

Keynote address

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## ***Assesment on the Sankara Campaign and relevance of our panafricanist alternative***

Good evening everyone

Thank you for inviting me. I'm delighted to be in Berlin among comrades and friends, and extend greetings to you all, as well as friends and family who couldn't join us, on behalf of my comrades from GRILA, the group for research and initiative for the liberation of Africa. I'm extending warm greetings as well to you all, from members and lawyers of the CIJS, the International Campaign Justice for Sankara that I have the honour to coordinate.

It is a kind of historical revenge to speak here on these topics as a panafricanist. As you all know, it was here in Berlin that European leaders in 1885 agreed on the first free trade agreement of the world then in the Congolese territory. There endless discussions allow bilateral and trilateral treaties avoiding intra-European wars and making the scramble possible for the full balkanisation occupation and dispossession of Africa. But I'm not the only resistant here, I can feel the spirit of Lumumba or Sankara in this room expressed by your panafrican vital energy. I can feel the empathy for the congolese people who again, the past 10 years, paid by millions the price of an unjust globalisation. So allow me to have, a minute of silence in memory of all the anonymous resistants as well as Thomas Sankara and his comrades for their struggles and sacrifices.

Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso's first president, was assassinated 25 years ago. But the identity of his killers remains unresolved. Marking the anniversary of his birth, our campaigners draw attention to the continuing struggle for justice for Sankara.

October 15 was the 25th commemoration of his assassination. Last year his grave has been vandalised but no one was charged for the crime. Sankara's comrades and family will celebrate his birthday on December 21, he would have been 63, knowing how useful his presence would have been for 21st century Africa. In the 21st century, pan-Africanism is at a crossroads while our continent is being attacked by new and complex forms of imperialism, as well as the political decay of consciousness of many of our elites.

Nevertheless, Sankara's message and work remain relevant, both for our continent and the world. I'm proud for participating in the release with the Rosa Luxembourg foundation and Afric Avenir, of the brand new book on most of his speeches and writings. It is accompanied by a series of articles of renowned activists and scholars, and I have had the honour to join them and also to write the postface. It is however a pity that a lot of people in Burkina will not be

able to read it. First because of censorship, and we will make everything possible to by-pass it. Second because of high rate of illiteracy. Many again today have difficulty to understand our fight against impunity, and bourgeois justice and for more social justice. As Thomas Sankara himself said in 1984 at the first session of the People's revolutionary courts :  
«In a society such as ours, here the population is 95 percent illiterate and held in obscurantism and ignorance by the ruling classes, bourgeois law, defying all common sense, dares assert that "ignorance of the law is no excuse."».

Thomas Sankara embodied the hope for change that was based primarily on the efforts of the people of his country, his fellow citizens. It was the last African revolution, interrupted by the bloodshed of 1987, just as it was starting to bear promising fruit. At 37, like Che Guevara, Sankara joined the pantheon of revolutionaries. The former Upper Volta, which he renamed Burkina Faso, was landlocked; its development is externally driven and dependent on international finance. It is a society in permanent quest for food self-sufficiency; people of working age are obliged to emigrate, continuing the country's vocation as a regional provider of cheap labour; and the elite maintains the status quo. In other words, a society with the usual characteristics of neo-colonial development. Thomas Sankara, among other priorities, focused on agriculture and farmers to stimulate national revival. He sought to create an internal market for a variety of consumer goods accessible to the masses and meet the greatest number of basic needs. He promoted social justice, women's emancipation and changes in men's attitudes toward women as portray in this excerpt of his speech :

«Posing the question of women in Burkinabé society today means posing the abolition of the system of slavery to which they have been subjected for millennia. The first step is to try to understand how this system works, to grasp its real nature in all its subtlety, in order then to work out a line of action that can lead to women's total emancipation. In other words, in order to win this battle that men and women have in common, we must be familiar with all aspects of the woman question on a world scale and here in Burkina. We must understand how the struggle of the Burkinabè woman is part of a worldwide struggle of all women and, beyond that, part of the struggle for the full rehabilitation of our continent. Thus, women's emancipation is at the heart of the question of humanity itself, here and everywhere. The question is thus universal in character».<sup>1</sup>

Thomas took a patriotic approach to managing public funds, campaigning against debt and the impoverishment of Africa, and agitating for internationalism that challenged the subordination of Africa by the global economic system. In short, he took on many radical initiatives that confronted the norms of the global system. He quickly alienated himself from local, regional and international supporters, especially from within his own backyard in Francafrique.

Sankara's assassination, along with eleven of his comrades, and the wave of political crimes which followed, brought a bloody end to Africa's true last revolutionary experience. I said last on purpose, no revolutionary transformation has occurred ever since, even if the radical

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Sankara, Speech, The revolution cannot triumph without the emancipation of women, March 8, 1987

upheavals in North Africa did overthrow regimes, they have not fully give the power to the people and yet not started to change the means of production anywhere.

The people of Burkina Faso, Africa and the international community are still waiting to find out how the assassination happened and who was responsible for it. It's likely there was a joint international and local plot behind the killing of Sankara and his ten comrades. For two decades his death certificate cites 'natural causes' – at the same time as a dozen of other people – no explanation for their deaths has ever been given and to this day no-one knows exactly where he is buried by the inmates obliged to dig nightly. Suspicion for the assassination falls on his best friend and «brother», Blaise Compaoré, backed by a complex network of external supporters. Minister of Justice at the time of Sankara's death, Compaoré is still president of Burkina Faso.

It is in this context, that the Sankara family and GRILA have taken a historic initiative 15 years ago. The impunity built into the system in Burkina Faso has been shaken by CIJS's (International Justice for Sankara Campaign) 15-year international campaign, Justice for Sankara.<sup>2</sup> Having exhausted all legal channels in Burkina Faso, our legal community brought the matter to the UN Human Rights Committee, which set a precedent in Africa and within the United Nations when is recognised the violations of the state:

*'The refusal to lead an enquiry into the death of Thomas Sankara, the lack of official recognition at the place of his death, and the failure to correct his death certificate constitute inhumane treatment of Madame Sankara and her sons, in contradiction of Article 7 of the agreement (12.2). The family of Thomas Sankara has the right to know the circumstances of his death (...) The Committee considers that the refusal to lead an enquiry into the death of Thomas Sankara, the lack of official recognition at the place of his death, and the failure to correct his death certificate constitute inhumane treatment of Madame Sankara and her sons...'*

But the Human Rights Committee did not retain the bidding right to demand an enquiry, nor did it demand compensation or recognition of Sankara's burial place. Paradoxically, Burkina Faso has not provided any evidence to prove the authenticity of the burial place. The compensation offered to the family came to – around €66,231 or US\$65,000, not even the widow's normal pension since his death. Some experts estimated, due to a strange typo, that the sum was more generous (\$650,000/43 400 450 FCFA) and that the State made an effort by crossing out the word 'natural' on the odious death certificate, which claimed that Sankara had died of natural causes. Despite the amendment of the figure by lawyers and the fact that Sankara pilgrims to a grave in the cemetery are not proof that he is buried there, the Human Rights Committee declared in April 2008 that it was satisfied with its findings and had no intention of taking the matter any further.

But the CIJS pursued the fight against impunity, especially as Burkina Faso continued to rack up other prosecutable violations; an enquiry should have been opened following new revelations from the protagonists in these sinister events –at the very least, they should have finally officially given their version of events. Statements made by General Tarnue, already assigned as evidence by CIJS, have been corroborated by unpublished revelations by Liberia's

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.grila.org/sankara\\_english.htm](http://www.grila.org/sankara_english.htm)

Senator Johnson at a reconciliation commission, charging President Compaoré and his regime with the murder of Sankara, in conspiracy with former Liberia president Taylor. In Taylor's final cross-examination at the criminal tribunal at the Hague on 25 August 2009 <sup>3</sup>he denied involvement, alleging that he was under arrest in Ghana at the time, but he erred on the guilt of Compaoré during his interrogation, before retracting his statements. ('I was still in jail when Blaise Compaoré killed them -- during the killing of Thomas Sankara, because I can't say he killed, but he didn't do it himself. I was in prison in Ghana...') he said. Taylor was recently condemned by the tribunal. I have personally asked President Jerry Rawlings about this jail story. Rawlings himself was embarrassed because the Ghanaian authorities have probably been pressured to release him for that plot.

In RAI's documentary '**Ombre Africaine**'<sup>4</sup>, another Liberian General Momo Jiba who was Compaoré's bodyguard, follows in the direction of Tarnue and Johnson, providing new insights into Sankara's assassination and claiming, in front of a hidden camera, that Compaoré fired personally during the killing, and that the coup was an international plot supported by the CIA. In **an interview with journalist Keith Harmon Snow**, his colleague Norbert Zongo – since assassinated by the Compaoré regime – also reported the support of Mossad and the CIA to the Compaoré regime. All these witnesses said they feared for their lives and refused to give more details about the matter. We have compiled other evidences. The truth must be known so that the Burkinabe can move on from an era of impunity.

President Compaoré, Sankara's suspected killer who still never revealed where his body is, after been named mediator in the Guinea crisis said on Radio France International, without missing a beat: 'We cannot tolerate that there are still discussions in Guinea about disappeared people whose bodies have not been found'. <sup>5</sup>

Compaore is very instrumental in the actual crisis in Ivory coast as well as the kidnapping of foreigners in the Sahara, and the northern occupation of Mali. He seems to be playing several games, one side with francAfrique, some with obscure integrist regional forces, another with the CIA in the American plan to secure military intelligence and geopolitical control of our continent.<sup>6</sup> So, that is why, last week as I was in the city of Washington D.C, once called by

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<sup>3</sup> (see page 27602),

<http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=pr6j5%2bbmsc%3d&tabid=160>

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[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChDY4zbMHes&eurl=http://www.youtube.com/user/lhommeintegre&feature=player\\_profilepage#t=22](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChDY4zbMHes&eurl=http://www.youtube.com/user/lhommeintegre&feature=player_profilepage#t=22)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/118/article\\_85342.asp](http://www.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/118/article_85342.asp)

<sup>6</sup> According to some recent American findings, there are at least 21 individual Offices of Security Cooperation for military activities with "African partner nations." With roughly 5000 American working full time on the field. The Stuttgart based (AFRICOM), slowly redeployed in Camp Lemonnier so-called only official U.S. base is now expanded by a web of activities: East Africa Combined Joint Task Force -- Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA); Ethiopia's Camp Gilbert and Arba Minch airport with drone's operations and military intelligence in all the region; Manda Bay in Kenya; Djibouti, Seychelles, Djema in Central Africa republic, Military facilities in Kigali, Bujumbura; and Kampala and Ouagadougou for all the Sahelian region; counter-terrorism training and

JFK « a city of southern efficiency and northern charm» I beg to the participants, most of them African, to become the true southern efficiency to convince the Obama administration to distance itself from the Compaore regime.

Friends, Thomas Sankara's body was never found and that's why Me Nkounkou introduced a confinement request procedure, which the authorities dismissed last June.

Following up on UN decision, CIJS is still waiting for the authorities to prove that the supposed tomb of Sankara is indeed his.<sup>7</sup> On 15 October 2009, the legal committee of the CIJS, represented by Me Nzeppa, Prosper Farama and Benewende Sankara, filed a request for a subpoena and order for the DNA of the corpse in the sepulchre, erected by the Burkina Faso government, to be compared with that of Sankara's children. We are still waiting for the state to make a decision on our request; it is possible that the act of vandalism against Sankara's supposed tomb is linked to our request. But the fight against impunity must continue.

Impunity perpetuates the assassination of internationalists who dare influence the development of their people towards meeting basic needs. Sankara embodied what we still cherish, a self-directed, Pan-African development; making a radical break with the previous disorder but also from rigid cultural attitudes. A project which needed popular support, the enthusiasm of the masses, a sense of sacrifice by the 'haves' – in short a set of conditions that made of Thomas, like certain other of his illustrious pan-African predecessors, visionaries ahead of their time. Not that their vision of society is not still valid. It is just as vital to have national and popular support; since vicious episodes are inherent in any break with 'compradorisation' and capitalist globalisation, in which many laudable initiatives across the continent have perished. Thomas's mistake was perhaps to believe that he had strong enough alliances, but also to have underestimated the reactionary fringe that was plotting against him.

Recently French comrades **issued a petition** calling people to support our campaign and demanding an inquiry into France's role in the Sankara affair. We encourage you to **sign it**.

In a letter to GRILA and the lawyers, Thomas' widow Mariam Sankara, wrote: 'You are pioneers in defending the memory of my spouse. If many others have taken up the torch again, it is thanks to you. You have the merit and the courage to continue my quest for the truth about the assassination of Thomas Sankara... this quotation from Seneca illustrates it: 'It is not because it is difficult that people don't dare. It is because we don't dare that it is difficult'. In a message addressed to her people, Mariam Sankara, repeating the popular

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military cooperation with Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Niger, and Tunisia, Lybia... AFRICOM after Atlas Drop 2011 operation has 14 joint-training manoeuvres to be achieved by the end of 2012, in Cameroon, Gabon, Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, Senegal, and Nigeria. The coup in Mali was lead by an american trained soldier despite of the long military support to Malian former head of State Touré, and the insurgent touaregs and so called islamists are mainly forces that were combatants, or are using arms coming from the lybian destabilisation. More details in **Obama's Scramble for Africa Secret Wars, Secret Bases, and the Pentagon's 'New Spice Route' in Africa** By Nick Turse, July 2012, in [TomDispatch.com](http://TomDispatch.com)

<sup>7</sup> Entrevue Burkina 24, Aziz Salmone Fall, <http://burkina24.com/news/2012/10/special-15-octobre-aziz-salmone-fall-prouvez-nous-que-cette-tombe-parmi-la-dizaine-issue-de-ces-assassinats-est-bien-celle-de-thomas/>

saying, insisted, 'Whatever the length of the night, the day will appear'. She still continues to call for unity, resistance and determination, remembering how much Sankara's message and objectives remain current. In Latin America, new forms of regional integration still resonate with the Africa-Latin America Summit, where Venezuela's Hugo Chavez just reelected quoted Sankara at length in his 1984 speech: 'We could look for the best forms of organisation, better suited to our civilisation, rejecting in a clear and definitive way all forms of external imposition, to create proper conditions, to match our ambitions. No longer focused on surviving, we release the pressure, free our campaign from mediaeval inaction, democratise society, awaken our minds to a universe of collective responsibility, to dare to invent the future.' Artists like Didier Awadi, Smokey, Sam'ka and a web of cultural initiatives promote resistance and panafricanism as sankarists variations.

Brothers and Sisters, the capitalism is in crisis, even if just look as a crisis of capitalism.<sup>8</sup> I am giving the name 'supraimperialism' to the particular form of hegemon that neoliberal financialised oligopolies has imposed through globalisation during the past 30 years. Its contradictions impel it to intensify the capitalist mode of production, dispossession and predatory consumption although this is bound to be a blind alley. The most critical tension in the system will be played out between three declining centres - the US, Japan and Europe - and the emerging countries whose leading runners BRICS, - Brazil, Russia, India and China South Africa - are as much capable of reinvigorating capitalism as of speeding up its chances of being steered in another direction. The latter can only happen if they opt to start in a self-centred surge within a more multi-centred world. But it is also likely that their bourgeois elites will rather fall in the *moneytheism* of the actual truncated globalisation. More pain and less gain for the masses is then to be expected !

In this regard, the class interests of the BRICS' leaders and of their people will be decisive. The case of South Africa is a microcosm of the apartheid on a global scale and it must alert us. Africa, which contributes so much to global growth, is nevertheless, still very much locked in the cash economy of the old international division of labour. This order is increasingly synonymous with the resources sold off by transnational corporations and local business people unconcerned about the condition and fate of the Africans. The strategy of imperialistic forces to control our resources and our resistance by military power will not fade. A recent French Strategy military report for the next 30 years describe panafricanism as a threat to western interest.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Samir Amin, *La crise, sortir de la crise du capitalisme ou sortir du capitalisme en crise* (Paris: Editions Le Temps des Cerises, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Des crises dites « identitaires », fruit de l'instrumentalisation de catégories communautaires par certains acteurs politiques et économiques (partage du pouvoir et des richesses), pourront encore survenir. Le fondamentalisme, voire le radicalisme, religieux, tant musulman que chrétien, pourrait progresser, en l'absence de perspective d'intégration économique et politique des populations les plus pauvres et, surtout, des jeunes. Parallèlement – et paradoxalement – les sentiments nationalistes et/ou panafricains pourraient se développer, parfois au détriment des intérêts occidentaux. In <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/base-de-medias/documents-telechargeables/das/documents-prospective-de-defense/horizons-strategiques-2012/horizons-strategiques-approches-regionales>

Fanon gave us a clear warning of this: 'Africa will be free. Yes, but she must get down to work and not lose sight of her own unity. It was in this spirit that, among others, one of the most important points of the first meeting of All-African Peoples' Conference at Accra in 1958 was adopted. The African peoples, it was said in this resolution, commit themselves to forming a militia that will be responsible for supporting the African peoples in their struggle for independence.'<sup>10</sup>

Instead, after a 20th century full of brutal imperialist interventions, our people, paralysed and divided, are participating in a 21st century that looks as though it will continue in the same way. In 2011, we have been presented with some 14,000 incidents of NATO combat aircraft bombing targets, often civilian, in Libya, the cold blood assassination of Ghadafi. We also saw the neo-colonial recolonisation of the Ivory Coast, the dismantling of Mali and the creeping extension of AFRICOM, for various pretexts, in the ranks of our armies and territories. Counter revolution is rampant in Maghreb; More indirect hegemony from China India and Qatar; and a mushrooming transnational big and juniors pillaging resources...land grabbing, and other forms of dispossessions in the great lake region... Return to the nightmare of apartheid bloody repressions against workers in South Africa...

The barbarity is fostered by the unyielding expansion of a capitalism in crisis that replies with counter-revolution every time we make advances in our struggles. Everywhere, it leads to compromises to which the social democratic and even radical left forces succumb, afraid of putting up opposition on an uneven playing field. However, there is nothing left to reform. In ther so called- new order The so called international cooperation, the declaration of Paris with its 'aid' effectiveness, Trojan horses NGOs and the apologetic bilateral enthusiasms no longer convince our people.

The instrumentalisation of multilateral forums is even more pronounced than in the last century. The IMF, the World Bank and WTO have been preserved, despite their obsolescence and their obvious failure, as instruments reproducing the international order. However, the latter has been slowly overtaken by a transnational order where the role of the large corporations, as well as major culturalist ditch and civilisational gaps, cannot be regulated by the G20. This means a gradual world governance by a G20 that has no democratic mandate to do so. The UN had the regulatory mandate but has been transformed into a chamber for recording the wishes of NATO, and new tools such as the right to interfere at a humanitarian level and the responsibility to protect have torn to pieces the international Law to some of the most powerful strategic benefits.

What Fanon said about the sequestration of Congo still resonates: 'Lumumba's mistake was firstly to believe in the good-natured impartiality of the UN. He strangely forgot that the UN currently is no more than a reserve assembly set up by the powerful to continue between two armed conflicts the 'peaceful struggle' over how to share out the world'... 'Our mistake as Africans is to have forgotten that the enemy's retreat is never trustworthy. He never

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<sup>10</sup> Fanon Frantz, Fanon Frantz, Pour la révolution africaine, FM/Petite collection Maspero, Paris, 1978, p172

understands. He capitulates, but does not change'.<sup>11</sup>

More than ever, the revolutionary imperative seems appropriate and the progress enabled by the fall of apartheid, and the recent upset of senile autocracies in North Africa must be followed through. Along the same lines, the colonial struggle of Fanon's days has been substituted by the struggle against neocolonialism and the retrogressive influences that are as 'comprador' as those vast sections of our societies that have been alienated and confused by the mirages of capitalism.

'The inter-African solidarity must be real, a solidarity in action, a concrete solidarity of people, resources and money.' recommended Fanon.

The African Union - that replaced the Organisation for African Unity - is for many of our fellow citizens an institution that is distant from their real concerns; it resembles a union of heads of state that cannot afford its own policies. Libya was the only African country without debt. The assassination of Gaddafi is bringing about a loss of finances for the African Union that was so unfortunately dependent on Libyan funds. Libya had ended up paying a third of the operational costs of the organisation as numerous countries were no longer contributing. In fact, with Libya, Algeria, South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt each contribute a little less than 15 percent of the expenses. Apart from this embarrassing quirk, surely we must deplore the fact that these African countries only contribute on average eight percent of the AU budget, while the rest comes from foreign partners and donors. Jean Ping would have to admit, before losing his reelection, that finance from outside Africa amounts to more like 77 percent. (Officially, the AU budget for 2011 was predicted to be US\$256,754,447 of which \$122,602,045 would come from member states and \$134,152,402 from international donors).

It is not only the funding that is problematic. The debate about the sort of pan-Africanism we want to construct has not started yet. There is a patent lack of political will and the Monrovia group, which has symbolically taken over from the Casablanca group, is dominating thinking. The most important aspects of this thinking - which may by chance be progressive - turn out to be unworkable. The members of the organisation still believe in the feasibility of NEPAD, a scarcely viable project left to the discretion of the West and whose futility for the continent we had already demonstrated at its launch at the Kananaskis G8 summit.<sup>12</sup> Today, Sankara would be deploring the fact that Africa still does not have a continental developing plan and that is why we are encouraging a move in this direction by offering the alternative of pan-African self-reliance (panafricentrage).<sup>13</sup>

Pan-Africanism would gain in fact by being geared towards two requirements suggested by panafricentrage: the reconstruction of what it is to be African, our cultural unity, and a forward-looking renewal to control accumulation and develop our productive capacity. Both

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid* p194-195

<sup>12</sup> Aziz S. Fall, GRILA, [Annotated critique of the 200 points in NEPAD](#)

<sup>13</sup> [panafrikanismusforum.net](http://panafrikanismusforum.net) and the talk on Panafrican Self Reliance [Panafricentrage](#)

need to return to the question of progress and modernity and, therefore, development and decide on other homeomorphic imperatives (that is, those that challenge their local equivalent). 'Africanity' and the pan-African renewal could both be based on a balance between maa't and internationalism - in other words, the fertile roots that provide for a harmonious future for Africa and its diaspora. To reconnect, without narcissistic attachment to the past, with our common roots; to regenerate them scientifically after all the assaults in our history that have led to amnesia and apathy. The revitalisation of pan-Africanism rely on many urgent needs.

Among them, the fact that the moment has come to set up an international and pan-African conference on the land and resources grabbing in Africa, especially agricultural land, following the example of Trinidadian lawyer Henry Sylvester Williams who launched a similar event in 1900, thereby inspiring the pan-African movement. We won't reinvent the wheel, but must revisit the work of WEB Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Lamine Senghor, Garan Kouyate, Price Mars CLR James, Padmore, Casely Hayford, Luthuli., Alioune Diop and Présence africaine... They were to fire the pan-African congresses and projects. Their legacy is perpetuated by their successors such as Lumumba, Ben Barka, Fanon, Nkrumah, Cabral, Sankara, Rosa Parks, Makonnen, Malcom X, Booker T Washington, Kenyatta, Sobukwe, Nyerere, Diop, Rodney, Neto, Chris Hani, Mandela... These future ancestors are still a shining light for us.

The reconstruction of revolutionary pan-Africanism offers us not only a critique of eurocentric Africanism, but also a rigorous and above all objective and historical review of Africa and its contribution to the arrival of globalisation. We must first fully recognise humanity's monocentric origin that refuses all forms of racism and eugenics; the anteriority of the ancient negro-African civilisations needs to be re-established as does their contribution, like those of subsequent traditional periods, to the building up of global systems. There is also the need to understand how Africa was of service to Europe's periphery, that is the Americas, before herself moving onto the fringes of capitalism. This is where she still is, in an unjust and out-dated division of labour that is perpetuated by internal, predatory dynamics. For example, UNICEF seems powerless to prevent the death of about 29,000 children under five every day - 21 a minute - chiefly from preventable causes. One child in eight in Africa dies before reaching the age of five.<sup>14</sup>

Nobody will save our people; we must do it ourselves and soon we will be one billion of whom three quarters still live exposed to various lack of basic needs. The need for renewal involves the struggle against the almost collective amnesia relating to the real history of Africa and its diaspora, but above all it involves the need to start learning lessons from the anti-imperialist struggles and decolonisation; the independences that had to be negotiated, struggles for national liberation, post-apartheid syndroms and, most of all, the failure of institutional Pan-africanism. It entails admitting that the complete liberation of Africa and its diaspora has yet to be achieved.

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<sup>14</sup> [UNICEF](#)

This requires a bold reorganisation of the forces of change, especially our youth who, despite their capacity for outrage and reaction, have lived through more than two decades of depoliticisation and political disaffection. This phenomenon was maintained as much by our states being disengaged from the economy and functioning as puppets of the Bretton-Woods institutions and other donors as by the diminishing field of vision of many of our more and more fragmented political parties mired in scenarios of artificial pluralist democracies and co-opted civil society. We have to make an essential and immense effort to create strategies and unity, but we also need a certain introspection in order to have respect for ourselves and others. In doing this, while many would wish to label 'panafricentrage' as one of the African doctrines, I want to make it clear that 'afrocentricity is preferable to 'afrocentrism'. Afrocentrism, like eurocentrism, is precisely a form of culturalism and other integrisms, blind alleys that need to be critiqued and surpassed.

'Panafricentrage', rather, is a doctrine that draws on its reactivated roots. It can be expressed on the one hand in terms of a philosophy that stresses *maa't* (Not the goddess as such, but merely what it symbolises, in its sense of cosmic, terrestrial and personal balances, honesty, integrity, truth and social justice) and the rediscovery of our historic, socio-cultural and political programmes for regulation. On the other hand, it also depends on a practice of integrity that leads to pan-African and internationalist autocentred progress, which is ecological and not sexist, and which can contribute to a multi-centred world. Here the quest is for a genuine balance, equilibrium very different from the one the world capitalist system pretends in vain to implement. Should I remind you that it still postulates, through market rational choice, that the economy will be able to navigate from balanced to balanced status by the sake of free and transparent competition? In fact, the true economic system never reached such a balanced state because of classes, social and nations antagonist interactions, which impose a comprador horizon to our nation-States. A nation-state cannot control its own accumulation as long as it is still trapped in the imperialist division of labour. The blind openness to market free trade, as well as resigning on options for a national endogenous strategy in favour of subordinate choices of dispossessing investment, will just profit to a few elites and perpetuate the development path. Because cynically that is what development-entwicklung- became after almost 2 centuries.

Panafricentrage instead is a historic materialism, and a historic *maa'terialism* which begins with the historic conditions of material existence of Africans and understands their process of balanced transformation and reproduction in order to achieve a revolutionary praxis. It is up to our working people and the organic intellectuals of Africa and the diaspora to build this alternative against the predatory phases of globalisation that only allow comprador options and their chimeric efforts at continental integration. We have to learn to endure and counter oppression by multiplying and channeling thousands of networks and ramifications that are moving in the same direction as this panafrican impetus.

'Panafricentrage' is a process of acquiring a political and historic awareness of the collective autonomy of the continent. By breaking away discerningly from the dominant capitalism, it favours the control of accumulation and equitable redistribution. It promotes the revaluing of key values of our traditions and ways of being in solidarity. It is a socio-cultural renewal

that potentially enables Africa to make an active contribution to our age.

Moreover, the conditions for the revolutionary awakening are becoming clearer: the global financial crisis; the closure of islands of prosperity to our disillusioned youth wishing to emigrate; the combination of the exasperation that is now affecting not only the poorest classes with the despair that narrows horizons that are clouded by the autumn of senile, predatory capitalist models. Finally, there is a ray of hope, glimpses of dawn that enable us to see the revolutionary advances that have started, timidly, here and there on the continent. Panafricentage advocate convergence in the diversity of panafricanists options. Space is short, but let us illustrate one dimension of it.

## **TOWARDS AN URGENT, AUTOCENTRED STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURE**

The devices of neoliberal recolonisation must be tirelessly combatted, as much with land grabbing as with rapacious commercial crops or the introduction of GMOs. One of the battle fields is the issue of world food and for Africa this is an issue of prime importance as more and more of its land is being sold off while the food problem remains chronic. The world's current food production could feed the planet, but much of the cereals - 40 percent - is used as concentrated fodder for cattle to provide meat for the most affluent. Moreover, the FAO - the UN organisation for food and agriculture - advocates a second green revolution, doubling food production between now and 2050. In the meantime, the rise in food prices is putting more than a billion people at risk of famine and is triggering the cycle of hunger riots.

Autocentred development requires agrarian reform and self-sufficiency in food. We need organic farming methods and appropriate technology. It means production and processing, throughout an agricultural system that is as organic as possible, conforms to a different law of value, with more balance of income between town and country, a strategy for full employment, the fair cost of production and processing, etc. This project takes the form of collective self-reliance, in other words it enables the exchange of products between areas and cross-subsidies between regions of surplus and deficit. The productivity in all types of activities can be spectacular while at the same time generating full employment in the preparation and processing stages of production.

A bio-organic approach to agriculture refuses to use chemical inputs and recycles all its rubbish. It is easy to envisage production of biogas that can be used both to clean the villages and towns and to provide energy. This could be coupled with solar energy to meet the energy needs of the communities. The jobs in growing and processing the crops encourage the people to stay local as their improved incomes and quality of life make the rural exodus less interesting. Biological farming (biomass, rotation, percolation, green pesticides, etc.) is falsely said to be less productive by the industrial producers of pesticides and chemical fertilisers and biotechnologies. An improved concentration per hectare is possible with this integrated, intensive model that preserves the adjoining environment as well as the sustainability of the arable ecosystems. We advocate, therefore, not sustainable, but enduring development. This is at the heart of the construction of an internal market of goods for consumption by the people, based on our products and selective imports that respond to

our essential needs. But here, as elsewhere, there are several obstacles in the way of Panafricentrage. Let us briefly identify the immediate strategic horizons that condition the future struggles of Africa and its diaspora and that are likely to help them triumph with the help of internationalists from the North:

- Self-sufficiency in food, agrarian reform, modernisation of agriculture to the rhythm of each society; markets with goods for mass consumption, to satisfy basic needs ( here we are not talking of a so called food security built by the agribusiness model, but rather a self sufficient agriculture that allow food sovereignty.
- Nationalisation of resources conditional to popular, patriotic participation
- Light industrialisation that complements the agriculture and the rebalancing of urban/rural income. Diversified and as much as possible ecologically modes of industrialisation articulated on regional integration and complementary poles
- Regional and continental integration accelerated by complementarity and levelling out.
- Backing patents and technology that are within our grasp and our means.
- A central bank, a continental currency;
- Continental parliament for the main issues regarding development and security.
- A continental army and a civil brigade for prevention of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction.
- South /south, Tricontinental cooperation against speculation, with internationalists from the North who share with us the fight against impunity, illicit amassment of wealth and the violation of human rights.
- Collective fight against paying the debt; disengage from programmes capping poverty-prsp etc.. and weigh up how to reform the international institutions in favour of internationalist cooperation with a 0.7%,untied ODA.
- Full emancipation of women and change of male mentalities.
- Democratic repolitisation of the people and their own organised efforts to counter imperialism, comprador regimes and anti-progressive behaviours. Active participation of young people in socio-political mechanisms for the making and implementation of decisions.
- Decipher the irresponsible, ostentatious consumerist behaviour and rediscover ways of living solidarity.

- Safeguard natural and environmental resources, by living ecologically and with a social conscience.
- Steer the energy of the progressive diaspora and the life forces of the continent towards Panafricentrage.
- Arrange the return to Africa from the Americas and elsewhere of the African diaspora
- Work for a progressive, humanist, multi-centred world and for the preservation of common 'goods' via development that is both responsible and of the people.

Nobody can predict the outcome of these struggles; the immediate future will rise out of the disruption of the balances of power - the socio-political, economo-cultural, gender and generational. In the meantime, it is a question of consolidating the gains, broadening the scope of a social, humanist and progressive (and, if possible, a creative socialist) response to the unilateral market model with its global apartheid. We must advance into our future, eyes open, uncompromisingly and without nostalgic attachment to the past.

However, for this future to be realised, we need concrete projects, on the scale of social formations, that is state-nations, major social reforms, indeed viable social projects. This does not seem possible to me without attempting selective disengagement and anti-capitalist self-centering and, above all, mutual support by integrating collectively those who opt for such an alternative.

The option for a people's national and democratic movement for Africa (states and peoples) -within a dynamic of Panafrican self-reliance that opposes the logic of compradorisation - would be able to form, through consultation and consistency, a response to defend such a project, even the birth of another world.

'Africa must be free,' said Kwame N'Krumah in his inaugural speech. We have nothing to lose but our chains and we have a huge continent to conquer. In Accra, Africans swore loyalty and support to each other.' [13]

I will ask you to do, in respect of Sankara's vision. Please Stand Up., and always remember

**When the people stands up, imperialism trembles.!!**

A luta continua. Amandla Ngawethu ! UHURU !

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