pre-colonial states, Africa had tried to build new states from the foundation culture of colonial states, a very different thing. So independence had not been able to join Africa to its own history and tradition.”¹¹

A major preoccupation of the newly created post-colonial state is the struggle to gain internal legitimacy in the social space of the new state and to concretise its international legitimacy from its very creators. According to O’Brien, “The inhabitants of African states, whether they should be properly designated citizens or subjects, do not readily regard their rulers as providing legitimate authority, and state power does not rest on a secure foundation of popular belief in the right of rulers to rule.”¹² The struggle for intra and international legitimacy

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has become the dominant theme of its very existence. In effect, the post-colonial African state and its system as constructed cannot take Africa far into the evolving millennium.

The profile of the leaders of the African ghetto state is represented by Sese Seko Mubutu of Zaire, Idi Amin of Uganda, Albert Omar Bongo of Gabon, Ibrahim Babaginda and Sani Abacha, both of Nigeria, Theodore Obiang of Equatorial Guinea, Yahyah Jammeh of Gambia, Samuel Kanyan Doe and Charles Taylor of Liberia, Paul Biya of Cameroun, Bernardino Viera of Guinea Bissau, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Hissene Habre of Chad, Idris Ethno Derby also of Chad, Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso and Sassou Nguesso of Congo Brazzaville and Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi. Many of them double as stooges of hegemonic forces that validate them. These include Houphouet Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire, who in collaboration with

the now disgraced Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso unleashed Charles Taylor on West Africa to tear apart the sub-region. The main reason was to derail the sub regional economic project of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS). When he finally passed away, the French establishment, the controllers of his entire life career, instituted a peace prize in his name to sanitise his legacy of violence and pacify memory. But Africa is not deceived. Even Africa's latter day self-acclaimed revolutionary leaders are crumbling to the virus of the ghettos of Pan-Africanism.

Many of these are considered leading lights of a ghettoised Africa. They are prominent players and the leading lights of their beggarly African Union. The profile of Sese Seko Mubutu is suggestive. Joseph Desire Mubutu joined the colonial army of Belgium at age 19 following a formal education in missionary schools. He rose to the rank of a sergeant-major. Following independence, in the power struggle that ensued between Prime Minister Lumumba and President Joseph Kasavubu, Mubutu, now a colonel, sided with the President. In September, 1960, at 29, Mubutu as Chief of Staff of the Army, suspended the government and placed Lumumba, who was subsequently murdered in January 1961, under house arrest. In 1965, he led a coup d'état and proclaimed himself as President. By 1970, as President, he established a political party, the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR) to which all Zaireans were forced to belong. In 1971, he changed the name of the country to Zaire and in 1972, changed his name to Mubutu Sese Seko. These leaders have also formed the exclusive club of Africa's richest families at the expense of the impoverished people entrapped in their traumatised enclaves. The richest people in Africa could easily be former and current presidents and rulers of African countries.¹³ A few examples should suffice.

Sani Abacha, who was a professional soldier throughout his life and Nigeria's former military ruler, died a multi billionaire. Upon his death in 1998, the Nigerian government uncovered over \$3 billion that was held in personal

and proxy bank accounts in tax havens as diverse as Switzerland, Luxembourg, Jersey and Liechtenstein. Following a series of negotiations between the Nigerian government and the Abacha family, Abacha's first son, Mohammed, eventually returned \$1.2 billion to the Nigerian government in 2002.

The United States Department of Justice in November, 2011 filed an asset forfeiture claim against property worth over \$70 million owned by Teodorin Nguema Obiang, the 41-year-old first son of Equatorial Guinea's President. The targeted properties, which are believed to have been acquired with the proceeds of corrupt activities, include a \$30 million Malibu mansion, a \$38.5 million Gulfstream jet and \$2 million of Michael Jackson memorabilia. Teodorin Obiang, who serves as Equatorial Guinea's Minister of Forestry and Agriculture even though he spends very little time in the country, is one of Africa's most lavish spenders – despite officially earning just a little over \$6,500 a month. Earlier, the French National Police raided his 42 Avenue Foch home in Paris, where they seized his \$10 million car collection as part of a foreign aid money-laundering investigation. Some of the cars seized in the raid included a Maserati MC12, a Porsche Carrera GT, two Bugatti Veyrons and a Ferrari Enzo, among others. Apart from his Malibu and Paris homes, Obiang also owns plush residences in swanky neighbourhoods in countries like South Africa and Belgium.¹⁴ Also, the oldest daughter of the Angolan president, José Eduardo dos Santos, who is Africa's richest woman, has built a vast empire in one of the world's most expensive cities. Her businesses range from telecommunications to banks to satellite TV to sports. In all, she owns a large chunk of Luanda's major businesses. Isabel dos Santos is worth some \$3.2 billion dollars.¹⁵

Following the nature of the post-colonial Africa, state candidates with authentic credentials for leadership are driven out of the political arena. There is thus a flight of credible leadership material from the national process, including politics. Those from the credible pool of leadership who are bold enough to venture into the political

arena are often assassinated. Political engagement in the post-colonial African state is often the reserved domain of the very tough. Also, power is often personalised. Rulers stay in power for as long as they can even when they are severely constrained by physical health to rule. Houphouët Boigny dominated the Ivorian political space for over sixty years before he passed away. Cameroun's Paul Biya, at 83, is still in office. Gabon's Omar Bongo Ondimba remained Africa's longest running head of state having spent 42 years in power. And when they die, they impose their children in dynastic succession. As noted earlier, there are a few exceptions.

The African Union, where they pretend to seriously deliberate on African affairs, has thus become a platform for the continent's most senior despicable renegades, thieves, anti-democrats, with the most dishonourable masquerading as statesmen. They are even too greedy with their looting of their respective national treasuries to fund the AU, their validating platform. They have reduced the African Union into merely a shameless continental begging bowl, just like the states that constitute that body. The AU complements the member states' penchant to carry the calabash around the globe, as if Africa was a poorly endowed geological space.

These developments were not unforeseen. Presciently, Cheikh Anta Diop was clear that at the base of these ephemeral constructions of states and structures was a fundamental contradiction. Only a few of the early political leaders wanted to make the sacrifice necessary for a concretisation of truly Pan-African structures and institutions. Indeed the vision of Pan-Africanism was, under extraneous influences, contested very early in the twentieth century and later, on the intellectual plane, codified in such concepts of Senghor's brand of Negritude. His notion of negritude sought to gain equality and respect within an integrated French international community and culture, rather than promote the vastly degraded communion of black humanity. With the consolidation of the discounted visions of Africa's future in the last half century and a decade since the watershed moments of

1963, it is clear that the revolutionary project of reinstating authentic Pan-Africanism poses a threat to the extant conservative continental establishment. The establishment and status quo, living off in the deep contradictions of the structural and institutional contraptions, thus pose a threat to the much needed authentication of the Pan-African project to resolve the very predicaments that are required in the reinvention of the sordid realities that characterise the extant ghettos of black humanity.

The 56 state structure dividing the African people must be jettisoned. The totality of the spatial and social expanse of African must be reconstructed based on the guiding principles of authentic Pan-Africanism: one consolidated federated African state. That was and remains the authentic spirit and visions of the true champions of the holistic African good. The current and present represent the very ghettos of the dangerously deferred vision of the commonality of Africa and its children. It is the pitiable sour outcome of a hope eternally fermenting. There is no room for this hopeless anachronism in the future of Africa. ■

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