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*Expectations of Independence
and Unfinished Business:
Two Essays by J.F. Ade Ajayi*

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1. EXPECTATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE

> *What is our objective? An end to the exploitation of man by man, more freedom, more well-being. In short, we want to shake off the imperialist yoke. It is hard to express the anguished hope with which the suffering masses look forward to this.*
>
> Dr. Alexandre Adande, 1959[1]

> *How have we come to this sorry state of affairs in the post-independence years which seemed at the beginning to have held so much promise?*
>
> Dr. Adebayo Adedeji, 1979[2]

How do we sum up the expectations that the peoples of Africa had on the eve of independence, or evaluate what has happened to those hopes and aspirations since the coming of political independence? If Alexandre Adande was right in his summation of the yearnings of intellectuals, did he speak for the traditional elite, and was he right about the "anguished hope" of the masses?

Adande was speaking at Ibadan in March 1959, at the conference "Representative Government and National Progress," organized by the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Extra-Mural Department of what was then University College, Ibadan. The intention of the conference was to bring together, in their personal capacities, "leaders of thought" in the newly independent and soon to be independent countries of Black Africa, to discuss the prospects of representative government, given the commitment of the emergent regimes to promoting "national progress." It was a unique meeting, providing one of the earliest interfaces between Francophone and Anglophone intellectuals in Africa, and the participants were most appreciative of the international exposure given to leaders like Patrice Lumumba and Cyril Adoula of the Congo. The proceedings of the conference, entitled *Africa: The Dynamics of Change*, provide a useful record of the intellectuals' aspirations and their perception of the expectations of the masses on the eve of independence.[3]

INTELLECTUAL ASPIRATIONS

The priority of the intellectuals was clearly to assume the reigns of government of the new states: other objectives were to flow from this. The intellectuals were leading the struggle for independence, and in varying degrees, they secured the support or connivance of the traditional elite and the masses—farmers, urban workers, and petty traders. They believed that they, not the masses nor the traditional elite had the knowledge and skills to create the political and socioeconomic structures necessary to promote national progress and to lead the emergent states to their rightful places in the modern world.

Influenced, no doubt, by the theme of the conference, the participants expressed their expectations of independence in very abstract terms, and were much clearer about what they wanted to end than about what they wanted to put in its place. They wanted to throw off the imperialist yoke, and end discrimination and the exploitation of man by man; they wanted freedom, and respect for the dignity of the black man. Beyond that, however, they had little conception of the kind of society they were striving to build outside of vague concepts of Europeanization or modernization. They had no clear-cut goals, and nothing like a blueprint for development. They mentioned economic development, but it was low on their list of priorities, subsumed under the concept of well-being and national progress. Implicit in this abstract expression of the ends of government was the assumption that the leaders in the new states would be those who most thoroughly understood the Western cultural models that were to remain the prototypes of the new structures and institutions to be established. The conferees assumed that higher studies in Western education and advanced skills in Western science and technology, such as these probable leaders possessed, would be the most important attributes one could have in gaining positions of power and influence in the new states.

Here was the dilemma of the intellectuals: despite their occasional references to African institutions and ideas, their vision of freedom, equality, representative government, and democracy derived essentially from Western liberal models, and they staked

their claims to leadership on their superior knowledge of these Western ideals and models. Yet they were not unaware of the fragility of the newly won or still to be won independence, or that the greatest threats to it could be expected from Western powers, especially former colonial powers. Their priority was commitment to that independence, and they wished to assert that independence from former colonial powers, and to stress the need for national cohesion and Pan-African unity as a basis for that assertion. They took for granted the masses' and the traditional elite's willingness to accept their leadership, and underestimated the problems of achieving national cohesion, dismissing the ethnicity that surfaced during the independence movements as ignorant or unpatriotic "tribalism." A radical group at the first All African Peoples Congress at Accra in December 1958 even pushed through a resolution to abolish those traditional African institutions, such as chieftaincy, that might prove to be incompatible with democracy and modernity. But the intellectuals realized that the support or the connivance of the masses was conditional upon meeting their aspirations for a better life in the immediate future. Meeting such aspirations, at least in the short run, seemed to depend on continued cooperation with—and aid from—the former colonial powers and their allies, from whom the intellectuals wished to be independent. Even those who talked about an African Revolution realized that it would depend on mass support, which could not be guaranteed in the short term without external support.

It was the imperative of achieving national cohesion and stability that the intellectuals saw as the main danger to democracy and representative government. They feared that future governments might lose touch with the masses and be tempted to create dictatorships in the name of protecting national unity.[4] Already the proponents of Western models of multi-party democracies had to contend with minority arguments for "one-party democracy,"[5] based, it was said, on neo-traditional models of debate, followed by consensus and withdrawal of dissent. There was no spectre of imminent class conflict, the intellectuals being more conscious of hierarchy based on education than on economic power. Nor was the spectre of the military, which loomed so large

ahead, noticed. The only reference to the army at the Ibadan conference was not that it constituted a threat to representative government, but that the emergent leaders might not need armies to protect themselves if they pursued socialist policies and promoted social justice.[6]

THE TRADITIONAL ELITE

To sum up or to document the views of the traditional elite on the eve of independence is more difficult. To a greater or lesser extent, they owed their titles and access to power more to the colonial rulers than to traditional rights, but generally they operated within the traditional milieu. This meant that whether they were regarded as guardians of traditional culture or not, their activities as rulers remained within the confines of traditional groups and divisions of local government. A few, by virtue of previous educational, administrative, or other experience, achieved some national significance in their personal capacities. Since every country, however, consisted of more than one traditional state, kingdom, or ethnic group, the traditional elite were handicapped in competing with politicians for power at the national level.

Most of the traditional elite had been used as the channel, if not the vehicle, of colonial administration at the local level. Apart from a few educated court and local government officials, the traditional elite as a group constituted the most important African agents and direct beneficiaries of colonial administration. Few of them would have expected colonial rule to come to an end so soon and so abruptly, and they could not have been unmindful of their possible claims to the succession. As colonial power began to be challenged by the intellectuals and the political leaders in the independence movements, only a few of the chiefs identified themselves with the nationalists. The majority rallied to the defense of colonial power, and it was often with great dismay that they watched what seemed to them the abdication of power by the colonial rulers to the nationalist leaders.[7]

In circumstances amounting almost to betrayal, and confined as they were within the traditional mold, they discovered, as they

became fully aware of what was happening, that they had to accept the leadership of a new political elite who were inheriting the powers of the colonial rulers. They did this, for the most part, with little enthusiasm, for they had come to accept the colonial ruler at his own evaluation—just, wise, incorruptible—while they did not trust the new politicians. Some chiefs, especially in former French colonies, were aware of the hostility of the masses, who had come to identify them with the most hated aspects of colonial rule, and they feared that this might encourage politicians to seek abolition of the chieftaincy institution as outmoded and obstructive. The struggle for their own existence left them little room to develop concepts of the goals of society as a whole or of what the masses might expect from independence.[8]

The basic expectation of the traditional elite, then, was to preserve as much as possible the power, influence, and privileges they had acquired during colonial days. They sought Western education for their children, invested in business, and speculated on land, forest, and other resources available to them. Their basic weapon, however, was to place themselves, wherever feasible, at the head of their ethnic groups to compete with politicians as brokers of political power within the group. Where they were successful, this ensured that politicians seeking electoral votes within the group had to negotiate with them, consult them, and induce their support and compensate them for it, or risk alienating the whole ethnic group. Where hostile politicians had a greater hold on the people's electoral votes, traditional rulers had more to lose than their influence. Sometimes they were removed from power, and in a few cases, as in Guinea and Uganda, the politicians tried to abolish the institution altogether.

THE MASSES' ANGUISHED HOPE

Victims alike of the colonial powers, the traditional elite, and of each succeeding regime, the "people" remained largely mute, for it was difficult to decide which self-appointed spokesman could be relied upon. The mass of the people paid the colonial taxes, supplied the forced labor to build the roads and work the mines,

and sold at uneconomic prices the crops they were ordered to grow. They went as soldiers to die far from home, and above all, it was their land that was expropriated to make way for new towns and mines, and for the insatiable appetites of white settler farmers. Yet despite this, in most parts of Africa, it would appear that on the eve of independence, the level of mobilization and political education of the masses was so low, that they had formed no clear expectations of what society in the new states ought to be. They had only vague notions of the promises the politicians were making to secure their support for the independence movements. In areas of white settlement, such as Central Kenya or Portuguese Africa, however, where widespread expropriation of land and prolonged armed struggle occurred, the leaders had to achieve a higher degree of mobilization and set clearer goals before the masses.[9]

Suspicion of government seems to have been the most characteristic attitude of the people. They were impressed by the technology of the white man and regarded him with awe. They viewed him from a safe distance as an incomprehensible, irrational, and uncontrollable force. They blamed their misfortunes on the traditional elite, who acted as agents of this irrational force. But the traditional elite were the only leaders they knew, understood, and in the ultimate analysis, could deal with. They barely knew the politicians or trusted them, and at times, merely to communicate with some of the political leaders, required the services of interpreters.

Insofar as they fully appreciated what was involved in the independence movements, their basic expectation was to see an end to the unpredictability and irrationality of the white man's world. Without the dubious advantage of Western education, they rejected the white man's culture, and for as long and as much as possible, stuck to what they knew. This did not mean that they wanted to re-create the past in its entirety. Their notion of freedom was not an abstract ideal, but a catalogue of specific wants. These included freedom from unjust and incomprehensible laws and directives; return of their land; and freedom to be left alone to live their lives and seek their own goals, especially in regard to

land tenure and local government groupings that affected historical relationships. These wants developed and became more specific with each new hope and each disastrous frustration. Soon, expectations came to include improved standards of living in housing and clothing, greater returns for their labor, better transportation for exporting and marketing their surpluses, education as a means to the social mobility that would ensure a better life for their children, and an adequate water supply, electricity, health-care facilities, and other such amenities of life.

THE POLITICAL ELITE

The task of securing these and other expectations of independence fell not so much on the intellectuals as such as on a new political elite. Some of the political elite, including a few outstanding leaders, came, of course, from the ranks of the intellectuals and nationalists who had led the independence movements. The continuing problem of rival nationalities and ethnicity in the emergent states, however, complicated any efforts toward the horizontal restructuring of society, based on knowledge and education or even largely economic factors. Although education remained of some importance, it soon ceased to be the dominant factor in the access to power that the intellectuals had imagined. More important were the ability to monitor and manipulate governmental patronage and the historic rivalries of different ethnic and communal groups. A new political elite, usually less well educated, more rooted in the local culture, and less idealistic than the intellectuals, emerged. They saw politics not only as an exciting and lucrative profession, but also one that guaranteed fame and adventure. In the political process that emerged, emphasis was placed not on the abstract concepts of freedom, human rights, and the dignity of the black man, but on fashioning a network of patronage and brokerage necessary for accession to offfice, and for its retention.

Without the same degree of involvement in European cultures that the intellectuals had, the new political elite were nevertheless constrained to operate within the framework of

models of development inherited from the final years of the colonial period. Specifically, these included increased linkage with the Western world, investment of Western capital, attempted transfer of technology, building of an infrastructure, and others. Even in areas of white settlement like Kenya, where the masses had been directly involved in the independence struggle, and where some expected an attempt at land reform and a rapid restructuring of society, the political elite chose to maintain their own control over the political system inherited from colonial days, and to pursue economic development through attracting foreign investment on terms favorable to maintaining such control. Even where leaders favored a socialist approach, it stopped short of immediate attempts at social transformation, relying instead on a long-term policy of villagization and rural transformation. Only in countries where prolonged struggles were necessary to achieve independence, such as in the Portuguese territories, was more commitment shown for the abolition of the private sector and a socialist restructuring of society. Yet even then, they found it difficult to reject the economic involvement of the Western powers.

With the new political elite placing such unambiguous emphasis on the acquisition and retention of power, without similarly clarifying the ideology or the goals of government, it is not surprising that many interest groups soon began to see in the army a more logical and efficient alternative to the political elite. The widespread emergence of military regimes, however, did not alter the framework within which the political elite operated. The gun was often used to suspend constitutions, but it could hardly suspend the political process necessary to secure the support or connivance of the masses, the traditional elite, and ethnic and communal groups. The result has been that even under military regimes, the obsession with politics has continued. A significant portion of the energies of the state, government functionaries, and all public institutions has been expended in the struggle for power and for keeping particular regimes in power, with little left, or allowed to be left, for the tasks necessary for development.

THE ELUSIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENT

The most fundamental aspect of post-independence Africa has been the elusiveness of development, however characterized—Europeanization, Westernization, modernization, progress, or simply development. That is to say, in many ways the quality of life of the average farmer and his family in the village, or worker in the urban areas, has not improved significantly; in some respects, and in some areas, it is even worse than on the eve of independence. In particular, many African countries now find it difficult to provide for their populations sufficient food and energy resources for the basic necessities of life.

Most of the new states have yet to evolve stable political structures that are imbued with a sense of national commitment and notions of social justice, around which the loyalties of the masses could be mobilized. Rather, the uneven development between different regions of the same country and between cities and rural areas of the same region persists. In addition, the inequalities of income distribution that characterized colonial rule have tended to widen considerably since independence. As a result, there have been civil unrest and civil war, and there is generally less security for life and property. In a few cases, grotesque and abnormal regimes have emerged that prey on their own populations rather than protect them or promote their welfare. The optimism of development plans of the 1960s has given way to increasing frustration in the 1970s and disillusionment in the 1980s. The general lament is that this is not what was expected from independence.

The intellectuals—who had the sharpest notions and clearest expectations of independence—have been the most frustrated, and their lamentations, especially when expressed in poetry, tend to be hyperbolic. Their sense of frustration has been heightened by the now current theory of dependency, which sees the new states as having been sucked through colonialism into an inescapable state of underdevelopment and a permanent state of dependency on the industrialized nations. African rulers, therefore, appear virtually helpless before the international network of neo-colonial forces.

In the dependency theory, a capitalist mode of development in the periphery is, by definition, doomed. Yet a socialist mode appears no less doomed, for the new states have already been locked, through colonialism, into a system where they have become satellites of the Western world, and the socialist or communist countries do not appear to be providing the kind of assistance necessary to break that bond.

SERIOUS, BUT NOT HOPELESS

Despite the foregoing, we can hardly deny that political independence has been a positive good. That is the only explanation of the exhilaration at the liberation of Portuguese Africa and the independence of Zimbabwe, as well as the struggle to extend this liberation to Namibia and even the Union of South Africa. Very few, even of the traditional elite, except perhaps in places like Uganda, would like to see a return to colonial rule. The assumption of sovereign power by the new political elite has transferred to Africa at least some power of self-government and self-regulation, which is often misused and sometimes abused, but is yet available. The responsibility for utilizing this more effectively, given African aspirations and the state of world economic relationships, lies to a considerable extent within Africa. Some of the regimes have at times made an effort to meet some of the expectations of the people. The pipe-borne water, electricity, and improved health facilities have already cut down the rate of infant mortality and raised life expectancy. The expansion of Western-type systems of education has facilitated social mobility, and for all the increasing inequalities in income distribution, no rigid class structure has yet solidified; the network of family relationships often cuts across income groups and links urban and rural populations inextricably.

In anticipation of independence, no provisions seem to have been made for an effective transitional period, and thus this period merely drags along. The greatest cause of the frustration of the mass of the people comes from the uncertainties of this period. After the initial uncertainties of colonial rule, people came to know what to expect. They approached independence with hesitation,

for they had no idea what to expect from it. Since independence, the feeling of uncertainty has increased. The political process has obeyed few rules consistently, whether constitutional or legal. World inflation and shifting economic policies have made prices unstable and the value of incomes most unreliable. New facilities such as electricity and pipe-borne water are expanded, but their performance is most unpredictable. Infant mortality is curbed, but highway fatalities are growing alarmingly. Life has become more uncertain. With the spread of Western education, and science and technology, the insecurity of life has bred superstition, and the search for faith healers and prophets has crept into every facet of society.

The healthiest aspect of the current reappraisals in Africa is the growing realism. With increasing cynicism about the possibilities of a new International Economic Order, or North-South dialogue, there is a new emphasis on self-reliance, self-fulfillment, and the more rational use of resources within Africa. The contrast with 1959 may be judged from the Report of the Monrovia Symposium, "What Kind of Africa by the Year 2000?" As at the Ibadan Conference, some forty participants were invited in their individual capacities. Although their frames of reference regarding the theme of the symposium differed, the greater realism of the Monrovia Symposium was unmistakable. Its Final Report set out four objectives of development in Africa, in this order:

1. The creation of a material and cultural environment that is conducive to self-fulfillment and creative participation;
2. The formation of policies for the rational use and exploitation of natural resources, entailing above all self-sufficiency in food and local processing of raw materials;
3. [A fresh look at] the whole educational and training set-up… and [the removal] of barriers… between education and employment, education and society, education and culture—in other words, between education and life; and
4. [Understanding fully] that the issues of freedom and justice can no longer be left in abeyance.

On this last point, the report goes on to say: "Only yester-day the birth of a State that respected basic freedoms was one of the most important demands in the struggle for independence. Has this erstwhile dream now turned into a nightmare?"

How widespread the new sense of realism and what the chances are of implementing this program are not certain. But the very frustrations of the past point to the need for fresh approaches, and such indications are being noticed. The vision of a new society in Africa will need to be developed in Africa, born out of the African historical experience and the sense of continuity of African history. The African is not yet master of his own fate, but neither is he completely at the mercy of fate.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Africa: The Dynamics of Change*, edited by H. Passin and J. A. B. Jones-Quartey (Ibadan: I.U.P., 1963), pp. 73-74. Dr. Adande is an anthropologist from Benin, who worked with Unesco in Dakar for many years. He later served as Minister of Agriculture, before joining FAO

2. *What Kind of Africa (by the Year 2000): Final Report of the Monrovia Symposium on the Future Development Prospects of Africa towards the Year 2000*, OAU/International Institute of Labour Studies Geneva, 1979, p. 62. Dr. Adedeji is a Nigerian economist and Executive Secretary for the United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa.

3. Contrast the more official Conference of Independent African States, Accra April 1958, or even the first All African Peoples Congress, Accra, December 1958, where participants were in a representative capacity. Compare also *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered*, Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference of the American Society of African Culture, Philadelphia, June 1960 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962).

4. For example, L. N. Namme, a Cameroonian living in Nigeria, said: "Would it not be essential that the government in power be strong enough to establish cohesion and stability?" *Africa: The Dynamlcs of Change*, p. 47. Also, the words of F. Amorin of Togo: "Too much freedom kills freedom; too much democracy kills democracy," ibid., p. 82.

5. *Ibid.*, especially Abdoulaye Diallo of Guinea, on p. 50. See also the reply of David Soumah, a Guinean exile living in Dakar.

6. *Ibid.*, F. Amorin, p. 253. Contrast with the more politically oriented All African Peoples Congress in Accra, where there was a resolution in favor of establishing armies to protect the newly won independence. A few newly independent countries even signed military pacts with their former rulers.

7. See M. Crowder and O. Ikime, *West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status*

under Colonial Rule and Independence (APC and University of Ife Press, 1970).

8. See, for example, J. J. Okunu, "Odinga and the Purpose of Independence: A Note on Not Yet Uburu," in *East Afnca Journal*, Nairobi, 4 (6): 13-15.

9. Colin Leys: *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), and O. L. E. Mbatia's review in *Journal of African Studies*, 4 (1) (1977): 107-12.

10. For a recent and perceptive analysis of the political process in a middle-size town in Western Nigeria, see J. D. Y. Peel, "Inequality and Action: The Forms of Ijesha Social Conflict," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 14 (3) (1980): 473-502.

11. Compare S. J. Kobrin, "Multi-national Corporations, Sociocultural Dependence and Industrialization: Need Satisfaction or Want Creation?", *Journal of Developing Areas*, 13 (2) (January 1979): 109-26; and T. M. Shaw and M. J. Grieve, "Dependence as an Approach to Understanding Continuing Inequalities in Africa," *Ibid*., 13 (3) (April 1979): 229-46. Kobrin concedes, "Contrary to the assertions of earlier dependentistas, political independence has and does make a difference" (p. 124).

12. *What Kind of Africa by the Year 2000?*, especially pp. 14-16.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: CONFRONTING THE LEGACIES OF SLAVERY AND COLONIALISM IN AFRICA*

INTRODUCTION

The summary of my argument is that development remains elusive in Africa, not merely because of the misrule and warped personalities of many African leaders, but because Africa had been damaged severely, first by the slave trade, then by the colonialism which grew out of the slave trade. Further, that Africa cannot rejoin the development train in the world until the damage is repaired as much as possible. When that is done, it will be of immense benefit not only to Africa, but also to the whole world.

A lot has been written about the trans-Atlantic slave trade, mostly about the economic benefits it conferred on Europe and North America, and the injustice of the lives of the slaves in America. Litttle attention has so far been given to the devastative effect of the damage done to African peoples. African historians have themselves been reluctant to focus much attention on this period of African history. The attitude generally has been that slavery is a universal phenomenon. Other peoples have transcended their periods of slavery and oppression. Why can't Africans forget about theirs, turn their faces forward and get on with their lives? Because of this refusal to confront the slave trade and come to terms with it, both Africans and non-Africans surround the subject with various myths. The story is told of a Harvard Professor of African descent who was visiting Africa and confronted an Asante lady with the accusation that her ancestors had sold his ancestors into slavery. The issue of possible guilt feeling has only compounded the African malaise. There is a Yoruba saying that "my child is dead is better than my child is missing." When dead, the child is buried; an account is given to the ancestors, and the living can get on with their lives. Consider how many such bodies are unaccounted for in every single community in Africa. Collective amnesia and deafening silence in the oral traditions have not enabled Africans to forget. A Nigerian writer has suggested the need for rituals to release the ghosts of

the missing presumed dead. This conference may make its own contribution towards that ritual of purification.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

There are university courses on slavery as a universal phenomenon. Usually, such courses stress that there was slavery in Africa before the coming of the Portuguese. There was slavery, but not slaves as a commercial commodity. Then came the trans-Saharan slave trade which introduced a commercial element into African slavery. But the scale of the trade was such that the slaves were able to continue to be treated as human beings. Under strict Islamic law, a converted slave became a free fellow Muslim. The children of a slave concubine or wife were free members of the household. Various features of the trans-Atlantic trade made it very different from any other type of slave trade or slavery in history. It was capital intensive and competitive among several European nations. The factor of international competition perhaps did more than anything else to reduce the slaves from fellow human beings to purely commercial cargo. Laws were passed to deny the humanity of the slaves. Their eye-witness accounts were not admissible in court as evidence. They could not own any property. Their children belonged to their masters and not to themselves. On the Middle Passage, they were packed like lifeless cargo in ways in which dogs and horses would not be packed today.

There were two further consequences of this. One was that, in all that period, from the late fifteenth to the late nineteenth centuries, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was inflicted on such a large scale on black Africans alone, with the result that by the 18th century, slave had become synonymous with black, and black with slavery. No one remembered that the Romans had Greek slaves or that the Turks and Arabs had enslaved many Europeans. Because of the kind of slavery they endured, black slaves were no longer accepted as normal human beings. The whole of Christendom, with all the religious fervour unleashed by the Protestant revolution of the 16th-17th centuries, clung to the argument that

slavery is not condemned in the Bible as a sin. Because of the Apostle Paul's letter to ask the master of Onesimus to forgive him and his plea that slaves should be loyal to their masters, it was concluded that the Bible condoned the heinous crimes of the Middle Passage and the gross injustice of the life of slaves on the American plantations. Some writers even tried to justify the Atlantic trade with the argument that it took black slaves from heathen lands into Christendom, thus opening up the possibility of converting them and saving their souls. All the teachings of Jesus that we should regard others as our neighbours, especially the weak and the oppressed, and do unto others as we would want them to do unto us, were glossed over. When eventually the Evangelical re-awakening of the 18th and early 19th centuries triggered off the anti-slavery movement, it stopped short of declaring the Atlantic slave trade as a sin and a heinous crime against humanity. The anti-slavery movement was the first to perfect the organization of mass rallies to force a change of policy on government and it did a marvelous job. But because of this failure to accept that the Atlantic slave trade was not compatible with the Biblical notion of neighbourly love, it was able to come to a compromise with the powerful West Indian planters in Parliament. Parliament voted 23 million pounds in 1834, now worth at least 23 billion to compensate the slave owners, but not one penny to compensate the slaves. Yet, slave owner and former slave were then to become fellow citizens competing in the same market place. Obviously, the anti-slavery movement left the task of emancipation as unfinished business. It has even been said that, what with apprenticeship schemes and all that, the slaves were not emancipated but ransomed. The passing of the Emancipation Act did not involve any change of heart in Europe or America about the evils of the Atlantic trade or the human qualities and capabilities of the black peoples involved. The Oxford Professor of Classics who examined Samuel Ajayi Crowther as he was being tested for ordination said he would like to show his papers to his colleagues who maintained that black people were not capable of logical thought.

THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT AND DOMESTIC SLAVERY

The anti-slavery movement focused its attention on stopping the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It was not designed as such to repair the ravages done to Africa by the slave trade. We could say that the missionary movement that grew out of the anti-slavery movement did attempt some reparation in its policy of combining Christianity, Commerce and Civilization. But the effectiveness of the missionary movement was greatly compromised by its failure to accept the slave trade as a sin incompatible with the teachings of the Bible. The missionaries were, therefore, willing to compromise with slave owners once again. When they discovered that they needed to promote internal slavery and slave trade in order to promote agricultural production for European industries, they did not hesitate to make the compromise. From the 1840's to the 1880's, they promoted what they called legitimate trade by encouraging a wide expansion of the use of so-called domestic slaves for the production and transportation of palm produce and other commodities to exchange for imported ammunition to continue the wars that continued to yield the slaves. To legitimize this compromise, the missionaries argued that slavery was not the sin, but the custom of plurality of wives which had no doubt been heightened by the years of the slave trade which usually removed more men than women. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) authorities ruled that in the Bible, slave owning was a social evil that could be tolerated until changes in the economic situation led to its amelioration, but that polygamy was explicitly rebuked in the New Testament in spite of its widespread practice by the patriachs in the Old Testament. The argument of Bishop Crowther that monogamy should be treated the way Paul treated circumcision as not an essential qualification for salvation, was firmly rejected. You may wish to contrast how some people in the same Anglican Church are today, in the name of showing love, trying to find a way round the explicit statements in the Bible condemning homosexuality, the sin of Sodom, as unnatural and not acceptable. Archdeacon Crowther, the Bishop's son, took the argument against polygamy to its logical conclusion when he said that he

was not worried about the fate of the wives of polygamists who were divorced so that their husbands could become monogamists and acceptable for baptism. The archdeacon said that he regarded the status of such "wives" as comparable with slavery. Even when Lagos became a British colony, slavery continued to be tolerated. The majority of the congregations in the CMS churches of the Niger Delta were slaves. The missions on the Niger River could not have been established without the support of the commerce in palm produce, shea butter and other slave-produced and slave-transported commodities in exchange for ammunition. For most of the 1870's Bishop Crowther established a formal alliance with the rulers of the Nupe kingdom as the southern outpost of the Sokoto Caliphate which was ostensibly being erected on the basis of a slave economy. Yet, the abolition of slavery was used at the Berlin and Brussels conferences as the defining mark of civilisation, on the basis of which African states were excluded from the comity of nations who congregated to share African territories without the participation of the Africans. Abolition of slavery was to be the major definition of the civilisation that the Partition Powers were to confer on Africans as soon as they could make good the claims that they were in control. The armies they used consisted largely of freed slaves. Slave raiding was the commonest *casus belli* declared against African rulers they marked out for attack.

ALL WERE VICTIMS, NOT BENEFICIARIES

Inter-ethnic relations in Africa will for long continue to be affected by perceptions as to who collaborated with the slavers and who suffered most. This is largely a futile argument because in the end all Africans and peoples of African descent were victims, not beneficiaries of the slave trade. The technology, capital and competition that characterised the European partici-pation in the Atlantic trade meant that no African peoples could afford to stay aloof from it. Those who could, obtained whatever ammunition was available, so as to protect themselves. The chiefs who participated in the trade were victims at least of unequal exchange. They exported man and woman productive and repro-

ductive power in return for ammunition, cheap gin, textiles, mirrors and others which the late Dr Dike called "meretricious" goods. No black African could escape from the racist burden of being black. Consider also the opportunity cost of the trade that of necessity compelled you to be perpetually at war with your neighbours instead of trading with them. Consider the specific case of Benin. It is reckoned that in terms of what may be called the civilized arts and perhaps even technology over a wide range of issues, life in Benin was comparable with life in Portugal when the Portuguese arrived to trade at the end of the 15th century, and there was some mutual exchange to start with. When the Portuguese showed that their interest was thenceforth to consist solely in slaves, the Benin monarch expelled the traders and missionaries from his court. The Portuguese just moved down the river to Itshekiriland. Benin could of course not keep away from the trade for too long. They had to trade, if not with the Portuguese, then with the Dutch and the French. Imagine what Benin could have become by the 19th century if they had enjoyed an export trade in commodities other than slaves. Consider also the Yoruba. The Old Oyo empire, with a cavalry force, built up some hegemonic power in the southern sudan belt in the 17-18th centuries.The Oyo ruled over Nupe, Bussa and others. They opened a corridor to the coast so as to participate in the Atlantic slave trade through Badagri, Porto Novo and Dahomey. Can we say the Oyo were collaborators and beneficiaries of the trade? See what happened to them in the 19th century. The old centre of the Oyo empire is today a forest reserve. The domino effect of the refugee problem involved triggered off the Yoruba Wars, which went on unabated till the British were able to impose peace in 1893. The wars continue to echo in Yoruba politics even today. Notice how in the Yoruba wars, the Oyo of Ibadan destroyed the Oyo of Ijaye in the struggle to survive. Notice from the account of many rescued slaves in Freetown how some Egba villages joined Ibadan and Ife warlords to destroy other Egba settlements. Crowther, an Oyo, was enslaved in 1821 by Oyo Muslim warlords. Who, then, were the beneficiaries and collaborators? All were victims of the Atlantic slave trade.

FROM ANTI-SLAVERY TO RACIST COLONIALISM

In promoting Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation as anti-slave trade measures and not for the reparation of the damage done to Africa, not only was the task of emancipation left unfinished. The anti-slavery movement also unwittingly laid the foundations of colonial rule. It was as if the missionaries saw the legacy of the Atlantic trade on Africa, felt that they could not tackle it alone, and invited the colonial powers after them. At the time, they regarded colonial conquest and colonial rule as essential for African development.

It is important to emphasize that colonialism in Africa arose out of the unique features of the slave trade that we referred to above, and it was therefore unlike colonialism in other places. It is what may be called racist colonialism in which a people set out to rule and civilize other people whose humanity continued to be questioned in so many ways. Whatever may now be said about the motives of the colonial powers, they did not have normal human regard for the Africans they ruled. Nowhere else in history was colonial rule characterized by the use of so much violence to control the lives of the subjects on a day to day basis. They came to Africa so that they could continue to exploit African labour which stopped flowing to the Americas at the end of the Atlantic slave trade. It was not always clear whether African land or African labour was the priority. We have examples in which people were evicted from their land specifically to create a landless people who would have no choice but to work for cheap wages on European farms or mines. Remember Leopokd's Congo in which the punishment for failure to produce enough rubber was to cut off the hands. How that was meant to stimulate productivity still beats the imagination. There were examples of policies of exter- mination as in the German Herero War, such that it seemed some of the colonial powers would have been happy to see the Africans die off like the American Indians. Every teacher would know that you cannot train a student with whom you do not communicate and to whom you do not concede even a fellow human feeling. The idea of a Dual Mandate in colonialism was an afterthought

and meant largely for propaganda. The clear evidence suggests that colonial powers had no enduring commitment to the development of Africa. Compare the legacy of Roman rule in Britain: Hadrian's wall, the road system, the baths and water resources, and administrative centers. The Romans stimulated productivity and exchange. Compare even the British legacy in India: the railways, the universities, the Indian Civil Service, and such monuments as the Victoria Railway Terminal in Bombay said to have been based on St Pancras in London which itself was based on the Salisbury Cathedral. The British went to India to trade and they had to stimulate existing trade. They may not have liked aspects of Hindu culture, but they did not harbour against the Indians the kind of contempt they showed for the Africans. The colonial powers in Africa did not hesitate to destroy existing trade, if only to divert attention to the production and export of crops for European industries and the importation of European manufactures. Dr William Baikie as Consul at Lokoja was impressed by the textiles he found in neighbouring markets, and which were said to have been widely distributed, as far as Kano. He sent samples of the textiles home to the British Museum. It is said that productivity declined when the producers found it more lucrative to turn to slave trading even before British manufacturers copied the designs and brought cheap imitations from India or Manchester to compete.

Those who are busy trying to rewrite the history of colonial rule in Africa, so as to paint a more attractive picture of colonialism rarely mention the enforced contribution of African colonies in manpower during the two World Wars. The number of French Africans involved in World War I was over half a million. This is another example of colonialism being an extension of the slave trade because many of those who went perished in the trenches, and suffered almost as much inhuman treatment. That was besides the contribution of money and the production of commodities.

DECOLONISATION: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Eventually, as in the case of slavery, the international community woke up to the evils of racist colonialism as practiced in Africa.

The Germans were relieved of their colonies in 1918, and these were shared out between Britain, France and Belgium to some extent. The anti-colonial movements, at the Pan-African level and at the level of individual countries began to be noticed, especially after World War II. Within a more conducive international environment, Britain and France agreed to move towards negotiating conditions for political independence, except in areas of European settlements. The decade 1950-1960 has thus been called the decade of decolonization.

Notice that there was no possibility or intention to restore independence to the pre-colonial states. The Partition boundaries which had been criticized as often arbitrary became the title deeds of the new countries that began to emerge in the 1960s as independent states. These were colonial states, colonial creations. It was during the decade 1950s-1960s that the rudiments of state institutions in terms of the executive, legislative and judicial patterned after the metropolitan institutions and suitably adapted began to be hurriedly put in place so that the outgoing colonial rulers could have new political elites to whom to hand over power. University institutions as campuses or colleges of metropolitan universities also began to be established. Thus, far from trying to decolonize, colonial powers deliberately created colonial states which were soon conferred with political autonomy. France had ruled two enormous territories of AOF and AEF in West and Equatorial Africa, but chose to decolonize them into 11 independent territories, some of which are not really viable, and with boundaries cutting across lines frequented by migrants. The French suggested to the British to follow their example and break up Nigeria, but the British rejected the idea. Boundaries fixed at the whims and caprices of colonial powers has produced the phenomenon in which the founding President of Zambia, lost election after ruling for 12 years and suddenly found his right to Zambian citizenship being questioned. There is the similar case in Cote d'Ivoire where it was the leader of Opposition who was denied the right to contest for the Presidency on the grounds that he did not qualify as a citizen.

The main point we are making is that political independence came without any real effort at decolonization. Political scientists

were at pains to whitewash autocratic rulers claiming that one-party states were democratic and in accordance with African traditions by which pre-colonial monarchies did not recognize opposition parties. Such political scientists have since been recanting and admitting that One Party states simply bred autocracy and misrule by refusing to tolerate criticism and dissent. We are still witnessing the outcome of such misrule in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya and other places. An African nationalist, Amilcar Cabral of Cape Verde once said:

> The colonialists have a habit of telling us that when they arrived, they put us into history. You are well aware that it is the opposite. When they arrived, they took us out of our own history. Liberation for us is to take back our destiny and our history.

Such liberation or decolonization, enabling the people to regain control over their own destiny and history remains unfinished business. Without decolonization, we moved from colonialism to neo-colonialism.

NEO-COLONIALISM

The concept of neo-colonialism is often treated as a joke because the word is used with such looseness as if it has no real meaning. We therefore need to clarify what we are talking about here. The slogan of Pan-African nationalists like Nkrumah was to "seek ye first the political kingdom and all else will be added unto thee." Neocolonialism is the situation of dependence created by colonial rule, in which you are granted political independence only to discover that you do not have control over your economy and cannot implement your own policies but must consult various powerful outsiders who directly or indirectly control the policies. Therefore, following the attainment of the political kingdom, nothing else was forthcoming to add to it and, usually, the political kingdom began to fall apart as peoples' expectations were frustrated. The nationalist leaders tried to get the best terms they could. Zimbabwe rejected the deal the British wanted to do with Muzorewa and waited for Mugabe. Urged on by students and younger partisans,

the Nigerian leaders were forced to repudiate the Anglo-Nigerian Defense Pact. But these were not enough. The economies of the different countries were already integrated into the economies of the metropolitan countries during the colonial period and under colonial exploitative terms, and the colonial powers were unwilling to surrender their advantageous positions. Agents of the World Bank and the IMF began to replace former Residents and District Commissioners as supervisors of the dependent economies in the former colonial territories. Globalization meant that the World Bank and the IMF could impose drastic devaluation of the currency and other measures of Structural Adjustment Programmes that impoverished the people and brought no visible economic returns. In pursuit of such policies, countries were encouraged to amass huge debts, and managing the Debt then became another weapon of control to compel continued compliance with policies of the World Bank and IMF. But it needs to be emphasized here that the debt of African countries is only a pittance compared with what the international communities owe to Africa, and debt relief is only the beginning, and not the end of the Reparation we seek.

The most notable examples of neo-colonialism are to be seen in Cold War politics where because of neo-colonial dependence, the US found it so easy to control and manipulate the economies of most African countries against the interests of the peoples of those countries in the name of containing the spread of communism. Take the example of Ethiopia and Somaliland. Decolonization exercebated border dispute between the two countries over the control of Ogaden. The dispute was exercebated as it facilitated control from outside. Under Emperor Haile Sellaisie, Ethiopian development was based on US aid and Somaliland therefore turned to the Soviet Union for assistance. When the Emperor was overthrown, and the Derge chose to embrace a socialist programme, the Soviet Union stepped into American shoes and the US became the new power over Somali development plans. Both neo-colonial powers exploited their position to extort substantial rewards and each was more interested to sell arms and to encourage the futile border wars than to improve the capability of their dependent

peoples to control their economic development. Consider also the Congo, and the blatant murder of Patrice Lumumba, and the secession of Moise Tshombe, followed by the setting up of Sgt., turned General Mobutu Sese Seko as the agent of the US and NATO. All the iniquities of Mobutu against the peoples of Zaire were aided and assisted by the US in the name of containing the spread of communism. It is said that the US was privy to the fall of Nkrumah. Take the case of Nigeria, The discovery of crude oil was a major factor in the Nigera/Biafra civil war. Because of its existing economic links, Nigeria had to resist the temptation during the war to turn to the Soviet Union for assistance. The Western powers then had the policy to recognise Nigeria and provide support, but never enough to bring the war to a quick end. Indeed, both Nigeria and Biafra continued for the 30 months to get military supplies from essentially the same markets.

Consider also the cases of Angola and Mozambique. Faced with the armies of the Portuguese Fascist dictator, Salazar, the nationalist movements in Angola and Mozambique received military assistance from Cuba, the Soviet Union and China at a price. This turned them into the enemies of the US and NATO. As a result of their resistance, the Fascist regime became bankrupt and was overthrown. Democracy was born in Portugal which became a more worthy member of NATO, but the countries that paid the price were not allowed to enjoy their liberation. Dissident groups and civil wars have continued to be encouraged in the name of containing the spread of communism. Even when the Cold War came to an end, and Mobutu and the apartheid regime of South Africa no longer had the US Mandate to foment war in the beleaguered countries, Jonas Savimbi continues to control diamond resources enough to continue the civil war. The cost of these neo-colonial wars to the people concerned are un-imaginable. Yet before independence, both Angola and Mozambique found that their conomies were already so integrated with the Portuguese economy that they had to end the Wars of Liberation by sitting at the table to negotiate independence with their former masters.

CONCLUSION: THE MEANING OF APARTHEID

Because of the long and intense campaign that had to be waged, the international community is well aware of some of the features of that evil system, perhaps more than any other in colonial African history. It may be helpful therefore if, in conclusion, we use Apartheid and South Africa to highlight some of the points we have been trying to make. The crucial factor is that it illustrates well the kind of exploitation to which Africa has been subjected by the Atlantic trade followed by racist colonialism. Unique as was the Apartheid regime, there was no feature of that evil system that could not be duplicated in the experience of other parts of black Africa. It was the racist colonial system that we have been discussing in other parts that made it possible for a few settlers protected by the force of the colonial power to erect such a system and operate it under neo-colonialism for so long because the Western world chose to regard white South Africa as their bulwark against the spread of communism. Another point to note is that the evil system arose out of the contempt bred by the Atlantic slave trade. The theology of the Dutch Reformed Church used to justify and sustain apartheid arose from the unfinished business of the anti-slavery movement, and the failure to declare the Atlantic trade and racist colonialism as a sin incompatible with the Biblical notion of neighbourly love.

Notice also that, in spite of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, the eradication of Apartheid mentality remains an unfinished business. We have in the constitution affirmative clauses to allay the fears of the privileged minority fearful of the possible revenge of the majority, but few concrete programmes to repair the damage done to the majority peoples by all the injustice and the unjust enrichment of not only the settlers but their capitalist supporters also. Without such a concrete plan to redress some of the wrongs that could be redressed, we have to wonder what would happen when the expectations of the people remain unfulfilled and the saintly figures of Mandela and Desmond Tutu may no longer be around.

We are sometimes asked how Reparation is to be distributed if received. It is, of course, bad strategy to start sharing what we have not yet received. But I need to give some preview of the kind of thing we have in mind. Africa needs a kind of Marshall Plan that enabled war-torn Europe and Japan to recover so quickly from the devastative effects of the war. Consider what adequate resources at the disposal of an All Africa Railway Authority to plan, construct and manage a railway system could do to provide necessary infrastructure for development. Consider what misery and waste of resources an adequate system of public transportation would remove from the lives of people in the municipality of Lagos. What about a telecommunication system that will make it possible to call Accra from Lagos without going through London? What about resources to develop and maintain a network of first class universities and research institutes that could provide facilities in Africa that will stem the current drain of high level manpower from Africa? What about a few specialist referral hospitals so that we do not need to send every senior government official abroad for treatment? Not all the damage of the Atlantic trade and racist colonialism can now be undone. But the world owes Africa the resources to build the infrastructure so as to level the ground somewhat to make competition within the global economy a little fairer.

My concluding point is that it is such Reparation, not charity and aid, that Africa needs to jump start its development effort. And such Reparation will benefit not only Africa and peoples of African descent, but the whole world. Let me add that if the world can firmly confront the evil of racism, it will remove a burden not only from the back of black peoples, but also from the head and heart of white peoples as well.

NOTE

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