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FROM PAN-AFRICANISM TO SOCIALISM:  
THE MODERNIZATION OF AN AFRICAN LIBERATION IDEOLOGY

by

Micah S. Tsonondo

The concept of Pan-Africanism has been around for a long time in spite of great historical events. Beginning as the nationalist thought of more or less detribalised Africans in the New World during the era of slavery, Pan-Africanism has survived the impact of such developments as the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction, the post-Reconstruction era, the rise and fall of the Garvey movement, European colonialism in Africa, the Russian and other socialist revolutions of the twentieth century, and the black freedom movements in Africa, the United States and the Caribbean since 1945.

Throughout this period some occasional attempts were made to supplement or even displace Pan-Africanism with other supposedly equally valid ideas and yet the ideology does not seem to have changed significantly in any one direction. There is therefore some considerable similarity between the emigrationist ideas of the Reverend Daniel Coker in the 1820s and those of Robert Campbell and Martin R. Delaney, Henry H. Garnet, Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois on Pan-Africanism.<sup>1</sup> At a later date such prominent leaders of the African nationalist movement as George Padmore, Franz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tom Mboya and Patrice Lumumba relied heavily on this accumulated Pan-African heritage from the diaspora.<sup>2</sup>

It was not until the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, England, in 1945 that a somewhat significant addition to the ideology was made with the inclusion of socialism as an aspect of Pan-Africanism. In his comment on this Conference Nkrumah pointed out that

*it was quite distinct and different in tone, outlook and ideology from the four that had preceded it. While the four previous conferences were both promoted and supported mainly by middle-class intellectuals and bourgeois Negro reformists, this Fifth Pan-African Congress was attended by workers, trade unionists, farmers, co-operative societies and by African ... students... (Its ideology became African nationalism ... and it adopted Marxist socialism as its philosophy.)<sup>3</sup>*

In reality, the only new inclusion was socialism. Among the apostles of this doctrine were DuBois, Padmore and Nkrumah himself. They apparently saw no conflict between Pan-Africanism and socialism. In fact, in his later works Padmore made more effort to distinguish what became known as Pan-African Socialism from the International Socialist Movement than to prove that the former was an integral aspect of the Pan-Africanism.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, throughout the era of his ideological ascendancy Nkrumah never questioned this attempt to integrate a socialist ideology with an old nationalist movement that had begun long before Karl Marx himself. He instead insisted that socialism was an essential aspect of Pan-Africanism and that the two could form one ideology. He did not find any more contradiction between the two than between his own undenominational Christianity and socialism. He maintained that the principles and purposes underlying Pan-Africanism would be realised through socialism. While Pan-Africanism was essential for black political liberation and unity in Africa and abroad, socialism was essential for Africa's economic liberation through industrial development.<sup>5</sup>

Even after he fell from power and was free to assume a more radical posture than before, Nkrumah continued to talk of "the three political components of our liberation" as "1. Nationalism 2. Pan-Africanism 3. Socialism" which he insisted were so "inter-related" that

*one cannot be achieved fully without the other. If one of the three components is missing, no territory on our continent can secure genuine freedom or maintain a stable government.*<sup>6</sup>

Basic to Nkrumah's thinking was the uncritical assumption that

1. a genuine Pan-Africanist is necessarily a nationalist
2. such a Pan-Africanist seeks radical social changes
3. Pan-Africanism and imperialism are mutually exclusive.

He therefore proceeded to further assume that a genuine Pan-Africanist would necessarily be inclined towards those policies which strike at the root of imperialism, and, by logical inference on his part, that Socialism was the only tool for the purpose.<sup>7</sup> In all of Nkrumah's works on the subject, a Pan-Africanist and a black socialist were one and the same person. Nkrumah also seems to have adopted a static conception of imperialism as incapable of co-opting Pan-Africanism. It never even occurred to him that inasmuch as neo-colonialism calls for the independent state as



its prerequisite, imperialism could, at some historical stage, find Pan-Africanism an essential for its survival.

In this respect it is the argument of this analysis that Nkrumah was justly criticised by his rivals for subverting and discrediting -- in their view -- the Pan-Africanist movement as an intercontinental ideology. By compounding Pan-Africanism with socialism, Nkrumah and his ideological associates were in fact trying to tie together two ideologies which were historically unrelated and conceptually antagonistic. It is the contention of this analysis that the Pan-African movement which we know as the ideological medium of all people of African descent can be irreparably damaged by being infused with socialism. It is also our contention that it will not do socialism any good to make it an integral aspect of Pan-Africanism. Furthermore, we shall also insist that it was a tactical blunder on Nkrumah's part to insist that African unity could come about only through Pan-Africanism. Summarised briefly, our argument is that contrary to the widespread misassumptions on the subject, there is no such a thing as "Pan-African Socialism." Secondly, we shall also insist that far from there being a necessary connection between Pan-Africanism and African unity, the latter is in fact hindered by the former.

However, the correctness of the preceding views will be apparent from a critical reappraisal of Pan-Africanism in the light of its historical achievements and failures and the reasons for them. By retracing the character of the successes and failures of Pan-Africanism, we shall have laid the groundwork for determining how far the movement is compatible with socialism. This will also prepare the reader for appreciating the implications of socialism for Pan-Africanism.

#### The Achievements of Pan-Africanism in Perspective

Much of the present disappointment with Pan-Africanism is due to the fact that many people have expected the movement to accomplish what it was never designed for. While all the goals of the movement are nowhere specifically spelled out, Pan-Africanism has nevertheless made some significant achievements in a number of respects.<sup>8</sup>

One of such achievements of the Pan-Africanist movement has been its victory against colonialism in Africa and the Caribbean. The movement sustained this war. Even though the people of each colony have generally fought independently for their freedom, the feeling that all black peoples of the world were fighting the same enemy and for the same goals has never been missing. It was this consensus against colonialism on the part of the black people all over the world that made the colonialists realise that

colonialism was doomed to failure. Black sympathy for the anti-colonial struggles in Ghana, Kenya, the Congo, South Africa, and many other parts of Africa was intercontinental. Such conferences as the All-African Peoples' Conference held in Accra in 1958 and those of the African independent heads of state from that year to the present alerted the colonial powers to the fact that the Pan-African movement would accept nothing less than national independence.

Nkrumah's contribution to this anti-colonialist campaign was quite significant. Not only did he insist on nothing less than full independence for Ghana, but along with others he publicised such anti-colonialist slogans as "Peoples of Africa, Unite!" and "Africa for the Africans!" as well as "Hands Off Africa."<sup>9</sup> Although coined long before him by such Pan-Africanists as Marcus Garvey, these catch-words became rallying points for the black decolonisation movement. In the United States, the "freedom rides" and civil rights marches of the 1960s were in fact a local manifestation of the Pan-African anti-colonial movement.<sup>10</sup>

The Pan-African movement has also contributed to the feeling of oneness among the black peoples of the world. Events affecting black people in one part of the world have raised concern among the blacks everywhere else. Schooled in the old Pan-African movement, many African, Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean leaders have been willing to take a public stand against colonialism in Africa and racial segregation in the United States. The Civil Rights Legislation in the United States in the 1960s was at least in part intended to improve the posture of the United States among the emerging nations of Africa. This in itself demonstrated the correctness of Garvey's argument that the struggle for Africa's independence would eventually help black people in the Americas.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, it should also be mentioned that Pan-Africanism has enabled the black people of the world to take a common stand in international organisations such as the British Commonwealth and the United Nations. It was this stand which brought about the isolation of South Africa in the U.N. and forced Europe to recognise Africa as a nuclear-free zone.<sup>12</sup>

The Pan-African movement has therefore been one of the main pillars of black nationalism in this century. It has contributed greatly to the process of decolonisation in Africa and the Caribbean, to the fight against racism in the United States, and to joint diplomatic efforts so that one part of the black world does not find itself siding with a different race against other blacks in another part. Within its limited scope Pan-Africanism has therefore been a great success. It should also be noted that such successes have come about without the need to infuse the movement with a socialist ideology of any sort.



Pan-Africanism has in many respects been a dismal failure in spite of its achievements. It has so failed to cope with the other dominant themes of the century that it may be a matter of years before it is eclipsed by another ideology that is more responsive to the black world as a whole or to some of its segments. The Pan-African ideology has remained relatively static except for the unsuccessful attempt of the Fifth Pan-African Congress to infuse it with socialism. It is not too much to say that if Garvey were to leap to life today, he could walk into a Pan-African Conference and find nothing strange about the agenda. This failure of the ideology to cope with the modern world is all the greater when the universal collapse of the Pan-African revolution is contrasted with the far-reaching achievements of the socialist revolutions in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Korea, and Cuba with which Africa and the Caribbean can hardly be compared.

Let us attempt to analyse the failures of Pan-Africanism under the following sub-topics:

1. *Pan-Africanism as a mere Pan-ism*
2. *Pan-Africanism and the Lack of an Economic Program for Underdeveloped Areas*
3. *The Failure to Dislodge Neo-Colonialism*
4. *The Failure to Indigenise the Economy*
5. *Lack of a Program for Preventing Intra-Racial Exploitation*
6. *Pan-Africanism's Failure to Unite Africa and the Caribbean.*

Thereafter we shall turn to the question of merging Pan-Africanism with socialism.

#### Pan-Africanism as a Mere Pan-ism

Although many blacks are proud of Pan-Africanism as their own unique contribution to the realm of ideology, in reality there is absolutely nothing new or original about Pan-Africanism. In fact, it was probably the last-born of all such pan-isms and is at present a relic of what the rest of the world with a few exceptions has had to discard. A quick glance at Garvey's *Philosophy and Opinions* clearly shows the impact of the European pan-isms of his times on his thinking.

The black world will benefit tremendously from a critical study of the rise and fall and the achievements and failures of the various pan-isms in world history. Such studies will show what elements the latter have in common with Pan-Africanism. For the purpose of the present analysis, however, only a brief survey of these pan-isms will be made.

To begin with, it should be noted that pan-ist ideologies have almost invariably been an outcome of and response to the diasporic and nationality questions rather than social and economic issues *per se*. Pan-isms revolve around the question of race and nationality without which they can never really take off the ground. They are never addressed to the social question within the concerned particular racial group.

Reference could be made to the pan-Italianism or the *risorgimento* of nineteenth century Italy. Its roots lay in the fall of the Roman Empire and the consequent division of Italy into petty states many of which were under foreign occupation such as that of Austria. Pan-Italianism was perhaps one of the most potent forces of nineteenth century Europe as men like Mazzini and Garibaldi sought to restore Italy to her former pride and dignity. Had the goal not been accomplished, pan-Italianism would today be still as strong as it was a hundred years ago.

But once the goal which had unified the aspirations of nearly all Italians all over the world, regardless of social status, had been achieved, the social question surfaced, and with it the problems of class. The result was that the Italian political revolution that had been brought about by the movement could not continue to derive its momentum from a doctrine that was based on the immediate past. There was a need to make a transition to a more specific ideology, and in the process of doing so the Italians had to recognise the economic classes among them: hence the rise of the extreme right and the extreme left.

There was also pan-Slavism, which arose out of the domination of the Slavs by many foreign powers: the Ottoman Turks, Austria, Germany and Russia. Finding themselves reduced to pawns in European diplomacy, the Slavs sought to restore their national identity and posed one of the difficult questions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It should also be noted that the momentum of pan-Slavism ran across class lines like that of the Pan-African mass party. Grasping Hungarian landlords, despotic Russian Czars, and the various indigenous aristocracies of the Balkans fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the exploited peasants in order to throw out the foreigner. The pan-Slavs had to literally close their eyes to the gruesome evils of the Russian emperors in the same way that Pan-African leaders have to close their eyes to the wretched oppression in various African states in the interests of a united front against the foreigner. The problem of the Balkans was as paramount to the Europe of the late nineteenth century as that of African decolonisation has been to the United Nations since 1945.

With the end of World War I the nationality question in the Balkans was solved as the Austro-Hungarian Empire gave way to



many independent national states. With the coming of the solution also vanished pan-Slavism which today is not even a viable doctrine. It was wiped out by its own success as much as was the *risorgimento* in Italy. With nationhood came the social question, and with the latter the struggle between capitalism and socialism in such countries as Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Albania. In Russia itself the Czars who had been the heroes of the pan-Slavic movement collapsed at the onslaught of the social question in the same way that Emperor Haile Selasse, the champion of Pan-Africanism, fell at the onslaught of the social question. A similar fate overtook Nkrumah of Ghana, the philosopher of Pan-Africanism, Tafawa Balewa and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, and many other African leaders.

When confronted with the social question, the pan-Slavism which had shaken Europe for decades evaporated in social gun-smoke. In its place arose two extremes — the Pilduski regime in Poland and the Bolsheviks in Russia.<sup>13</sup> Today nobody in his right mind would attempt to revive the movement, and yet in Africa there is still a widespread misassumption that Pan-Africanism will hold off the social question indefinitely.

Reference could also be made to pan-Germanism which deteriorated into Nazism in order to avoid the social question. For hundreds of years Germany had been fragmented into many petty states and many of her people were living outside Germany under foreign rule. But with her unification the pan-German momentum began to decline. It was in order to revive it and ride on the crest of the nationality wave that Hitler found it necessary to foreignise the Jew as a focal point of pan-Germanism.<sup>14</sup>

There is also pan-Arabism. As part of the pan-Islamic movement, it is much older than Pan-Africanism. Pan-Arabism proper has been nourished by the interference of the foreign factor in the Arab world. At one time the British were the factor; and at present it is the Zionist factor in Palestine that sustains the movement that stretches from Morocco to Iraq. But because of its failure to give way to the social question, pan-Arabism has seen many Arab governments rise and fall from factors other than itself. It has not permanently united any two states in spite of the proclaimed desires of the leaders because the basic issues it hides are social rather than racial. One finds the black Pan-African leaders of Africa and the Caribbean failing to bring about unity among themselves, allegedly because of differences on specific issues. In reality their basic drawback is the social question in their respective countries.

Zionism is also one of the old pan-isms. In fact, a lot of its doctrines were infused by Garvey into Pan-Africanism and he has rightly been called the Black Messiah. Like pan-Arabism,



Zionism operates at the racial level and thrives on the nationality and foreign factor questions. However, it too will have to face the social question.

A number of lessons may be drawn from all these pan-isms in the evaluation of the prospects of Pan-Africanism. Like them the latter arose out of questions of race, nationality and home-base. It had as its main goal the desire to liberate Black people in Africa and the New World. It also aimed at a spiritual union of all the black people for, as the UNIA motto stated it, they had "One aim! One God! One destiny!" Like its European counterparts Pan-Africanism has liberated Africa and the Caribbean from foreign domination. Like pan-Arabism and Zionism, it still derives a lot of momentum from the foreign factor in the unliberated zones of Southern Africa.

But just as its European counterparts had to succumb to the social question, so too Pan-Africanism has not been able to escape a similar fate. Leaders of Africa have fallen because of the social question and in spite of their Pan-Africanism.

It is here that one can find the rationale of Nkrumah's attempt to weave Pan-Africanism with socialism. What he was doing was in fact to try to safeguard Pan-Africanism against the impending social question that would result from its success at achieving the status of a home base. But the Pan-Africanists rejected the attempt to integrate such a tangential issue into the ideology. Given that decision, it is difficult to see how it can survive the problem. Indeed, there is also the more important questions as to whether it should survive at all where all other pan-isms have had to give way.

#### Pan-Africanism and the Lack of An Economic Program for Underdeveloped Areas

One singular characteristic of nearly all pan-isms, as discussed above, is their utter lack of an economic program. The reason for this is not hard to see. A pan-ism operates at the level of race and nationality where it attempts to weld together all the available entities whereas an economic doctrine operates at the level of social classes. Pan-isms are the greatest unifiers -- while they last -- and it is for that reason that they not only overlook the question of economic programs, but they find it to their interest not to raise it as well as to suppress those who do so for the sake of the united front. Hungarian landlords could no more raise such a question than could the black elites in the U.S., the Caribbean and Africa. They shun it as divisive: hence the fear of radical socialist and communist parties that is characteristic of Pan Africanists.

In fact, when it came to the question of socialist parties, Garvey and the N.A.A.C.P. stood on the same platform as the Ku Klux Klan, which is also the same platform on which nearly all other Pan-Africanists and pan-Arabists like Nasser have stood.<sup>15</sup>

It is the contention of this paper that pan-isms operate best, and perhaps can only operate, at the level of liberal and capitalist ideologies which admit of various social classes and therefore need something outside the economic realm to weld the disparate social elements together. We are here not making a statement against capitalism. Rather, we would like to expose the fact that in spite of their lack of capital, Pan-Africanists have nevertheless stuck to the capitalist ideology. Herein lies their lack of program. Afro-America, for example, is in serious need of capital and yet black nationalism in the U.S. has never attempted to formulate an alternative program, except perhaps for the Black Muslims. Garvey even talked of black capitalism spilling from the U.S. to Africa when in fact the black ghettos are as much a colony in economic terms as are Africa and the Caribbean.<sup>16</sup>

In Africa Pan-Africanism has continued on the capitalist path in spite of there being no capital because of its lack of an alternative ideology. Africa's failure to achieve anything comparable to the achievements of the Bolshevik Revolution, China, North Korea, and Cuba is largely due to the ideological bankruptcy of Pan-Africanism at the level of economics. However, in order to deceive the masses so as to postpone the social question, Pan-Africanism has come up with such slapdash and pseudo "programs" as "African Socialism" and nationalisation. The former is a disguised rejection of Socialism and the latter means unlimited private capitalism on public funding.<sup>17</sup>

Our point is that Pan-Africanism, because of its very inclusiveness within the racial peripheries of the black world, is less realistic than pan-Arabism and Zionism, which are also capitalistic but have the capital. On the other hand, it should also be recognised that the adoption of socialism would certainly destroy Pan-Africanism as we know it insofar as it would appeal to a class within the race rather than to the race as a whole.

### The Failure to Dislodge Neo-Colonialism

There is no doubt that the Pan-Africanist has always been opposed to colonialism. It is, however, by no means certain that he also wants to eliminate neo-colonialism, for he would be left ideologically naked and with nothing to work with.<sup>18</sup> In any case, Pan-Africanism in both Africa and the New World has shown no inclination to challenge the neo-colonial order. Under the guise of so-called "realistic" economic policies, nearly all the Pan-



African leaders that have assumed positions of power in independent Africa have adopted programs that not only strengthen but even enhance the very colonial interests which the anti-colonial movement sought to overthrow. Examples of this can be seen in Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, Zaire, Zambia, and, among many others, Selasse's Ethiopia.

In all these cases no attempt was made to restrict the activities of the colonial economic interests, let alone to abolish them. Instead, various arguments were advanced by the Pan-African leaders to the effect that there was a "need" for them. This is apparent from the published positions on the issue as put forward by such men as Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Tom Mboya and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. Even Kwame Nkrumah gradually became more pre-occupied with justifying Ghana's need for foreign investors than with developing alternatives to the latter.

The result has been a tremendous disappointment with the black revolution on the part of the masses. In Africa the enthusiasm of the masses for the revolution has been dissipated by the Pan-African conspiracy to preserve neo-colonialism. In the United States the great nationalist enthusiasm of the 1960s has vanished and old lifestyles are returning as Afros become less meaningful. One reason the Pan-Africanist is lukewarm towards the campaign against neo-colonialism is that he knows it will take socialism to begin the job -- that is, he will be banished from the stage!

#### The Failure to Indigenise the Economy

The development of indigenous capitalism in Africa, the Caribbean, and the black ghettos of the U.S. has been the hope of black capitalism for over a century. On this issue Garvey eloquently summarised the ambitions of the Pan Africanists: "why should not Africa give to the world its black Rockefeller, Rothschild and Henry Ford? Now is the opportunity."<sup>19</sup>

But thirty years after Garvey, there is as yet no sign of the development of black capitalism anywhere in the world although there are lots of black capitalists. One would have expected that after the fall of Nkrumah, the state corporations he had constructed would be handed over to the black bourgeoisie who had brought him down. Instead, they were either disestablished as too costly or auctioned to the foreigners at pitiful prices.<sup>20</sup> The reason Pan-Africanism has not even been generous enough to develop opportunities for capitalism for its own black bourgeois exponents is that it takes socialism to do even that, for it can not be done without first challenging neo-colonialism.



### Lack of Program for Preventing Intra-Racial Exploitation

In the heydays of the Pan-Africanist decolonisation campaign during the 1950s and early '60s, it used to be quite fashionable in African ideological circles to maintain that with the end of colonialism would come a just society in which no person would prey on another. In fact human exploitation had been so closely identified with the colonial regime that it was automatically assumed that a victory against the latter was synonymous with that against exploitation of man by man. The leaders of the Pan-African liberation movements looked like the Joshuas at the sound of whose "freedom" trumpets the walls of exploitation would come tumbling down.<sup>21</sup>

In this respect Pan-Africanism hid from public view its own astounding lack of a theory of social criticism that could even remotely approximate that of socialism. Because it is a racial ideology, Pan-Africanism cannot explain society except in terms of racial conflict and exploitation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, the father of modern Pan-Africanism. For Garvey everything connected with history and social movements was explicable from the question of race. Even the ambivalence of the black middle class towards his program was explained on the basis of their lack of sufficient race consciousness. To instill the latter into a people was equated with the making of a revolution.<sup>22</sup>

The same bankruptcy in social criticism was apparent in the "Africanisation" programs of the successful movements. The first item on the agenda the morning after the attainment of national independence or internal self-government was almost invariably how to Africanise the country. Such leaders as Nkrumah, Kenyatta, Mboya, Nyerere, Banda, Kaunda, Balewa, Senghor and many others thought of the new Pan-African order after the collapse of colonialism almost exclusively in terms of Africanising the state: the parliament, the civil service, the police, the army, the education personnel, the health service, etc. Even the giant capitalistic monopoly corporations which had bled Africa for more than half a century were confronted with some ultimata for Africanising their managerial personnel. In rural areas similar attempts were made to Africanise the ownership of land and other natural resources. In fact, until very recently when the masses have begun to see through the facade of Africanisation, the leaders of the successful Pan-African movements were labelled radical or conservative and progressive or reactionary solely on the basis of the extent to which they had Africanised the state and its economic establishments.<sup>23</sup>

But fifteen years later it is apparent that in spite of Pan-Africanism and the Africanisation programs, human exploitation in Africa has continued with undiminished fury at many levels of society. The failure to dislodge neo-colonialism and commercial interests is still diverting for distribution in European metropolitan centers the foreign exchange accumulated by the sweat of the African workers and peasants. Such diversions of essential capital are justified as profit, debt-servicing, or the shareholders' earnings. At the same time the wages for the workers and peasants are still as insulting as ever.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, such exploitation of the lower classes is equally characteristic of the African elites and bourgeoisie. Many items which are the basic essentials for the sustenance of the working classes are heavily taxed in order to create a national budget which almost invariably supports the luxurious life-styles of the bourgeoisie, politely called "the standard of living." African middlemen and distributors are still free to squeeze the last pennies out of the peasants without fear of government intervention. Whereas under colonialism it was the gap between the races which was widening and which gave Pan-Africanism a lot of political ammunition, in the independent state the growing disparity between the rich and the poor is also taking place within the African race itself.<sup>25</sup> Thus the Pan-African assumptions about race as a factor for national solidarity has been effectively exposed as a false dream and Pan-Africanism must of necessity transform or dissolve itself if it is not to continue as a hindrance to African liberation.

The point to be emphasised here is that unlike socialism, Pan-Africanism obviously has no program for preventing mutual exploitation within the race because its concept of racial solidarity does not preclude intra-racial exploitation. Besides, Pan-Africanism has shown no inclination to solve this problem. Here reference could be made to the situation that prevailed in Ethiopia during the long reign of Emperor Haile Selasse. Despite or perhaps because of His Majesty's unquestionable devotion to Pan-Africanism, neither Selasse nor his intercontinental Pan-African sympathisers was averse to the existence of feudalism and indigenous and foreign bourgeoisie exploitation in Ethiopia. Yet such a combination spelled total and unmitigated ruin for its victims from the cradle to the grave. The question to be asked is whether such a situation would have been equally tolerated in the country if His Majesty had been pre-occupied with socialism rather than with Pan-Africanism.

During the optimistic days when Pan-Africanism was still considered the be-all and end-all doctrine of African liberation, Nyerere could see a society of equals around the corner: "We must ... regain our former attitude of mind — our traditional African Socialism — and apply it to the new societies we are building today" because



*We, in Africa, have no more need of being "converted" to socialism than we have of being "taught" democracy. Both are rooted in our own past -- in the traditional society which produced us. Modern African Socialism can draw from its traditional heritage the recognition of "society" as an extension of the basic family unit.*<sup>26</sup>

The late Tom Mboya similarly condemned those Africans "who call themselves socialists" when in fact "they are so blindly steeped in foreign thought mechanics that in their actions they adopt standards which do great violence to African brotherhood." Instead of socialism, he argued, what was needed was African Socialism which represented

*Those ideals and attitudes of mind in our tradition which have regulated the conduct of our people with the social weal as the objective. I think it is worthwhile emphasising the fact that these ideals and attitudes are indigenous, and that they spring from the basic experience of our people here in Africa and even here in Kenya.*<sup>27</sup>

Instead of flogging a dead horse, we only need to take note of the fact that the preceding slapdash that goes under the name of (pan-) African Socialism has not prevented mutual exploitation among the peoples of Africa, Tanzania, or Kenya. Such grandiose predictions of the future of Africa had in fact been superseded by the actual historical developments long before they were penned by their authors. Today it is apparent that exploitation has continued to increase in Africa in spite of our noble heritage of communalism and the grandiloquent pronouncements of the Pan-African ideology.

It is also clear that even in the United States the black movement which is the equivalent of Pan-Africanism has not been averse to siding with the interests that exploit blacks. The late Louis Lomax observed the following of black leadership in the country before the revolt of the masses in the 1960s:

*Negro leadership organizations, dominated as they most certainly are, by middle-class Negroes and white liberals, lost touch with the mood of the Negro masses. The result was a concentrated attack on segregation that reflected "class" rather than "mass" concerns.*



This led to the revolt of the masses on behalf of themselves as a class.<sup>28</sup> A similar situation had already occurred in Africa twenty years before with the revolt of the masses against the leadership of the ever-compromising intelligentsia.<sup>29</sup> Yet in both cases the black middle classes disguised themselves with the garb of Pan-Africanism and managed to reassert their leadership. The result was a great set-back for the liberation movement as the eyes of the masses were diverted from the enemy in the name of a united front.

#### Pan-Africanism's "Failure" to Unite Africa and the Caribbean

It is often asked why Pan-Africanism has failed to unite Africa and why the West Indian Federation fell apart in spite of the Pan-Africanism of the leaders of its component states. It is also asked why the Pan-African movement has not politically united Afro-America under one organisation such as Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity. It is also asked why the Garvey Pan-African movement, far from uniting black Americans, merely accentuated the divisions among them as well as between them and the blacks of Liberia and the Caribbean.<sup>30</sup> These questions used to be asked seriously but today they are already non-questions and are being raised here only for purposes of clarification.

But when one asks, "Black unity for what?" the answer one gets is that unity is necessary for black economic development and for forestalling neo-colonialism.<sup>31</sup> Herein lies the clue to the failure of black political unity under the Pan-African umbrella. With a very few exceptions, political unity was never a goal of the Pan-African ideology as expounded by the leaders of the movement. The Pan-Africanist has no need of unity for economic development because the latter is not even a part of his program, and never was.

It is apparent that Nkrumah distorted the goals of Pan-Africanism more than any other member of the movement. It was he who crudely appended the whole "political" or "African" unity theme to the vague and grandiloquent agenda of Pan-Africanism. Garvey was to a degree also responsible for a similar attempt. Most of the Pan-African thought and nearly all of its basic tenets never implied the creation of a united black political and economic entity such as an Africa or a Caribbean under one government. Edward Wilmot Blyden was, for example, not so anti-imperialist after all, and yet he was an ardent Pan-Africanist and continues to be eulogised as such today. Then there were the blacks whose Pan-Africanism drove them to settle in Liberia from the 1820s. They had no desire whatever to cut themselves loose from the United States of which they considered themselves an integral part. The history of Liberia, the names of her cities, her flag and her

institutions, from the beginning to the present, show that the blacks who emigrated there had no objection to being a neo-colony of the United States.

Reference could also be made to many African leaders who were Pan-Africanist but not interested in African unity. Leopold Senghor, for an example, has no need of African unity in spite of his Pan-Africanism: "We believed then, and we still believe that the (European) Community ... is the ideal framework for an effective coalition." Hence "vertical solidarity between ourselves and our European metropolises will be modified but not dissolved." As for inter-African unity, Senghor does not even take it seriously: "We shall obtain peace neither by race war nor by continental war."<sup>32</sup>

The main point to be emphasized here is that it is erroneous to say that the Pan-Africanists have failed to unify Africa because they never intended to do so in the first place. It was Nkrumah, Padmore and a few other Pan-Africanists who invented that goal for the movement in the same way that they tried to add socialism to it. In both respects Nkrumah's attempts were a failure. On the other hand the Pan-Africanists who defeated such innovations may be congratulated for having kept the faith.

#### Socialism and Pan-Africanism: Allies or Rivals?

The preceding analysis has brought out the main strengths and weaknesses of Pan-Africanism. It has pointed out the significant contributions of the movement in such respects as the campaign against colonialism, the feeling of brotherhood among the black peoples of the world, and the co-ordination of joint diplomatic efforts in matters affecting black people anywhere in the world. But the analysis also pointed out the weaknesses of Pan-Africanism such as its inability to face the social questions, its lack of a viable economic program for underdeveloped areas, its inability and unwillingness to dislodge neo-colonialism, its failure to indigenise the economy, its lack of a method to prevent intra-racial exploitation, and its unwillingness to unite the African states and those of Afro-Caribbean. From such an analysis it may be correctly inferred that Pan-Africanism, as presently structured, has largely become a hindrance for the progress of the black world in the contemporary situation.

This raises the question of what next in terms of ideology. One could hardly propose to give capitalism another chance inasmuch as it has invariably failed the black world. For obvious reasons, African traditionalism is not a viable doctrine for economic and political modernization. In fact, traditionalism is itself crumbling at the touch of the forces of social change with which it can hardly cope.<sup>33</sup> It is here that the issue of socialism



becomes particularly relevant for further evaluation. The Fifth Pan-African Conference of 1945 had in fact tried to safeguard against the possible deficiencies of Pan-Africanism by adding socialism to the latter.<sup>34</sup> Thereafter Nkrumah and his associates attempted unsuccessfully to supplement Pan-Africanism with Pan-African Socialism. In their view, the two doctrines were inseparable allies if the newly independent countries were to preserve their independence and achieve economic development.

We shall now critically examine whether Pan-Africanism can be made more viable by being integrated with socialism. The analysis will bring out both the great possibilities that could result from the process as well as the discordant problems that could occur.

With respect to the possibilities it could be pointed out that Pan-Africanism and socialism are both revolutionary doctrines. The only distinction between them in this respect is that whereas Pan-Africanism is best suited for bringing about political and nationalist revolutions in a colonialist situation by uniting all the disparate social elements regardless of class, socialism is more suited for the making of social and economic revolutions. It is therefore conceivable that socialism could begin where Pan-Africanism ends not in order to subvert the Pan-African phase of the revolution, but in order to continue it at a different level. However, a Pan-Africanist is not necessarily always synonymous with a socialist. There are in fact many more Pan-Africanists than there are socialists in Africa. It is therefore certain that most of the former would not give up without a fight.

There is also the fact that socialism is strong in all those areas where Pan-Africanism is weak. Whereas the latter is a movement that can include people from different social classes, socialism is an exclusive ideology which seeks to draw lines between classes rather than erase them. The adoption of socialism would also provide the black world with a tool that has proved its ability to modernise underdeveloped countries. But as mentioned earlier the lack of a specific economic ideology on the part of Pan-Africanism actually represents its inclination towards capitalism. It is therefore by no means certain that many of the present-day Pan-Africanists would be willing to make the necessary ideological transition.

Socialism could also more effectively challenge the neo-colonialist economic patterns in Africa and the Caribbean which Pan-Africanism is not radical enough to break. Basil Davidson has pointed out the need for Africa to make a radical break with neo-colonial patterns as pre-condition for her own development:



*Higher all-round standards of living can proceed only from the development of higher productivity ... and thus from profound social and cultural changes. Yet any such changes can in their turn proceed only from a break, necessarily a radical break, from the inherited situation, whether traditional or colonialist.*<sup>35</sup>

But in spite of this need for a radical break with neo-colonialism, it would be too much to expect the Pan-African bourgeoisie to liquidate themselves.

Socialism could also abolish the mutual exploitation that is going on in Africa, and yet it would necessarily destroy the privileges of the bourgeoisie in the process. In that case the latter may be expected to resist such changes. Socialism would also indigenise the economy and give it back to the people. Unfortunately, because it presupposes the abolition of the private control of the major sectors of the economy, socialism would also ruin the hopes of the Pan-African bourgeoisie to step into the shoes of the neo-colonialists in the distant future. It is therefore unlikely that the latter would welcome such a democratisation of the economy.

With respect to African unity and that of the Caribbean, socialism would greatly facilitate it by creating the need for it, for as pointed out above, the Pan-African bourgeoisie are unwilling rather than unable to unite Africa. It is the compelling necessity for unity resulting from the need for a viable political entity that will propel Africa towards political union.

A number of significant problems will be encountered in the attempt to integrate Pan-Africanism with socialism. Pan-Africanism will be weakened to a vanishing point in the transition from a movement to a party. On the other hand Pan-Africanism has already lost much of its momentum and socialism will merely recognise the class struggle that has been going on in Africa and the Caribbean.<sup>36</sup> In the ensuing conflict, the African bourgeoisie would be driven further into the arms of neo-colonialism, as happened in Zaire in the 1960s.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, that would make the masses of the people recognise them for what they are.

An even more probable result of the adoption of socialism as an instrument of black nationalism is that many blacks, particularly in the United States, would be permanently alienated from the movement. By tradition and culture, many Afro-Americans would equate such a transition with a betrayal.

In conclusion we shall argue that it is not possible for Pan-Africanism as we know it to be effectively merged with socialism. On the other hand we shall also insist that the former has largely outlasted its usefulness since decolonisation whereas the necessity for the latter is increasing every day. Ultimately, the choice between the two is really a choice between neo-colonialism and the black revolution.

#### Footnotes

1. On Pan-African thought from early times to the present the following are relevant sources: Ross K. Baker, ed., *The Afro-American*, for such items as Robert Campbell's "Journey to my Motherland" and George B. Tindall's "Liberian Exodus". Also Theodore Draper, *Rediscovery of Black Nationalism* (N.Y.: Viking, 1969); John Bracey et al., *Black Nationalism in America*, and Howard Brotz, ed., *Negro Social and Political Thought, 1850-1920* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1966). Brotz's book contains a lot of relevant items including Henry H. Garnet's "African Civilization Society" (1859); Marcus Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions*, ed. by Amy-Jacques Garvey (N.Y.: Atheneum, 1971); Edwin Redkey, *Black Exodus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).
2. Evidence of later and African borrowing from earlier Pan-Africanism can be found in Ras Makonnen's *Pan-Africanism from Within*, ed. by Kenneth King (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973); Kwame Nkrumah, *Autobiography* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1957); Rayford W. Logan, "Historical Aspects of Pan-Africanism, 1900-1945", in *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered*, by the American Society of African Culture (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1962), pp. 37-52.
3. For Nkrumah's description of Fifth Pan-African Congress see his *Autobiography*; further details can be found in George Padmore's *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London: Dobson, 1956), pp. 161-70. Emphasis added.
4. Padmore, "A Guide to Pan-African Socialism", in William H. Griedland and Carl G. Roseberg, ed., *African Socialism* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 223-37; Padmore's *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* emphasises his fear of communism.
5. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1963); also his *Revolutionary Path* (N.Y.: International Pubs., 1973), pp. 222-8; and, among many others, his "Address to the Conference of the African Heads of State and Government," May 24, 1963, in pp. 233-48 of *Revolutionary Path*.



6. Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Warfare*, in *Revolutionary Path*, p. 463.
7. This thesis is fully spelled out in his *Africa Must Unite* and in the "Address to the Heads of State and Government" of May 24, 1963, in *Rev. Path*, pp. 233-48.
8. On the objectives of Pan-Africanism see Ras Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within*; Marcus Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions*; Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* and his "Guide to Pan-African Socialism," in Friedland and Roseberg, ed., *African Socialism*, pp. 223-37; also Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, and *Rev. Path*, Part II; and Ndabaningi Sithole, *African Nationalism* (N.Y.: O.U.P., 1968)
9. On the decolonisation implications of Pan-Africanism, see the "Declaration to the Colonial Peoples of the World," adopted by the Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945, which stated "Colonial and subject peoples of the world -- Unite!" in *Towards Colonial Freedom* (London: Heinemann, 1962), pp. 44-45; Nkrumah, *Autobiography*; Sithole, *African Nationalism*; George Shepherd, *Politics of Pan-Africanism* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1962), and Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism* (Praeger, 1963); also *Rev. Path*, pp. 125-34
10. James Geschwender, *The Black Revolt* (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971); Stokley Carmichael, "Pan-Africanism -- Land and Power", in Robert Chrisman and Nathan Hare, ed., *Pan-Africanism* (N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1974), pp. 9-19; and Charles V. Hamilton, "Pan-Africanism and the Black Struggle in the U.S.," pp. 145-53 of same.
11. *Ibid.*
12. On the impact of Pan-Africanism in international affairs see Sithole's *African Nationalism*; Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1961); Quaison-Sackey, *Africa Unbound*; Kwesi Armah, *Africa's Golden Road* (London: Heinemann, 1965); and Kenneth Kaunda, *Zambia Shall Be Free* (Lusaka: Govt. Printer, 1968).
13. Leopold H. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); on the probability of class conflict in Africa see Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa* (N.Y.: International Pubs., 1970).
14. Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965); also Madison Grant, *Passing of the Great Race*, which is an assertion of Nordism.
15. Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (N.Y.: Atheneum, 1971); Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions*, pp. 69-71.

16. International Monetary Fund, *Surveys of African Economies*, vols. 1-5 (Washington, D.C.: IMF, 1973); Andrew Karmarck, *Economics of African Development* (Praeger, 1971); A. Iskenderov, *Africa: Politics, Economy & Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Pubs., 1972); Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions*, Part I, pp. 67-8. On the lack of capital in Afro-America see Earl Ofari, *Myth of Black Capitalism* (N.Y.: Monthly Review Press, 1969), pp. 66-86; E. Franklin Frazier, "Negro Business: A Social Myth," in his *Black Bourgeoisie* (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 129-45; William K. Tabb, *Political Economy of the Black Ghetto* (N.Y.: Norton, 1970), pp. 21-34.
17. Leopold Senghor, *On African Socialism* (Praeger, 1964); KANU, *African Socialism and its Application to Kenya* (Nairobi: Govt. Printer, ca. 1965); Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After: Kaunda, Zambia Shall Be Free; Nyerere, Ujamaa: Basis of African Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: O.U.P., 1968). For a critique of "African Socialism" see Friedland and Roseberg, *African Socialism*; Nkrumah, "African Socialism Revisited," in *Rev. Path*, pp. 438-45; and Arthur Klinghoffer, *Soviet Perspectives on African Socialism* (N.J.: Assoc. Univ. Presses, 1969).
18. Franz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1968) and *Black Skin White Masks* (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1967); Pius Okigbo, *Africa and the Common Market* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1967); and Arnold Rivkin, *Africa and the European Common Market* (Denver: Univ. of Denver Press, 1966).
19. *Philosophy and Opinions*, I, p. 68. On the problem of indigenising the economy see Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism and Challenge of the Congo*; Geoggrey Bing, *Reap the Whirlwind* (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1968); Mamadou Dia, *Reflexions Sur L'Economie de L'Afrique Noire* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1963); Elija Muhammad, *Message to the Black Man*; E. U. Essien-Udon, *Black Nationalism* (N.Y.: Dell, 1962); Draper, "Nation of Islam," in *Rediscovery*, pp. 48-56; and Ofari, *Myth*, pp. 66-86.
20. Nkrumah, "Set Back", in *Dark Days in Ghana*, pp. 97-112; Peter Garlick, *African Traders and Economic Development in Ghana* (N.Y.: O.U.P., 1971).
21. Kofi Baako, "African Socialism", (1961), unpublished speech; KANU, *African Socialism*; Nyerere, *Freedom and Uhuru*; Nkrumah, *Autobiography and Consciencism*.
22. *Philosophy and Opinions*.
23. Mboya, *Freedom and After*; A. Iskenderov, *Africa: Politics, Economy, Ideology*.



24. J.C. de Graft-Johnson, *Introduction to the African Economy*; I.M.F., *Surveys of African Economies*, vols. 1-5; Paul Streeten and Helen Sutch, *Capital for Africa* (London: African Publ. Trust, 1971).
25. Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*; and Charles & Alis Darlington, *African Betrayal*, (N.Y.: McKay, 1968).
26. "Ujamaa," In Friedland and Roseberg, pp. 243-246; K. Baako, "Nkrumaism -- African Socialism as I Understand It", 1962, unpublished speech; also *Consciencism*, pp. 95-102.
27. Mboya, "African Socialism", in Friedland and Rosberg, pp. 251 & 53.
28. Louis Lomax, *Negro Revolt* (N.Y.: Signet Books, 1963), pp. 89-90; also R. Barbor, ed., *Black Power Revolt*.
29. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, and David Apter, *Ghana in Transition*.
30. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, 1963.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-117 & 173-93.
32. Senghor, *On African Socialism*, p. 64.
33. *Historical Developments and Social Progress in Africa* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1972), pp. 31-2.
34. Nkrumah, *Rev. Path*, pp. 40-44; Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, pp 61-70.
35. Basil Davidson, *Can Africa Survive?* (Boston: Little, Brown & C 1974), pp. 153-4.
36. Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa*, 1970; Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*.
37. Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo*.

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