



EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON AFRICA'S PAST AND PRESENT

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By Motsoko Pheko

The challenge of Africa Liberation Day 2012 is for this generation to reflect on their commitment to the vision of Pan-Africanist pioneers who worked so hard to bring Africans to where they are today.

Programme Director, Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

The effects of colonialism past and present are visible all over Africa. It is not an overstatement when Edem Kodjo, author of 'Africa Tomorrow' describes the condition of African as "torn away from his past, propelled into a universe fashioned from outside that suppresses his values, and dumbfounded by a cultural invasion that marginalises him. The African,... is today the deformed image of others. "

On this year's anniversary of Africa Liberation Day, African people all over Africa and wherever they may be on this planet, must reflect deeply on their history as it relates to their present life conditions and to their future. History is a clock that tells a people their historical time of the day. History is the compass that wise people use to locate themselves on the map of the world. A peoples' history tells them who they are. What they have been, where they have been, where they are now, but most importantly, where they still must go. True African History is a powerful weapon against colonial history that has been used for mental enslavement and colonisation of the African people.

Programme Director,

Africa is the Mother of Humanity. Africa is the cradle of the first human civilisation. The First Renaissance on this planet was the African Renaissance. Africa was "the first world" economically and technologically NOT the "third world" of paupers robbed of their lands and riches. Our ancestors built the pyramids which even in this 21st century no one can reproduce. Egyptian civilisation was a Black civilisation. The pharaohs were Black people. That is why that great African Egyptologist, Prof. Cheikh Anta Diop has written:

"The history of Black Africa will remain suspended in the air and will not be written correctly until African historians dare connect it with the history of Egypt. The African historian, who evades this, is neither modest nor objective or unruffled; he is ignorant, cowardly and neurotic."

The Zimbabwe Buildings that Africans built have been attributed to "foreigners" who vanished into thin air and cannot be found! The stubborn historical fact, however, is that these magnificent buildings were designed by Zimbabweans.

The Azanian civilisation which stretched from Eastern Africa to our country is a historical fact. The people of Azania whose country colonialists called "South Africa" through the British imperialist Union of South Africa Act 1909; mined gold and copper in Mapungubwe as early as the 9th century. That was centuries before Jan van Riebeeck arrived in Azania on 6th April 1652. He and the other settlers brought no land here on their ships. Our ancestors fed them and housed them. They knew not the intentions of these pale strangers.

The Rev. J.H. Soga was a contemporary of Enoch Sontonga, the composer of 'Nkosi Sikelela iAfrika'. He has made reference to how Africans in what is called South Africa today came to be called "Bantu" instead of their old name Azanians. Soga explained in 1928 that the name Bantu was of modern application. It arose when Dr. Bleek a scholar of Azanian languages used the word "Bantu" as a comprehensive term for all the dialects of the inhabitants who formed a large section of the people of Southern Africa. He had no intention of applying this term to the people themselves. (The South Eastern Bantu pages 2, 6 and 11, Wits University Press, Kraus Reprint Millwood, New York, 1982).



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The history of European colonisation has been not only of land dispossession but of destroying African knowledge. For instance, the "Atlantic" Ocean was called the Ethiopian Sea as late as 1626 and the so-called "Indian" Ocean the Azanian Sea. George Murdock has written that Azanians stimulated trade with the East. ('Africa and Its Peoples and Their Cultural History', pages 204 and 206). See also 'General History Of Africa' by J.KI Zerbo, pages 304, 306 AND 330; Heinemann, California UNESCO 1981).

The name Azania, or Azanian civilisation, has a long history. (Look at the following literature and history on this name: 'Old Africa Rediscovered page 95, The Lost Cities Of Africa pages 155-156 by Basil Davidson; Basutoland Records Volume 2, Ethnography of Southern Africa the History Of The World', J.M. Roberts pages 457-458 Pelican Books).

Azania like Kush, Mizraim, Egypt, Kemet, Ethiopia means Blackman's country or continent (Izwe labantu abamnyama, lefatshe la batho ba bats'o). In 1930 excavations at Mapungubwe in the area of Limpopo River revealed skeletal remains of people that became known as "ancient Azanians." These Africans were also referred to as Kushites or descendants of Kush. Of course, the offspring of colonialists and their neo-colonialist collaborators hate the name Azania because it is not their master's name.

In fact, in 1990, Dr. Gert Viljoen who was F.W. de Klerk's Minister of Constitutional Affairs gave reasons why his apartheid colonialist regime would not negotiate with those African revolutionaries who subscribed to the Azanian school of thought.

He said, "We want to change our approach. But we would be negotiating even the name. Many Blacks call it Azania....The name sounds a warning note of a break in history. In our thinking, a complete break in history would be unacceptable. We will have to provide some continuation of the past." Indeed, this has happened. The colonial minority has entrenched 87% of the land for itself. It has given the "moderate leaders" with whom it negotiated the same 13% of land allocated to the 80% African indigenous majority in 1913.

By the way, the name Azaniah in the Bible, means "he whom God hears."

AFRICA BEFORE SHE WAS COLONISED

Let me now move on to North East Africa - ancient Egypt, and to other issues about Africa. Africans built the city of Memphis in ancient Egypt in 3100 B.C. Greeks built Athens in 1200 B.C. The Romans built Rome in 1000 B.C. Africans invented writing. It was Hieroglyphics before 3000 B.C. and Hieratic alphabet shortly after this. Demotic writing was developed about 600 B.C., while a Kushite script was used in 300 B.C. Other African scripts were Merotic, Coptic, Amharic, Sabeian, G'eez, Nsibidi of Nigeria and Mende of Mali. There were many others such as the Twi alphabet of the Twi people of Ghana.

In November 1999, some scholars at Yale University such as Prof. John Damell speculated about the origin of writing going back to 1900 B.C. These scholars could not dispute that, whatever date was, the location was Africa – Alkebu Lan, "the Mother of Nations."

The well-known archaeologist in Kenya, Dr. L.S.B. Leakey long wrote, "The critics of Africa forget that men of science today are without exception, satisfied that Africa was the place of birth of man himself, and that for thousands of years...Africa was in the forefront of all world progress."

Affirming this fact, Edem Kodjo, the author of Africa Tomorrow who is also a great researcher on Africa has written, "It is here in Africa that history began. Far from being a gratuitous assertion, this statement is undeniable scientific fact for which one finds corroboration when one roves the world in search of the remains of the ancient civilisations. According to the present state of research on the origins of the progress of human kind and civilisation, the Mother of Mankind; Africa remains the privileged source of the manifestations of intense human creativity."



DESTRUCTION OF AFRICA BY IMPERIALISM

Africa was destroyed by imperialist Europe and is still being destroyed by Europe. Up to the 14th century A.D. Africa was ahead of Europe or on par with Europe militarily. The Romans used spears and we used spears in war. That famous Roman Emperor, Julius Caesar in adoration and admiration of the advanced Africa exclaimed, "ex Africa semper aliquid novi!" (Out of Africa always something new!)

Earlier educated Greeks received their education in Africa, to be precise in Mizraim (ancient Egypt). This is corroborated by "the father of European history," Herodotus himself. He is supported by other ancient historians such as Diodorus.

Prof. Walter Rodney shows how Europe destroyed Africa. This is in his book 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa'. This is a mentally decolonising book every African must read because Africans tend to treat Europe and its satellites as demigods. Indeed, when an African fears a creature like him just because he has a different skin colour, he or she offends God. He or she indulges in idolatry which is the worship of a false god.

Africa has suffered the worst genocide and holocaust at the hands of the architects of slavery and colonialism. What is called "European Renaissance" was the worst darkness for Africa's people. Armed with the technology of the gun and the compass it copied from China, Europe became a menace for Africa against her spears. So-called "civilised" Europe also claiming to be "Christian" came up with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. There was massive loss of African population and skills. Some historians have estimated that the Gold Coast (today's Ghana) alone, lost 5000 to 6000 of its people to slavery every year for four hundred years.

Prof. Walter Rodney asks a pertinent question: "What would have been Britain's level of development had millions of her people been put to work as slaves out of their country over a period of four centuries?"

As if slavery had not already done enough damage to Africa's people, European leaders met in Germany from December 1884 to February 1885 at the imperialist Berlin Conference. The Belgian King Leopold stated the purpose of the Berlin Conference as "How we should divide among ourselves this magnificent African cake."

Africa was thus plunged into another human tragedy. Through the Berlin Treaty of 26 February 1885, the European imperialists sliced Africa into "Portuguese Africa", "British Africa", "German Africa", "Italian Africa," "Spanish Africa", "French Africa" and "Belgian Africa." There was no Africa left for Africans except Ethiopia, encircled by paupers of land dispossessed people who were now the reservoir of cheap native labour for their dispossessors.

Somalia, a tiny African country, had the misfortune of becoming "British Somaliland", "Italian Somaliland", and "French Somaliland." Colonial brutality on the colonised Africans knew no bounds. Here are a few examples of atrocities committed against Africans by colonialists. A British philosopher, Bertrand Russell wrote about some of these colonial atrocities perpetrated by Belgium in the Congo in the name of "Western Christian Civilisation." Russell wrote, "Each village was ordered by the authorities to collect and bring in a certain amount of rubber – as much as the men could bring in by neglecting all work for their own maintenance.

If they failed to bring the required amount, their women were taken away and kept as hostages...in the harems of colonial government employees. If this method failed...troops were sent to the village to spread terror, if necessary by killing some of the men...they were ordered to bring one right hand amputated from an African victim for every cartridge used." (Introduction To African Civilisations, John G. Jackson 310-311)

The result of these atrocities according to Sir H.H. Johnston was the reduction of the African population in the Congo from twenty million to nine million people in fifteen years.

The worst genocide also occurred in Namibia in 1904. Namibia was then a German colony. The Herero people resisted German colonialism. A well armed army under General Lothar von Trotha defeated the Hereros at the Battle of Waterberg. The German colonial aggressors drove these Africans from their land to the desert where



there was no water. Seventy percent of the Herero population died of dehydration in that desert. In South Africa the Khoisan people were exterminated by colonialists after being hunted like animals and dispossessed of their land.

COLONIALIST BARBARIANS HONOURED BY THEIR IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Colonised Africans were treated not only as sub-humans, they were denied basic rights such as education and the right to land for decent housing, farming, mining and fishing. Colonial functionaries were honoured for barbaric actions and atrocities. The British government honoured its colonial officials such as "Sir Andries Stockenström". He had earlier said:

"The question of robbing natives of their land is not whether it is right or wrong to plunder their land, massacre and exterminate the Hottentots, the Kaffirs...the simple question is will it PAY? But if the Bible and the missionary stands in the way of this one thousand per cent profit...If in short, they cannot promote the great work of converting a nation of shop-keepers into a nation of millionaires,...gun powder will produce a more efficient gospel for the purpose of our system of civilisation." (R.U. Kenny, Piet Retief, Cape Town and Pretoria: Human & Reason, 1976 page 77)

When introducing inferior education for African mental enslavement in South Africa, Hendrik F. Verwoerd that arch implementer of apartheid colonialism said, "There is no place for him (the African) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Until now, he (the African) has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of the European society where he is not allowed to graze." ('Apartheid: The Story Of A Dispossessed People, Motsoko Pheko page 150 Marram Books London 1984)

Comrades,

Slavery and colonialism enriched Europe and reduced Africa to abject poverty. The riches of Africa and her raw materials fuelled the economies of imperialist countries. The British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill bore testimony to this fact when he said:

"Our possession of the West Indies gave us the strength, the support, but especially the capital, the wealth, at the time when no other European nations possessed such reserve, which enabled us to come through the great struggles of the Napoleonic Wars. The keen competition of commerce in the 18th and 19th centuries enabled us not only to acquire this appendage of possessions which we have, but also to lay the foundations of that commercial and financial leadership which when the world was young,...enabled us to make our great position in the world." ('The Long Road To Humanity', by Stanton A. Coblentz page 325 and Introduction To African Civilisations John G. Jackson page 306)

It was against this background of genocide in the name of "European civilisation" that Africans in the Diaspora who had been shipped from Africa and enslaved in the West Indies and in the Americas realised that the solution to Africa's people both at home and abroad was Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism is a political philosophy that was conceived in the womb of Africa. Pan-Africanism was formally organised in 1900 by Selvester Henry Williams.

It's relevance to Africa's people as a solution to their problems is indisputable. Its effectiveness and prowess were demonstrated at the 5th Pan African Congress in Manchester in 1945. It is Pan Africanism that won present political freedom for Africa and reversed the African tragedy and humiliation that was orchestrated at the Berlin Conference. It is Pan Africanism that brought about the Organisation of African Unity, the African Union, the Pan African Parliament and Africa Liberation Day that Africa's people throughout the world are commemorating each year. It is Africa's Pan Africanist spirit that led to assisting African Liberation Movements of Southern Africa against colonialism.



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THE CHALLENGE OF AFRICA LIBERATION DAY

Programme Director, Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

The challenge of Africa Liberation Day in 2012 is for this generation to reflect on their commitment to the vision of Pan Africanist pioneers that worked so hard to bring Africans to where they are today. Among these pioneers of Pan Africanism, allow me to mention and honour a few in the Diaspora such as Henry Sylvester Williams, Marcus Garvey, W.E. B. Du Bois, George Padmore, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, Yusef Makonnen, Malcolm X, John Hendrik Clarke, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Biko Sylvania and Martin Delany. In fact, Marcus Garvey was the first to organise Africans globally on the principles of Black Consciousness and Pan Africanism.

The pioneers of liberation in Africa such as Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Julius Nyerere, Ahmed Ben Bella, Abdel Nasser, Modibo Keita, Ahmed Sekou Toure fought, the first stage of African liberation with distinction. That is political freedom. But they are now reminding this generation that there is much to be done. True sons and daughters of Africa must tighten their belts for a more fierce war. That is a war against neo-colonialism – the last stage of imperialism. The battle cry is now for economic liberation of Africa and her technological advancement.

AFRICA'S ECONOMIC POTENTIAL CAPACITY AND HER RICHES

Africa is 11.3 million square miles. Africa is almost four times the size of the United States of America in land size and in all kinds of riches, especially in raw materials such as platinum, cobalt, uranium, tantalum, gold, diamonds and oil. There is hardly an agricultural product that cannot be grown in Africa. Africa's arable land for food security is reported to be the largest in the world. But Africa's riches including her human resources have been brutally looted by imperialist countries for centuries and still are, even under supposedly liberated Africa.

A glaring example of the riches of Africa is the Democratic Republic of Congo, the country of Patrice Lumumba. Economic experts have pronounced that, when developed Congo alone can feed and provide electricity for the whole of Africa. During the Second World War, the Nazi forces of Hitler over-ran Belgium. The Belgians established their government-in-exile in London. How did Belgium manage financially? Well, Congo was their colony. Let this come from the horse's mouth. Godding was the Colonial Secretary of the Belgian Government-in-exile. He boasted:

"During the War, the Congo was able to finance expenditure of the Belgian Government-in-exile in London, including the diplomatic service as well as the cost of armed forces in Europe and America. The Belgian gold reserve could be left intact."

To this minute, Africa's riches are fuelling the economies of imperialist countries. Africans remain the poorest people in the world amidst their own riches in their own African Continent. As the late President Kwame Nkrumah put it, "If Africa's resources were used in her own development they would place Africa among the most modernised continents of the world. But Africa's wealth is used for the development of overseas interests."

Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe the Pan-Africanist giant that was banned "this side of eternity" as John B. Vorster put it, declared, "The potential wealth of Africa in minerals, oil, hydro-electric power, and so on, is immense." Sobukwe envisioned that by the end of the 20th century, "the standard of living of the African masses will undoubtedly have arisen dramatically." Lo! This has not happened.

Perhaps, our venerated Martyr Steve Biko was being prophetic of the African condition, when he said, "At the end of it all, the Blacks have nothing to lean on, nothing to cheer them up at the present moment, and very much to be afraid of the future."



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DO “NEGOTIATIONS” WITH COLONIALISTS DELIVER LIBERATION?

Whenever an African country is about to be liberated, imperialists have always divided liberation movements into radicals, extremists and militants and so-called moderates. Colonialists have often called these so-called moderates to the “negotiating table” and offered them the flag and parliament – things we never made the fundamental objective of our liberation struggle.

Lest we forget, from day one of the arrival of colonial invaders in our country, the primary objective of our struggle was repossession of our land and its riches taken from Africans at gunpoint. Anyone one who doubts this historic fact must consult Kings Sekhukhene, Makado, Hintsa, Cetshwayo, Moshoeshe, Makana and Bambatha, even Mzilikazi for that matter. Land is what our people have died for, for over three hundred years of their existence, in our case in Azania.

A Kenyan political activist and former presidential candidate, Koigi Mamwere, captured this truism accurately in April 2000 when he proclaimed:

“Today, Europeans own almost all the land in the Americas, almost all the good land in Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania and most of the best land in African countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Kenya. To acquire this land outside Europe, Europeans did not use law, justice or money. They took the land and its riches with the gun....Europeans continue to own millions and millions of hectares of the best land in Africa....Whatever Robert Mugabe’s past mistakes, we must agree that on this one question of finally redistributing land to African people, he is 100% right...”

“REGIME CHANGE”: A NEW NAME TO PROTECT IMPERIALIST INTERESTS

Programme Director,

“Regime change” is the new name coined by imperialists to continue with colonialism in a new form. The political situation in “post independent” Africa demonstrates that any true leaders, who the imperialists perceive as a threat to their economic interests, are targeted through aggressive campaigns such as “regime change.” Some of these leaders were Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Chief Moshodi Abiola and recently Muammar Gaddafi.

So far, imperialists have found President Robert Mugabe a hard nut to crack. Two British Prime Ministers, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown and President George Bush of America have become despicable casualties in the battle field of “regime change” in Zimbabwe against President Robert Mugabe. The imperialist European leaders have gone down the political drain, on the shores of Africa. President Nicolas Sarkozy of France who enthusiastically created a “New Libya” in the imperialist war for “regime change” seems headed for the political dustbin of history.

Mugabe is still standing. He is still in command. Africa needs more African leaders like President Mugabe. Otherwise, Africa’s authentic liberation will never arrive.

Under America’s Bill Clinton’s government Chief Moshodi Abiola, a democratically elected Presidential candidate was prevented from taking power in Nigeria. Abiola was a staunch defender of Africa’s economic liberation. In 1993, he convened the First Pan African Conference on Reparations. In his speech inter alia, he said:

“Our demand for reparations is based on the tripod of moral, historical and legal argument....Who knows what path Africa’s social development would have taken if great centres of African civilisation had not been destroyed in search of human cargo by Europeans? Who knows how our economics would have developed?”

Chief Abiola added, “It is international law which compels Nigeria to pay its debts to Western banks. It is



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international law that must now demand Western nations to pay us what they have owed us for nearly six centuries.”

TWO MAIN THINGS TO DO TO ADVANCE AFRICA’S AUTHENTIC LIBERATION

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

There are two main things that Africans must do to advance Africa’s authentic liberation. African rulers must exercise sovereignty over African lands and riches and use them for the benefit of their people. This is true national independence from colonialism and imperialism. Secondly, education is the key to the development of Africa, wise control of her raw materials and use of her human resources. Quality education is the key to creating, owning and controlling Africa’s wealth and mentally decolonising her people’s captured minds.

Africa needs a diverse education that is tailored to the economic needs of her people. That education must be free for the poor. No African child must be without education, merely because of his or her condition of poverty. And these African children must be taught the true history of Africa, not the colonial history of Africa’s invaders that is full of perfidy to protect their colonial interests.

All African countries must prioritise the study of science, technology, economics and finance and of course International Law. Africa’s children must be equipped with skills and professions that arm their countries with technological capacity to process Africa’s raw materials and export them to the outside world as finished goods. An African nation that exports its raw materials unprocessed will remain a perpetual pauper.

Where there is urgent need or desperate lack of high technology to process raw materials rapidly, African countries must exchange Africa’s raw materials for high technology; not for cash or foreign goods. Countries that enrich themselves from Africa’s raw materials are secretive and refuse to transfer technology to Africa. Knowledge is power. This is probably why Prophet Hosea told his people in 735 B.C. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

A WAR AFRICA MUST WIN FOR HER SURVIVAL AND SECURITY

Programme Director, Comrades, Sisters and Brothers,

Africans both on the continent and in the Diaspora must have the agenda for economic liberation of Africa and technological advancement.

Pan-Africanism is more relevant to the African world today than when it was formalised over one hundred and twenty years ago. Yes, we may be Jamaicans, Tanzanians, Trinidadians, Kenyans, Zimbabweans, Angolans, Nigerians, Ghanaians, Basotho, Zambians, Namibians, South Africans, Azanians, African Americans, Afro-Brazilians etc. But the train that will take all Africans to their destination and give them power to take their destiny into their hands is the Pan African train.

It is not ethnicity, regionalism, sectarian politics or flirtation with the forces of neo-colonialism and imperialism. Forces that are determined to make us their perpetual slaves work together against us. A divided Africa cannot defeat these plunderers and thieves.

We need to ignite our Pan African Nationalism. Pan African Nationalism is the privilege of all Africans wherever they may be to love themselves and to give their way of life preference. Pan African Nationalism views the personhood and humanity of the African people and of the people of African descent as equal to any other human beings on this planet. Pan African Nationalism rejects with contempt any philosophy that holds that Africa’s people are destined to exist in servitude to other human beings. Pan African Nationalism does not look down on other members of the human race.

But it demands justice for African people. Africa’s riches belong to Africans. They are there for the benefit of the



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African people. They are not there to fuel foreign economies and perpetuate economic exploitation and poverty of our people.

The commemoration of Africa Liberation Day is not a ritual. It is a time to renew our vows, revisit our strategies and tactics to fight neo-colonialism more effectively with tangible results to control Africa's riches for Africa's people. The ultimate goal of our political struggle was to regain our lands and economic power, and rapidly advance Africa's people technologically.

The question is not whether economic liberation for Africa is winnable. The critical question is whether we can afford not to win such a life and death struggle and therefore, continue to be the wretched of the earth in our own country and continent. The economic freedom of Africa is winnable. But it starts with the recognition that the greatest damage colonialism did was on our minds. We must decolonise our minds. Only mentally liberated Black people with a vision for our country and continent can win Africa's authentic liberation for themselves and their children.

AFRIKA HA E KHUTLELE HO BENG BA EONA! MAYIBUYE IAFRIKA! MAWUBUYE UMHLABA WETHU NEMALI YETHU!



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