

**THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION:  
A NEW STRATEGY**

**By DR WANGECI WA-KAMAU**

The only way that an African Revolution will take place, in economic and cultural terms, is if a union of revolutionary African states is formed. We who subscribe to the objectives of the African Renaissance agree that revolution is required, and to some extent our ideology may be said to have been embraced by particular African nations. However, there are many African governments which cling to the opposite ideology of upward mobility (that is, into a Western ideal). This is an ideology which is antithetical to that of the African Revolution, and we cannot expect such governments to assist us in our missions. In fact, they will hinder us, because their policies, diplomatic activities and economic pursuits are geared at achieving upward mobility (they being individual elites). This is directly opposite to our own aim of uplifting the *collective* state of Africa. So, for example, when we are calling for just terms of global trade, they are sustaining the existing (unfair) terms of trade by aiding and abetting them, in so far as those terms of trade abet their own upward mobility.

We of the African Revolution must therefore think carefully about how we will achieve our goal. Of course, a union of Africans is needed, and some may argue that the new African Union may serve as a vehicle for the African Revolution. However, this is problematic. It is impossible for an organization to institute revolution when factions within it are not interested in revolution, when they do not believe that revolution is feasible, and when they view the maintenance of a status quo as beneficial to their own aims for upward mobility. This means that a second pan-African coalition is required: one which consists of only those African states which embrace the ideology of an African Revolution by both word and action. These nations must all be democratic (with anti-elitism as well as free/ fair elections), they must embrace the African group to the extent that internal tribal divisions are irrelevant and to the extent that their principle loyalty is *with Africa*, not with the West or anyone else, and they must not be engaged in activities/ ideologies/ policies which are antithetical to those of the African Revolution.

When we ask for reparations from the West, there are African governments which openly disagree, telling the West that no reparations are due. When we call for the uplifting of the African proletariat from poverty, they openly collaborate with those very multinational companies or Western bodies which keep Africa in poverty. When operatives from the West want to engineer a

coup d'état or military instability in order to appropriate an African nation's valuable resources, they lend a helping hand. Instead of the African group being their point of reference, they look at the West as the ideal, and they yearn for symbolic mobility into the West, ensuring that their actions enable acceptance by the West, that they please the West, and that the rewards promised by the West (in exchange for their collaboration) are acquired.

That is why a coalition of revolutionary African states is required. Those nations which subscribe to the principles of this revolution (or which are making significant efforts to do so) should sign a treaty with each other. Yes, we will all still be a part of the African Union, but signing a treaty will articulate our commitment (as nations, and as individuals) to an African revolution. The time for rhetoric has passed; we need to radically address Africa's dependency on the West, Africa's unjust global economic position (vis-à-vis trade), Africa's cultural self-hate, and Africa's divided state. I propose the following principles of the African revolution: (i) the principle of democracy, (ii) the principle of a minimum standard of living, (iii) the principle of systematic equilibrium, (iv) the principle of freedom of expression, (v) the principle of functional detachment, (vi) the principle of internal-reference, and (vii) the principle of African unity.

*(i) The Principle of Democracy:*

We must ensure that democracy – true democracy – prevails within African Revolutionary Coalition States (I shall call them 'ARCS'). The fundamental basis of the African Revolution is global equality for Africa. We cannot be hypocritical nations which demand global justice whilst oppressing our people. There must be free speech, freedom of political activities (including political parties), and human rights (with no unlawful imprisonment). We must remember that the lack of liberty was itself a tool imported into Africa during colonialism, to oppress the masses and to silence them. We are determined to uplift Africa and we must reject any oppression of Africa – be it external or internal. We ARCS must also vehemently criticise any African nation which is autocratic and we must assist those dissidents from such nations who are fighting for democracy. However, we must reject any action that involves coups or military activity. No African nation has ever achieved democracy or political stability after a coup d'état; coups lead to counter-coups, a culture of coup d'états is born and democracy becomes an even more distant prospect.

*(ii) The Principle of a Minimum Standard of Living*

We must fight against economic elitism. Tax the rich more than they are being taxed; tax their bank savings and interest from it; tax their overseas stashes. The African economic elites often possess trillions which were appropriated through corruption, worker exploitation, collaboration with Western exploits, or through theft from national resources. Who, in Africa, gets that kind of salary?? We in ARCS cannot expect to end the global exploitation of Africa if we continue to allow Africans to exploit Africa. If the economic elites of Africa were sufficiently taxed, there would be sufficient funds for the provision of free education, free healthcare, and for the salaries of public workers (e.g. teachers, doctors, maintenance workers) to be increased. Furthermore, if those who make their trillions by exploiting everyday necessities (e.g. by making large profits from their supermarkets or pharmacies) are heavily taxed, the exploitation of everyday consumption will not be profitable and the inflated prices will fall. Ordinary Africans can then afford basic necessities, even if their wages remain the same.

Furthermore, the main reason why Africa is so impoverished is because the economic elites of Africa have aided and abetted the exploitation of the continent (and its citizens) pre- and post- colonialism. Economic elitism is thus also antithetical to our goals in the African Revolution. We must remember that capitalism in the West has not worked for the world (wherever profits are the main aim, there will always be exploitation because of the 'tendency of the rate of profit to fall' and the subsequent 'necessity' for exploitation). Even so, we must also remember that communism has not worked either. The solution for ARCS is a balance between capitalism and socialism. Yes, people can be entrepreneurs if they create jobs and pay their workers fairly. Yes, people can make profits, if those profits are substantially taxed and the proceeds are used to fuel further economic growth for the continent (thereby creating self-sustaining economies). When a point reaches whereby 100% of Africans have achieved a certain, acceptable standard of living, then the more industrious Africans may be free to accumulate wealth without further taxation. However, this can be reviewed, should the economic need arise.

Before colonialism, most Africans had a comparable standard of living, irrespective of their 'wealth' (in terms of land or livestock). In fact, in many African societies, the concept of property ownership was not practised until after colonialism. We in ARCS cannot take our continent back to such a state of being, because of our present reliance on currency, but we can ensure that all Africans attain an agreed standard of living. If everyone has access to good healthcare, it will no longer matter whether some can *afford* even better healthcare. The same goes for education, transport, access to safe water,

electricity, telecommunication, and housing. If there are sufficient jobs for the population – jobs which pay a decent minimum wage or more – the population will be able to maintain itself at a decent standard of living (or better).

*(iii) The Principle of Systematic Equilibrium*

If we must be “capitalistic”, let us be capitalistic as a group. We should trade with each other in order to maintain the millions of jobs which may be sustained through fair pan-African trade and through ethical business activities. Just by tending to our primary needs, we can build self-sufficient economies; if we stopped importing food, clothing, medicines, labour, and household electrical goods, our own food, clothing, pharmaceutical, electrical industries would provide employment for much of the African population. When we engage in export business, we should ensure that it benefits us; let us shift from exporting primary produce (e.g. raw cocoa, tea leaves, coffee beans) to manufacturing that produce and then exporting it. If international buyers from the West persist with unfair terms of trade, let us shift from trading with them to trading with other developing countries and with the East (let us see what Nestlé will do without African cocoa and what Kenco will do without African coffee!)

When we must be “communist”, let us ensure that collectivism is enacted by all (unlike in the world’s present or former “communist” nations, whereby a tyrannical elite was exempt). It goes without saying that we should take control of all our key industries – from food and clothing production to telecommunications and electricity/water supply. “Foreign investment” has led to foreign monopoly of many such industries but the continent has never benefited from foreign monopoly and it never will. Furthermore, socialism can be enacted amongst ARC states and within the developing world; natural resources/ principle produce can be battered (for little or no profit) amongst developing nations, instead of those same resources being purchased through profit-making middlemen based outside the developing world.

In essence, the two antagonistic concepts of capitalism and communism must be used strategically, as if in a regulated system. We should apply either in calculated measure until equilibrium is reached (that is, when 100% of the population has achieved a particular standard of living); after that, we can afford to be flexible. The idea is not that everyone should earn the same amount of money, but that wealth should be distributed until such a point as a decent standard of living is arrived at and the population has the means to

maintain that standard of living without further distribution of wealth. Our principle objective is to uplift the *African group* in a sustainable manner.

*(iv) The Principle of Freedom of Expression*

We must acknowledge the dangerousness of totalitarianism. We must operate on the maxim that no policy should be imposed upon Africa; this also applies to those in the African Renaissance Coalition. The policies which are thus far outlined are offered as collective principles, yes, but the implementation of these policies by African governments must not extend to suppressing dissent against those policies or to quelling antagonistic behaviour in an unjust manner. For example, the economic elites may not particularly like being taxed to such an extent as is outlined in principle (ii), and they may form political parties whose manifestos promise the end of such taxation. If those political parties are democratically elected, then those for the African Revolution must accept it but continue to campaign to the masses, remembering that elitism is an ideology that it is unfavourable to the majority. If the majority population weighs its options, having experienced its deteriorating economic state (due to the elitists), it will soon vote out the elitists.

Furthermore, an important aspect of the African Revolution is cultural; African culture must be rediscovered, rejuvenated, practiced, and maintained. However, it must not be imposed on the general population. African culture *should* receive ample structural support (e.g. in terms of African culture/history being taught about in the state curriculum, African research institutes being state-funded, public television/radio having majority African content, etc). Even so, other cultural forms should be allowed to blossom to the extent that citizens allow them to blossom. If this is not allowed and African culture is imposed upon the population, there will undoubtedly be a revolt and African culture will be associated with repression.

In essence, there can be and there should be no totalitarianism. The principles of the African Revolution should themselves be subject to public consensus. The public should be consulted ceaselessly, and referendums should be held continually. We must operate on the fact that people are free to possess any ideology except that which involves interfering with the rights of others.

(v) *The Principle of Functional Detachment*

For the African Revolutionary Coalition to succeed, it will have to detach itself from the West. For decades, relations between Africa and the West have been unequal. Nothing has changed in Africa's favour. In fact, the terms of the relationship have deteriorated, from Africa's perspective. Protests against World Trade Organization treaties have been futile; pleas for loans to be written off have been ignored; the aversive effects of the West's "structural adjustment policies" for Africa (put as conditions to the delivery of aid) have been disregarded by the West. Western companies continue to exploit Africa's natural resources. Political relations with the West are based on a system of rewards and punishments (with the West holding the whip), such that African leaders who want to be in the West's favour are bound to being obedient servants.

ARCS can only be successful if they detach themselves from the West because any and all economic relations with the West are on an unequal basis. If Africa continues to wait for the West to save it, it will be waiting forever not only because of the reasons outlined above (reasons which will continue to be real for as long as the West is driven by profit-making aims) but also because of the continually pervasive neo-colonial mentality that is implicit in the West's dealings with Africa. Africa has to remove itself from a situation in which it is the commodity.

By detaching itself from the West, ARCS will also be detaching their Africa from the global structural hierarchy which has bound Africa in a subordinate position. They will also, in essence, be rejecting the ideology that a global structural hierarchy exists or that it is relevant to Africa. If Africa removes itself from the situation of being in a hierarchy, it can then proceed to exist on its own terms. Dependency on the West must cease. Africa does not need loans or aid to survive – it can certainly *thrive* without either, not only because it has the capacity to be self-sufficient but also because those loans/aid are attached to conditions which are harmful to Africa. They also perpetuate the global structural hierarchy.

*After* Africa has become self-sufficient, *after* it has uplifted the standard of living for all Africans, *after* it has established itself as an independent continent, then it can resume economic relations with the West. At that stage, those relations will be on an equal basis, and both parties will have equal negotiating power.

*(vi) The Principle of Internal-Reference*

The ultimate goal of the African Renaissance must never be set on a comparative basis; we must not say 'Africa should be like x continent' or 'Africa should be better than x continent.' The notion of 'standard of living' must be determined within Africa, according to Africans' own desires. If, say, electricity is deemed to be a basic necessity by consensus, then it must be available to all as a basic necessity. However, we must not say that because electricity is widely available in the "developed" world, then we must also possess it. One of the problems of existing on a comparative basis is that the process of competition may eventually lead to African sub-groups turning on each other (e.g. one nation exploiting another) in pursuit of the status which they have defined through comparisons with other nations or continents. Trying to 'compete' with other continents will also mean that Africa will continue as an actor in a global structural hierarchy – whether as the commodity or as the exploiter. Even if Africa becomes "the second world," it will still be oppressed by the "first world" and it may resort to exploiting the then "third world" in order to maintain or advance its status.

Furthermore, the notion of global wealth is a vague notion which partially depends on currency rates – rates which are not definitive. We must remove ourselves from global "league tables" of wealth or poverty. Even if, after ARCS' reformation policies are underway, their average Gross Domestic Product remains at x dollars or sterling pounds (however 'low' this value), it does not matter, provided that that money (in local currency) is sufficient for a decent standard of living within the relevant nation. To remove the problem of some ARCS currencies being more "valuable" than others in the global market, ARCS may decide to standardise their currency or – where inter-ARC trade is involved – to use standardised abstract units of currency.

*(vii) The Principle of African Unity*

The citizens of Africa are one. African Revolutionary Coalition States must embrace all of Africa, irrespective of differences of opinion and irrespective of geographical distance. We are all citizens of Africa, and we must therefore participate fully and unequivocally in the process of African Unification delineated by the African Union. The opinions of an African government do not necessarily represent the opinions of its citizens, and we must therefore never alienate the citizens of African countries whose governments we

disagree with. For example, a particular country may have an unelected government which achieved power through military force; we should criticise and penalise that nation's government, but not its citizens. We should establish and maintain diplomatic and socio-cultural links with such countries.

The African Revolution can only be achieved if Africans erase the neo-colonial mentality which has hovered over them for the past few decades. We must take control of our television and radio broadcasts, ensuring that our cultures and languages are celebrated. We must facilitate social, cultural, linguistic, and educational exchanges amongst Africans. We must familiarise ourselves with each other, and we must regard each other as fellow compatriots, irrespective of national boundaries or distances and irrespective of linguistic barriers. We must begin to exist as citizens of one nation: the African Union. Wherever there is conflict within a region of the African Union, we must help resolve that conflict; wherever there is hunger within a region of the African Union, we must rush there with every assistance that we can give; wherever there is injustice within the African Union, we must express concern and outrage because our compatriots are being oppressed.

I ask you to gain awareness of *The African Unification Front* ([www.africanfront.com](http://www.africanfront.com)), a revolutionary Pan-African organization which has been active since the mid 1990's, and whose ideologies, objectives, and visions encapsulate the dream of revolution in Africa. These Pan-African brothers and sisters, as well as those in the African Union and other Pan-African organizations, have worked hard for a unified Africa and for the political/ economic/ cultural liberation of Africa. It is the duty of every African government to listen to, consult, and participate in these Pan-African efforts.

I ask those in charge of creating the East African Community federal state not to forget the African Union. I also ask all region bodies to embrace the unification of Africa – from the South African Development Committee (SADC) to the Common Market of East & South African States (COMESA) to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC). I ask all African citizens to embrace each other and to know each other. I ask television stations to seek out their counterparts in other African nations, and to exchange programmes. I ask radio stations to broadcast a kaleidoscope of African music. I ask newspapers to delineate larger sections of their coverage and analysis to pan-African news. I ask educationalists to ensure that students acquire knowledge of all-Africa's history, that African lingua franca are introduced into curricula, and that pan-African student-exchange programs are established.



I also ask every African to remember that, were it not for Pan-African unity, the struggle for Independence would have been harder and lengthier than it was. The national boundaries which exist within Africa have been in existence for several decades, but a boundary-free Africa has been in existence for millennia. We suffered together under colonialism, we fought together for Independence, and we can most certainly restore Africa to its amalgamated state.

The African revolution does not require funding from the World Bank or aid from the West. It has no need of permission from the International Monetary Fund or the World Trade Organization. The African revolution exists within every African who is committed to liberating Africa and unifying it. The African revolution is something which every African citizen, every politician and every institution can enact. We are all citizens of the African Union, but we who regard the matter of an African revolution with greater urgency than others should accelerate towards African unification, democratisation, economic independence, intra-African freedom and global liberation. A new generation of Pan-Africanists has sprung up – Pan-Africanists who cannot tolerate the thought of another capsule of time passing by with Africa still in chains.

---

Correspondence to: [Caroline@wakamau.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Caroline@wakamau.fsnet.co.uk) Copyright C.W. KAMAU 2005.