Violence

SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

EDITOR

CHRIS JONES

6

AFROCENTRIC EDUCATION FOR PAN-AFRICANISM AND THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE: AFRICAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHERS' INTERVENTIONS

Simphiwe Sesanti

Keywords

African Renaissance; Afrocentric education; Eurocentric education; Pan-Africanism; violence; 'xenophobia'

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In May 2008, during a month celebrated throughout the African world as the 'Africa Month', the media splashed a shocking photograph of a Mozambican man, on his knees, engulfed in flames (Commey 2008:12). In what became a "symbol of shame" during a "moment of madness",¹ South African citizens rounded up Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave, "wrapped him in his only possessions, blankets, and set him alight". While the fire devoured his body, South Africans "danced, laughed, cheered, and jeered" (ibid). Nhamuave's violent murder was not an isolated event. In search of a better life in South Africa, African immigrants "were savagely set upon by locals, beaten up, their property looted, raped and murdered" (ibid:12). These violent acts, widely referred to as 'xenophobia', were not the last in 2008.

In September 2019, an organisation called Sisonke People's Forum mobilised hostel residents in Johannesburg, as well as the All Truck Drivers Foundation, for a national shutdown to protest against "foreign nationals" taking South Africans' jobs (Bornman 2019:8). Under the slogan "South Africa for South Africans", the protesters called for "foreigners" to go back to their countries of origin (ibid). The slogan "South Africa for South Africans" undermined the worldwide Pan-Africanists' slogan "Africa for Africans" (Nkrumah 1973:220). It also contradicted Nyerere's (in Nkrumah 1963:243) Pan-Africanistic's observation that "[w]e are all Africans trying very hard to be Ghanaians or Tanzanians".

1 Phrases used by the *New African* magazine journalist, Pusch Commey (2008:12).

In November 2020, a group self-identified as Umkhonto weSizwe Military Veterans' Association (MKMVA)² mobilised South African unemployed graduates and truck drivers, and marched in Durban, "demanding that foreign-owned businesses be shut and their owners 'go home'" (Erasmus 2020:10). The organisation blamed the "foreigners" for taking South Africans' jobs and for dealing in drug-trafficking (ibid:10). Whether the "foreigners" were in SA legally or not, the MKMVA demanded that they should "go back" to their countries (ibid:10). South Africans' violence on fellow Africans was seen by those on the receiving end as a betrayal of Pan-Africanism which found expression in solidarity shown by fellow Africans to South Africans' struggle against apartheid (Commey 2008:12). In the words of Cameron Duodu (2008:22),

[t]o a Pan-Africanist, the most galling thing is that some black South Africans should turn their anger not on the rich who use their superior education offered them by apartheid to obtain economic power, but on their fellow Africans, who are as poor as themselves. Ironically, it should make the apartheid ideologues laugh: Africans helped South Africa break free from us. But they didn't realise we had set them a trap by giving them only political power and keeping economic power for ourselves! And now, the trap is sprung.

Indeed, Nigeria, for instance, provided scholarships and relief materials to South African students and refugees (Adebajo 2010:146). In addition to this, Nigeria instituted a "Mandela Tax" through which money was deducted from Nigerian civil servants' monthly salaries in order to support the anti-apartheid struggle (ibid:146). Another reason that caused dismay to fellow Africans was that while South Africans on the one hand harassed fellow Africans, on the other hand the country's former president, Thabo Mbeki, was reviving the idea of the African Renaissance, a project of Pan-Africanism about the rebirth of the African continent's cultural values and celebration of Africans' sisterhood and brotherhood (Adebajo 2020:169, 176, 177, 180). While it is true that some South Africans have indeed betrayed the spirit of Pan-Africanism by perpetrating violence on their fellow Africans, South Africans' misdeeds are not unique in Africa.

Before passing on in 1961, Frantz Fanon (1967:126) recorded that citizens of the Ivory Coast saw fellow Africans from Dahomey as economic competitors; some Senegalese regarded some Sudanese likewise. In the Ivory Coast, the Dahoman "foreigners [were] called on to leave; their shops ... burned, their street stalls ... wrecked" and the government of the Ivory Coast, just like the government of Ghana, commanded them to go, "thus giving their nationals satisfaction" (Fanon 1967:125). The violence on fellow Africans by the Ivory Coast's and Ghana's governments is an indication that Pan-Africanism was, first and foremost, betrayed by African leaders "who once used to call for 'African unity'" in pursuit of their selfish interests (ibid:148).

2 UMkhonto WeSizwe (MK) was the military wing of South Africa's liberation movement and the African National Congress (ANC) which has been South Africa's ruling party since 1994.

Yet, Fanon (ibid:132) points out, “we must understand that African unity can only be achieved through the upward thrust of the people, and under the leadership of the people, that is to say, in defiance of the interests of the bourgeoisie.”

In line with Fanon’s foregoing observation, I argue in this chapter that Pan-Africanism must be achieved through a bottom-up approach, that is, by the African masses, not by a few elite African leaders. Such an outcome must be facilitated by Afrocentric education. Afrocentricity and, by extension, Afrocentric education refer to intellectual work by African scholars, be it in philosophy, history, sociology, and other disciplines, whose central idea is that the “key crisis in the African world is the profoundly disturbing decentering of African people from a subject position within their own narrative” (Asante 2017:231). Eurocentrism on the other hand and, by extension, Eurocentric education refer to the idea of centring European values and interests, and imposing these on the rest of the world (wa Thiong’o 1986:93). Eurocentric education in aid of colonialism made Africans regard one another as foreigners (Nkrumah 1973:212).

Out of this historical context, violence amongst Africans is referred to as ‘xenophobia’, a misnomer because no African is a foreigner in Africa. I begin by defining this chapter’s key concepts. Subsequently, I demonstrate how Eurocentric education alienated Africans from one another. Concrete expressions of Pan-Africanism, the African Renaissance and Afrocentric education are then presented, followed by concluding remarks.

DEFINING KEY CONCEPTS: PAN-AFRICANISM AND THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Pan-Africanism refers to “efforts to promote the political, socio-economic and cultural unity, emancipation and self-reliance of Africa and its diaspora” in the conviction that “Africans on the continent and around the globe share a common history and destiny” (Adebajo 2020:4). A largely unappreciated aspect of Pan-Africanism is its commitment to the “finest cause in the world, the liberation of mankind ... the whole of mankind – not Africa alone” (Nkrumah 1973:32, 220). While opposed to “all ... forms of ... chauvinism”, including racial and national chauvinism, Nkrumah (ibid:167, 220) declared that “the future of the world will be decided in Africa” in the context of Pan-Africanism as a tool for the liberation of the entire human race.

Pan-Africanism, in the continental context, means ushering Africa, not as a “large number of small and weak countries subject to all the dangers of Balkanisation, but rather, the evolution of some sort of African union”, seen as the “only answer to the several difficulties” confronting Africa as “various states and territories” (ibid:176, 221). An “African Union” or “Union of African States”, in Nkrumah’s (ibid:253) view, implied a “political union” which would be responsible for ensuring “a uniformity” in Africa’s foreign and defence policy and “rapid social, economic and industrial

developments". Nkrumah's (ibid:253) "political union" was radically different from a "loose confederation of co-operation" to which he was vehemently opposed, seeing it as "deceptively time-delaying".

Converting Africa into "a series of tiny states", which had neither resources nor personnel to provide for their own defence to establish their own banking systems, thus compelled to continue with the old colonial framework of trade, would compel such African states into pacts with their former colonial powers, thus losing control over their foreign policy and, therefore, not free (ibid:253). An African union, Nkrumah (ibid:176) further pointed out, needed not "prejudice the local autonomy of individual territories", but should "provide a mechanism which would allow Africa as a whole to co-ordinate its defence, its main lines of economic and foreign policies, and its economic development". Nkrumah (ibid:252-253) had realised that colonial powers were insincere in conceding independence to African countries, but, instead, wanted to do so only "in name", the real objective being to make African countries getting independence "in point of fact pawns of the colonial power that is supposed to have given them independence".

In emphasising the "political union" as the only way out, and in exposing colonialists' objective to perpetuate their domination of Africa, Nkrumah (ibid:128) sought to "illustrate the different forms which colonialism and imperialism old and new can take", so that Africans could be on their guard "in adopting measures to safeguard" their "hard-won independence and national sovereignty". The imperialism existent in the "postcolonial" sought to accomplish their objective "not merely by military means, but by economic penetration, cultural assimilation, ideological domination, psychological infiltration, and subjective activities even to the point of inspiring and promoting assassination and civil strife" (ibid:128). The end to these means were to "influence the foreign policies of small and uncommitted countries in a particular direction" (ibid:128). In this regard, French governments, in particular, "preferred to break up their colonial federation and make sure that a weak political independence came separately to each of its territories" (Davidson 1973:120).

Such an approach was meant to ensure that "decolonization became a new kind of 'balkanization', a further breaking up of Africa into separate states which, being poor and small in population, were also weak states" (ibid:121). The vulnerability of individual African states, amongst other cases, manifested itself in 1984 when Mozambique, after having regained independence in 1975 and having hosted the ANC's activists, was pressured by the apartheid regime through military attacks to expel the then liberation movement from its territory (Callinicos 2004:517). An agreement known as the Nkomati Accord, which required both Mozambique and South Africa to cease supporting each other's enemies, "required that ANC members in Mozambique be given notice to leave the country. Even those who were in hospital, including pregnant

women receiving treatment in antenatal clinics, were asked to leave” (ibid:517). To drive this point home and to make his commitment to Pan-African unity and Ghana’s role in it clear, Nkrumah (1973:98) expressed his government’s hope that Ghana could become “the centre for the discussion of African problems as a whole and that, with the cooperation of all other African territories”, Africans would be able to foster a common attitude to local and world problems.

Nkrumah (ibid:206) declared that “so deep” was the government and Convention People’s Party’s (CPP) faith in African unity that there was “preparedness to surrender the sovereignty of Ghana, in whole or in part, in the interest of a Union of African States and Territories as soon as ever such a union becomes practicable”. Not only was Nkrumah’s party and government prepared to surrender Ghana’s sovereignty to an African Union government, but Nkrumah (ibid:221), as the country’s president, declared that he, for one, was “prepared to serve under any African leader who is able to offer the proper guidance in this great issue of our time”.

In the diasporic context, Edward William Blyden (1967:125, 132), a Pan-Africanist, noted that for the “descendants of Africa” in the west, it is

only in Africa that they will find the sphere of their true activity ... For the Negro, pure and simple, there is no country but Africa, and in America his deeper instincts tell him so. He will never be understood, nor will he ever understand his European guide and teacher, as long as he remains in the countries of his exile.

It was in appreciation of this Pan-Africanist expression by Blyden that Nkrumah (1970:88) later observed that the “total liberation and the unification of Africa ... will bring about the fulfilment of the aspirations of Africans and people of African descent everywhere”. Nkrumah (1971:164), though, did not perceive diasporic Africans as a helpless lot and victims who needed to be rescued by their African sisters and brothers based on the continent, but as people who had skills that were needed in the African continent. In a visit to the United States (US) in 1951, Nkrumah (ibid:164) told the African-American community he met there that “there was much for the Negro people of America to do to help their ancestral country both then and in the future upon the attainment of independence”. In response to Nkrumah’s appeal, many African-Americans approached Nkrumah (ibid:265), expressing their quest to go to Ghana.

The African Renaissance is a project of Pan-Africanism that seeks to reclaim African values for Africans’ liberation and reconstruction (Nkrumah 1970b:63). The African Renaissance, in the continental context, “created the right political atmosphere for a real effort of national regeneration” (Nkrumah 1973:149). In this context, Ghana, the first country to “regain” independence in 1957, was referred to by Nkrumah (ibid:47), the first head of independent Ghana, as a “symbol and the inspiration of

renascent Africa.” In line with the concept of “rebirth” – African Renaissance – Ghana “regained” (not “gained”) her independence, and when Ghana became a Republic in 1960, “Ghana [was] reborn” (ibid:35, 240). We now turn to Eurocentric education’s destructive role in Africa.

EUROCENTRIC EDUCATION’S CENTRALITY IN DIVIDING AND ALIENATING AFRICANS FROM ONE ANOTHER

Throughout the period of European domination of Africa, “colonialism imposed on the mind of Africans the idea that their own kith and kin in other parts of Africa were aliens and had little, if anything, in common with Africans elsewhere” (ibid:212). This ploy to estrange Africans from one another “was in the interests of colonial and settler rulers to perpetuate the subjugation” of Africans by pursuing a policy not only of divide and rule, “but also of artificial territorial division of Africa” (ibid:212-213). In order to effectively carry out the colonial project of dividing Africans, the colonialists “played upon” Africans’ “tribalistic instincts” and thus “sowed seeds of dissension”. Having emphasised the cultural differences existing amongst Africans, which some African scholars have referred to as variations, as opposed to differences, significantly, in casting doubt over the potential of Pan-Africanism, “[c]ritics of African unity refer to the wide differences in culture, language and ideas in various parts of Africa” (ibid:xi). In entrenching divisions amongst Africans, Eurocentric education played no small part.

While pursuing his studies in the US, Nkrumah (1971:44) came to be aware of two sociological schools in the US which held divergent and conflicting views about cultural ties between Africans at home and those in the diaspora. While on the one hand, some sociologists at Howard University, led by Professor Fraser, argued that “the Negro in America had completely lost his cultural contact with Africa”, another section of sociologists, led by Dr M.J. Herzkovitz, at the North-western University (in the USA), maintained that “there were still African survivals in the United States and that the Negro of America had in no way lost his cultural contact with the African continent” (ibid:44). Nkrumah’s (1973:96) personal interactions with African-Americans at the time referred to as “Negroes”, impressed upon his mind the existence of “a firm bond of sympathy” between Africans on the home continent, and the “Negro peoples of America” whose ancestors came from Ghana.

Nkrumah (ibid:96) further noted that, in 1957 in the West Indies, it was still “possible to hear words and phrases” which came from various languages of Ghana. By pointing out the African diasporic linguistic ties to the African continent, Nkrumah was making the point that the African diasporic cultural ties to Africa had survived, thus defying and undermining the colonial project of keeping Africans apart. It is in this context – the alienation of Africans from one another and attempts at destroying African

cultural values – that Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance emerged. We now examine the concrete expressions of Pan-Africanism in the African continent.

PAN-AFRICANISM IN GHANA: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

Ghana regained independence on 6 March 1957, with the CPP, led by Nkrumah, being the ruling party. The CPP's constitution committed the party to socialism and Pan-Africanism and identified itself with the "masses ... of the people" (Nkrumah 1971:96, 291-292). In line with this commitment to Pan-Africanism, on Ghana's Independence Day, Nkrumah (2017:68) declared that "the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent". In making Pan-Africanism practical, Nkrumah (1973:126, 186), in April and December 1958, respectively, hosted a Conference of Independent African States, made up of African governments which had secured independence, and an All-African People's Conference, constituting freedom fighters from different African countries. Both meetings discussed Africa's total liberation and unity (ibid:126, 186). Ghana proceeded to provide offices and military training facilities to freedom fighters from different African countries (Nkrumah 1967:65).

While Nkrumah took pride in these Pan-African initiatives, some Ghanaians resented them. When he was overthrown in a coup on 24 February 1966, subsequent events pointed to this resentment. One of the first attacks of the coup makers was to "attack the African Affairs Centre and the Bureau of African Affairs which catered for African freedom fighters granted political asylum in Ghana" and detaining some freedom fighters (ibid:65). In 1969, Ghana's government "expelled thousands of Nigerians and other West Africans, many of whom had been born in Ghana and knew no other home" (Prah 2006:32). In 1983, the Nigerians returned the favour and expelled Ghanaians from their country (ibid:32). Nkrumah's critics alleged that he "sacrificed Ghana on the altar of Pan-Africanism" and that he was "a great African but not a great Ghanaian" (Biney 2020:162).

A report written in 1962 by William P. Mahoney³ for the US president, John F. Kennedy, referred to "the senseless extravagance of Nkrumah on prestige projects and in disseminating his brand of pan-Africanism" (Rooney 2007:307). But resentment towards the CPP for advancing Pan-Africanism was not the only factor that led to its overthrowal. The party's leaders made some mistakes and did some wrongs which ultimately undermined Pan-Africanism. While the CPP's leaders were "not averse to Nkrumah's talking fervently of unity and national freedom; so long as he merely talked, they enjoyed the fame and respect that all this brought to Ghana and themselves" (Davidson 1973:125).

3 An ambassador for the US in Ghana.

In reality, and in practical terms, the CPP's leaders' "eyes became ever more firmly fixed on interests and advantages which had little or nothing in common with unity and national freedom" (ibid:125). What this means is that the CPP's ideology of Pan-Africanism, clearly stated in its constitution, became subservient to its leaders' selfish interests (Nkrumah 1971:292). But, argues Davidson (1973:123), "[i]deology was precisely what [the CPP] did not have, unless ideology is a mere longing to be free". As far as Davidson is concerned, for the CPP there had been "no time for deep thought about the future, or for any general understanding of the need for such a thought" (ibid). According to Davidson, the CPP "was swept along on a tide of impatience to be finished with foreign rule" (ibid). What Davidson means by this is that "[l]ike every nationalist movement of those days, the CPP had no detailed doctrine of thought and action" (ibid). In the absence of such necessary detail and action, for opportunistic elements "the gains of nationalism became increasingly a passport to privilege and personal enrichment" (ibid:124).

The opportunistic elements in the CPP, who also constituted its leadership, were the educated elite and traders whose "interests of business were the driving interests of their nationalism" (ibid:123-124). To be sure, while these business-driven leaders "believed ardently in the cause of Africa's liberation, and suffered much for the sake of it ... it soon appeared that they would tend, as the early gains were won, to put their personal interests first" (ibid:124). The CPP was characterised by contradictions in that while, on the one hand, what "gave the party its strength was the support of masses of ordinary people in town and village"; on the other hand, the CPP became "a party of the privileged" (ibid:124-125).

This state of affairs was made possible by the fact that while, on the one hand, the masses of the people were needed because colonialists "would give way only to mass pressure", on the other hand, "mass pressure called for a leadership which was at least sufficiently educated in European ways to be able to formulate demands, and devise tactics, that colonial government would find effective" (ibid:123-124). So, the opportunistic section of leadership that the CPP had "needed the poor and humble, but rather as the foot-sloggers of an army are needed by its officers" (ibid:123). The CPP's high ideals took second fiddle as, for the party's leaders, the "size of a man's motor was beginning to be the measure of his social prestige" (ibid:136). The CPP's leaders were "not in the least ashamed of their wealth, nor of the dubious ways, or even the downright dishonest ways, in which they got hold of it" (ibid:180). When Nkrumah tried to restore the CPP to its former self and said that it "must again become the party of the masses", it was too late, and he "was obliged to stand alone; and in that solitude he fell", because the CPP had "become a party of the privileged" (ibid:125).

These factors cannot be fully appreciated unless Ghana's history between 1951 and 1957 is taken into cognisance. This is a crucial period because it "shaped all the

groundwork and achievement of [Nkrumah's] life, bringing his great success but also preparing his downfall" (ibid:158). During this period, Nkrumah (1971:139) assumed the position of "Leader" of what was called "Government Business", following Ghanaian elections in 1951. The implication of the 1951 "Government Business" (ibid) was that it resulted in the opposite of the CPP's call for "Self-Government Now!", namely delaying independence for a period of six whole years until 1957. The colonial British government persuaded the CPP to postpone the call for "Self-Government Now!" in favour of "self-government soon" (ibid:81-82). This turned out "to be victory at a heavy price", though it was "not the way it seemed at the time" (ibid:82). Being "Leader of Government Business" and not "Prime Minister" was more than a case of a nomenclature (ibid:85).

This meant that, not only could the CPP not exercise authority in "vital questions of foreign policy, national defence, internal security", but also that Nkrumah and his ministerial colleagues "were not even to have any power over appointments in the civil service" (ibid:85). This meant that Nkrumah's government was severely limited in delivering benefits that would transform the Ghanaian masses' lives. This arrangement exposed the CPP and Nkrumah to being criticised for having "sacrificed the hopes of revolution" (ibid:84). Such criticisms did not only emanate from outside the CPP, but also from within the party with some saying that the "Government Business" arrangement "looked very much like a sell-out" (ibid:114). Opposing these criticisms, Davidson (ibid:84) points out that such arguments were naïve and failed to take into consideration that at the time there was "no chance ... of any far-reaching change, much less of revolution". This is because, Davidson (1984-1985) further argues that, not only was the colonial power very strong, but also that the CPP was "in no sense a revolutionary party; nor, in the circumstances of that time, could it have been one".

The CPP, in the 1950s, had "neither the experience nor the leadership ... that could have carried it beyond a fight for immediate gains" (ibid:85). Davidson (ibid:213) further argues that the "struggle for liberation has to be understood for what experience has amply shown it to be: a difficult choice between possible alternatives, none of which can offer a 'pure' gain, but only, at the best, a greater gain than loss". While Davidson (ibid:213) concedes that the choices that Nkrumah made resulted in much loss, he also argues that they also yielded greater gain, not only for Ghana, but also for the whole of the African continent, an issue we address next.

APPLYING PAN-AFRICANISM IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

Articulating the dangers and difficulties entailed in implementing Pan-Africanism, Nyerere (1968:207-208) noted that while Pan-Africanist-led anti-colonial liberation struggles were informed by a "real ambition" of "African freedom and African government", and that the waging of these struggles, country by country, was seen

by Pan-Africanists as “merely a tactical necessity”, the achievement of sovereignty by different African states, posed serious challenges. Pan-Africanists soon realised that, as they governed their different states, the citizens of their countries, not driven or inspired by Pan-Africanism, expected each government in Africa to be “responsible to the people of its own area – and to them only ... work for their particular well-being or invite chaos within its territory” (ibid:208).

Observation and experience informed and taught Nyerere (ibid:211) that, because Africans had been “suffering the effects of poverty too long” and needed to “see some immediate attack being made on that poverty”, “they could not, and would not, agree to stagnation or regression” while Pan-Africanist leaders pursued the “goal of unity [Pan-Africanism]”. The “real dilemma” confronting Pan-Africanist leaders was that, while on the one hand Pan-Africanism required an “African consciousness and an African loyalty; on the other hand is the fact that each Pan-Africanist must also concern [him- or herself] with the freedom and development of one of the nations of Africa” (ibid:208).

A further “dilemma of the Pan-Africanist” in following this reasoning was that as each African state pursued development for its individual interests, more and more barriers between African countries were raised, differences inherited from a colonial past entrenched, and new emerged, as citizens of African countries developed “a national pride which could easily be inimical to the development of a pride in Africa” (ibid:211). Even though Nyerere (ibid:211) conceded that such “national pride” would not automatically preclude the development of “pride in Africa”, such national pride could be “very easily twisted to have that effect” and be “deliberately bolstered by those who are anxious to keep Africa weak by her division, or those anxious to keep Africa divided because they would rather be important people in a small state than less important people in a bigger one”.

In seeking unity of African states, the surrender of individual African countries’ sovereignty to one African body, Nyerere (ibid:212, 215) warned Pan-Africanists, was fraught with many difficulties. One of these difficulties was that if, on the one hand, the ideal of an African union government were to be championed by bigger and wealthier African countries, there would be “talk of a new imperialism, an attempt to ‘take over’ the small state” (ibid:212). If, on the other hand, it were to be smaller states advancing this notion, there would be talk of “betrayal and lack of patriotism” (ibid:212). Nyerere (ibid:222) saw clearly and pointed out the fact that a Union of African States “is not, and will not be, always comfortable for individual states” because it meant that all African states “will be called upon at different times to sacrifice something for the common good in return for the benefit we receive from unity”.

A recognition of the dilemmas facing Pan-Africanists called for confronting the reality, Nyerere (ibid:222) reasoned, that “unity will be difficult to achieve, and difficult to maintain, and that it will demand sacrifices from nations and from individuals”.

Difficulties notwithstanding, Nyerere (ibid:222) argued that there had to be a willingness and determination to pay the necessary price – sacrifice from nations and individuals – which “must start with a psychological acceptance of its requirements”. This was necessary because Nyerere (ibid:222) pointed out that, while in its early stages, “unity brings difficulties – probably more than it disposes of ... It is in the longer term, after fifteen or twenty years, that its overwhelming benefits can begin to be felt”.

African leaders had an obligation to bring to Africans’ attention that they had a choice to make between abandoning the geographical boundaries created by colonialists, and thus achieve meaningful unity and success, or maintain them, and thus become the “plaything of international politics” (ibid:215). Nyerere’s remarks reveal, on his part, a great sense of foresight and insight into African politics. With reference to his foresight, what he articulated in the 60s came to pass in South Africa in the 90s and the 2000s. His insight was informed by his awareness of what happened in Ghana to Nkrumah and what happened in other African countries where Africans, called “foreigners”, were subjected to violence by fellow Africans.

The notion of Pan-Africanism in the African continent found concrete expression in a number of initiatives. The first was a “nucleus for a Union of African States”, which was ushered in on 23 November 1958, when Ghana and Guinea established a union government under the leadership of Nkrumah and Sékou Touré, respectively (Nkrumah 1963:141). In 1961, Mali, under the leadership of Modibo Keita, joined Ghana and Guinea, thus ushering in a Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union (ibid:142). Ghana and Guinea’s union had positive outcomes in that when Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 and moved to Guinea, on his arrival at a mass rally, Touré announced Nkrumah as Guinea’s head of state, further stating that the “Ghanaian traitors” had been “mistaken in thinking that Nkrumah [was] simply a Ghanaian” (Milne 1990:6). When Nkrumah, who did not understand what Touré was saying since he was speaking French, realised what Touré had announced, “he was very moved but agreed only to become co-president of Guinea” (ibid:6). Touré’s move was “an unprecedented expression of Pan-Africanism” (ibid:6).

The second initiative was the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), made up of independent African states in 1963 (Rooney 2007:305). The OAU was not quite what Nkrumah had envisaged – a Union Government of African states (ibid:290, 305). The OAU was characterised by positions that were held by African states leaders who were known as the Casablanca group as a result of the group’s meeting held in Casablanca in January 1961, and the Monrovia group, as a result of a meeting held by the latter group in Monrovia in May 1961 (ibid:290, 293). The Casablanca group favoured Nkrumah’s idea of an African political union while the Monrovia group proposed that “the first steps towards union should come from willing alliances between neighbours” (ibid:290).

Determined to accomplish his African unity version, Nkrumah tried, at the OAU Summit in Ghana in 1965, to push this through, but failed, leading him to considering “withdrawing from the OAU altogether” (ibid:320). In Nyerere’s (in Nkrumah 1963:242) view, Nkrumah “under-estimated the degree of suspicion and animosity which his crusading passion had created among a substantial number of his fellow heads of state” (ibid:242). Nkrumah’s quest threatened many African leaders because they feared to lose their “precious status” attached to being heads of state (ibid:242).

When the union government idea failed at the Accra Summit, Nyerere (ibid:242) “heard one head of state express with relief that he was happy to be returning home to his country still head of state”. Confronted with these realities about the OAU, Nyerere (1968:292) conceded that, when the organisation was formed in 1963, “we rejoiced too soon ... just as we overestimated our achievement”. But for Nyerere (ibid:292), difficulties were no cause for despair, pointing out that the idea of African unity would “never be lost while there are people conscious of the need for it, and willing to work for it”, further expressing the conviction that “there are still many such people in Africa now”.

While the OAU and its successor, the African Union (AU), succeeded in bringing heads of African states together, that too has been its limitation and cause of failure. That is because the OAU then, and the AU now have not yet “transformed from a union of African heads of state into a genuine union of African people” (wa Thiong’o 2009:70, 72). For a genuine union of African people, in other words, a Pan-Africanism of the masses to be realised, there has to be a conscious effort of educating and re-educating African people in that direction. Therein lies the role of Afrocentric education, discussed next.

AFROCENTRIC EDUCATION FOR PAN-AFRICANISM AND THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

While on a visit in India in 1958, a journalist asked Nkrumah (1973:157) whether the idea of an African Union government represented a “popular sentiment” or was just “an intellectual concept at the level of the top African leadership”. Nkrumah’s (ibid:157) response, of course, was that Pan-Africanism was an idea for the African masses. In line with this conviction, Nkrumah (1967:42), in his message celebrating international workers’ day on 1 May 1966, pointed out that “African Unity and a Continental Union Government of Africa are the pre-requisites for respect and dignity for Africa” and, this being the case, urged the “workers of Africa” to “unite and fight for socialism” and “for a continental Union Government of Africa”. Long after the Indian press posed this question to Nkrumah, some scholars and critics have described Pan-Africanism as “a kind of intellectual elitism” (Rabaka 2020:2). Cognisant of this criticism, Rabaka (ibid:5) emphasises that “Pan-Africanism is simultaneously an idea *and* a movement, a kind of intellectualism *and* activism, a theory *and* a praxis”.

The foregoing observations are significant in the context of the philosophical foundations of both Afrocentric and Eurocentric education. With reference to the history and philosophical foundations of Eurocentric education, it is noteworthy that when the English embarked on founding university colleges in Africa, the objective was to “promote a ‘responsible class’ to whom, sooner or later, they would safely hand political independence” (Davidson 1973:162). This approach was consistent with their own background where, until the 1950s, English universities strove to “produce a small elite of the sons and daughters of England’s ‘political class’”, their products being those who had “always run England and its satellites or overseas extensions” (ibid:162). What this means is that universities, both in Europe and colonised Africa, were meant to serve as “centres of privilege” where students were “isolated from the life of the common people”. The philosophical foundations of Afrocentric education are different from those of Eurocentric education. Nkrumah (1973:57), in line with Afrocentric education, articulated the view that the “purpose of all true education is to produce good citizens”. He was opposed to the notion of seeing education “as a guarantee of privilege”, but rather “as a means of national progress” (Davidson 1973:160). Nkrumah (1973:243) envisaged that a University of Ghana should be created to “not only reflect African traditions and culture”, but to “also play a constructive part in the programme of national awakening and reconstruction”.

Nkrumah (1970a:88; 1970b:77, 79) advanced the notion that Afrocentric education would inculcate in the minds of Africans that “Africa is *one* continent, *one* people, and *one* nation”, and that Africans should strive for “the restitution of Africa’s humanist and egalitarian principles ... which underlie the traditional African society”. Ghana turned theory into practice as “African languages began to be studied as degree subjects” in the same way that African history was (Davidson 1973:160). An Institute of African Studies, which attracted scholars from outside Ghana, was set up, whose “activities in research became admired wherever African culture was studied and respected” (ibid:160). Under Nkrumah’s government, “for the first time”, Ghanaian schoolchildren were afforded an opportunity to learn about the “history of their own country and the continent” (ibid:161). This approach in education was aimed at developing not only Ghanaians’ self-awareness, but Pan-African consciousness as well. While schools, in general, were certainly a good starting point, libraries, both inside and outside of schools, had a key function in advancing education.

Reflecting on the opening of the Ghana Library in Accra on 17 May 1956, Nkrumah (1973:62) pointed out that a “good national library and a good national museum are the custodians of a nation’s culture and wisdom”. Addressing a conference of African independent states in 1958, Nkrumah (ibid:129) called for the “establishment of libraries specialising in various aspects of African history and culture which may become centres of research”. While at the University of Pennsylvania where he obtained a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy, Nkrumah (1971:33, 43) helped to set

up an African Studies Section there. Nkrumah's Afrocentric approach to education was shared by Nyerere. At the inauguration of Zambia's president, Kenneth Kaunda, in 1966, as the University of Zambia's first Chancellor, Nyerere (1968:216) observed that African academics had a "responsibility" in ensuring the success of Pan-Africanism.

Having pointed out that African leaders of the time were "grappling with serious and urgent problems" within their states and that the time available to them for "serious thinking about the way forward to Pan-Africanism [was] limited in the extreme", Nyerere (ibid:216-217) pointed out that African universities' academics and students had the duty "to think out the practical problems of achieving this goal of unification" because they "have an opportunity to think and learn without direct responsibility for day-to-day affairs". Having pointed out that the challenges facing African leaders were "not things only for Governments to work out", Nyerere (ibid:217) further noted that African universities should "put proposals before our Governments and then demand from ... politicians a reasoned answer on the basis of African unity if we do not agree!" Urging the universities of Tanzania and Zambia to do "things which link our intellectual life together indissolubly", Nyerere (ibid:217) called for students' exchange between the two countries so that each countries' students would get degrees from each other's universities in order to strengthen the ties of Pan-Africanism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

While, as pointed out above, it has been noted that Pan-Africanism is aimed at, ultimately, not only African people's total liberation wherever they may be in the world, but also the liberation of all of humankind, the bitter reality is that internecine violence amongst Africans has undermined the basic aim of Pan-Africanism, that is, of uniting and liberating Africans from the imposed notion of regarding one another as foreigners and enemies. Afrocentric education for the masses, not merely the elite few, as articulated by the philosophical writings of Nkrumah and Nyerere, seeks to reverse this alienation of Africans from one another. In 1966, Nyerere (ibid:222) expressed a belief that "the people of Africa [were] ready" for African unity. That is because, in his interactions with fellow Africans, Nyerere (ibid:218) saw that Africans thought of themselves as "Africans" before calling themselves "citizens of this country or that".

Because of this perceived Pan-African consciousness, Nyerere (ibid:222) believed that ordinary Africans were "willing to sacrifice immediate satisfaction for the good of the whole continent". The willingness to sacrifice for the common good was existent because, as Nyerere (ibid:222) pointed out, in African "traditional societies each individual accepted that he could not do exactly what he wanted when he wanted, but that instead he had a loyalty to other members of his community". In other words, Nyerere believed that the willingness to share, on the part of Africans, was informed by African traditional values which placed emphasis on communalism,

that is, sharing what was available in the community amongst all its members. The emphasis of Afrocentric education, therefore, is to highlight traditional African values with reference to “hospitality ... public order, and social tolerance” (Rodney 2019:56).

The revival of such traditional values through Afrocentric education would make Nyerere’s (1968:226) conviction a reality; that even if selfish leaders undermined Pan-Africanism, ordinary people would bring this ideal to fruition because “any nation – is as great, as good, as fine a place to live in, and as progressive, as its citizens make it”. This being the case, “leadership may be good, bad, or indifferent, but if the people are awake and aware of themselves it will not for long be completely unrepresentative of the attitudes in the society. And the truth is that it is teachers more than any other single group of people who determine these attitudes, and who shape the ideas and aspirations of the nation.” (ibid:226). The revival of traditional African values – such as compassion, as opposed to indifference, communalism, as opposed to individualism, hospitality, as opposed to hostility, and violence to wayfarers, amongst African people, through Afrocentric education – will do a great deal for Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance because, by identifying such African cultural values, it will restore to Africans a Pan-African cultural consciousness and a basis for reclaiming such values for the present generation and generations to come.

What the foregoing means, therefore, is that Afrocentric education should serve to raise Africans’ consciousness about African history and culture. Teaching African history is not about the romanticisation and sentimentality. Rather it is about both the good and the ugly, success and failures, and solidarity and betrayal that have accompanied the struggle of Pan-Africanism. More importantly, Afrocentric education is about what conscious and committed African masses can achieve when they see themselves as one, united African people.

REFERENCES

- Adebajo, A. 2020. Pan-Africanism: From the Twin Plagues of European Locusts to Africa's Triple Quest for Emancipation. In: A. Adebajo (ed.). *The Pan-African Pantheon: Prophets, Poets, and Philosophers*. Jacana Media: Auckland Park. pp. 3-57.
- Adebajo, A. 2010. *The Curse of Berlin: Africa After The Cold War*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press: Scottsville.
- Asante, M.K. 2017. The Philosophy of Afrocentricity. In: A. Afolayan & T. Falola (eds.). *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York. pp. 231-244. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59291-0_16
- Biney, A. 2020. Kwame Nkrumah: "A Great African, But Not a Great Ghanaian"? In: A. Adebajo (ed.). *The Pan-African Pantheon: Prophets, Poets, and Philosophers*. Jacana Media: Auckland Park. pp. 157-166.
- Blyden, E. 1967. *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.
- Bornman, J. 2020. The people behind the xenophobia. *Mail & Guardian*, 13-19 September, p. 8.
- Callinicos, L. 2004. *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*. 2nd Edition. David Phillip Publishers: Claremont.
- Commey, P. 2008. "A national DISGRACE!". *New African*, July, pp. 10-16.
- Davidson, B. 1973. *Black Star: A View of the Life & Times of Kwame Nkrumah*. James Currey: Oxford.
- Diop, C.A. 1987. *Black Africa: The Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State*. Expanded Edition. H.J. Salemson (transl.). Lawrence Hill Books: Chicago, IL.
- Duodu, C. 2008. Who will save South Africa? *New African*, July, pp. 18- 22.
- Erasmus, D. 2020. Xenophobic tensions surge in KZN. *Mail & Guardian*, 13-19 November, p. 10.
- Fanon, F. 1967. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Penguin Books: Rosebank.
- Milne, J. 1990. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years: His Life And Letters*. Panaf Books: London.
- Nkrumah, K. 2017. *Dark Days in Ghana*. KNAC: Accra.
- Nkrumah, K. 1973. *I Speak of Freedom*. Panaf Books: London.
- Nkrumah, K. 1971. *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. International Publishers: New York.
- Nkrumah, K. 1970a. *Class Struggle in Africa*. Panaf Books: London.
- Nkrumah, K. 1970b. *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation*. Panaf Books: London.
- Nkrumah, K. 1967. *Voice from Conakry*. Panaf Books: London.
- Nkrumah, K. 1963. *Africa Must Unite*. New Edition. Panaf Books: London.
- Nyerere, J. 1997. Address in Accra, 6 March, on the occasion of Ghana's 40th independence anniversary. In: K. Nkrumah. *Africa Must Unite*. Panaf Books: London.
- Nyerere, J.K. 1968. *Freedom and Socialism: Uhuru Na Ujamaa*. Oxford University Press: Dar Es Salaam.
- Prah, K.K. 2006. Recollections and Reflections of a Foreign Native: Xenophobia amongst Africans. In: K.K. Prah (ed.). *Racism in the Global African Experience*. The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS): Cape Town. pp. 23-52.
- Rabaka, R. 2020. Introduction: on the intellectual elasticity and political plurality of Pan-Africanism. *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*. Routledge: London. pp. 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429020193-0>
- Rodney, W. 2019. *The Groundings with my Brothers*. A.T. Rodney & J.J. Benjamin (eds.). Verso: London and New York.
- Rooney, D. 2007. *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision And Tragedy*. Sub-Saharan Publishers: Accra. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvk3gm60>
- wa Thiong'o, N. 2009. *Re-membering Africa*. East African Educational Publishers Ltd.
- wa Thiong'o, N. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. James Currey, EAEP & Heinemann: Oxford, Nairobi, Portsmouth (NH).