

Dispatch from 'Dar':**Remembering the Arusha Declaration as Zimbabwe Votes**

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Remembering "Dar": Walter Rodney was here too

On these bustling streets, of Dar Es Salaam, there is a renewed sense of thinking about the national liberation project of social and economic transformation that was long sowed here and practiced by that theorist and Pan-African revolutionary – *Mwalimu Kambarage Nyerere*. The Tanzanian liberation movement has had very stable leadership changes and that has been rewarded with a national political stability very different from the experiences of many of Southern Africa's liberation movements. It is walking on the hallowed grounds of the '*University of Dar*' and the historical whispers of *Arusha* that has provoked this *Gravitas*. As one walks into these gates the rich intellectual history comes tumbling like the summer rain – *mubvumbi*.

**Fig 1.0 Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere**

Here at the 'University of Dar' or simply 'the Hill' revolutionaries freely mingled in Africa's most prominent permanent intellectual tribunal supplying ideas to the Pan-African and international project of decolonization. Liberation activists, intellectuals, trained guerillas and variegated shades of 'humanitarian' sorts exchanged and built ideas and practical projects for the liberation of Africa. Students, not even faculty, published a radical political economy journal called *CheChe* and after a few issues even the Tanzania liberation movement found it too hard to read and had it banned for being 'too foreign'. Walter Rodney was here at 'the Hill', so was Lionel Cliffe, John Saul, Giovanni Arrighi, Issa Shivji, so was Gavin Kitching before he 'gave up African studies'. Ideas teemed unceasingly, and Walter Rodney constantly breached the ramparts of human indignity wrought on the 'wretched' by a social and economic system centered on profit rather than people.

The University of Dar flourished long before the neo-liberal age had triumphed and the African university turned into charade and education, via econometrics, turned into a commodity. And now the ghost appears for the thing itself. At the heart of the *Mwalimu Nyerere's* experiments was the commitment to one principle: *human dignity*. He may have looked for it and articulated it from a complex mix of national determination, some forms of communalism and definitely some socialism yet the project was always and remains revolutionary – meaning the creative use of human labor to improve the lot of us from being 'wretched' and assailing the feudal socio-cultural order and its attendant mystifications and backwardness. But here is why walking the streets of Dar has ignited this *Gravitas* edition, it is simply that the articulation of the *National Democratic Revolution* (NDR) has slowly dropped from our theory, thoughts and action – and its dangerous.

Professor Roger Southall's observation on the *NDR* is instructive here: 'overcoming the legacy of racial oppression of the black majority', and 'to achieve democratization' and importantly to 'transform power relations as a basis for societal equality'. Alternatively, Professor Adebayo Adedeji's observation that the NDR should lead to transformation of society to achieve an ever-increasing measure of self-reliance through internally located and self-sustaining growth. The question that begs: what are the possibilities of the contestation that re-imagine the *liberation promise* and logically lead to the attainment of the NDR?

However, make no mistake, the trashing of the NDR is not only a Zimbabwean problem, but a continental one. Nowhere is this more evident than the global de-radicalisation of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, that founder of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), into a re-packed, re-arranged pitiful iconography with his true ideas willfully carted off and his image re-projected back to us with a smiling face and his ideas all forgotten. A smiling, beautifully dancing, well dressed, evenly sculpted, orderly museumised, de-historicised Mandela is a comfort to the stubborn ancien order which appropriates for its bank accounts a particular non-threatening Mandela. They watch the charade with glee as de-radicalized 'Mandela Lectures' are delivered galore right in the putrid thickness of a society built on inequality and resurgent segregation. But for now let us understand briefly why Africa's intellectuals have allowed this to happen.

Professor Stephen Chan's Usurpers: 'Educating the Educators'

Intellectuals have a spectacular way of tying themselves up in nasty knots often because of laziness. This is why one political economy theorist said the 'educators will need to be educated'. Professor Stephen Chan, with one another, wrote a whole monograph in which they inscribed the epitaph of opposition politics in Zimbabwe and especially the MDC. So much for linear analysis. The two Professors concluded that the opposition was in 'disarray', that there were no 'viable opposition', that Morgan Tsvangirai was relying on 'history' to become President and that he excited 'crowds and did not attract votes'. These are musings of Albion in an era in which the empire has long been pulverized by the march of history's forces. The argument becomes 'Africa needs Strongmen' or 'Bigmen' and political stability becomes an obsession of Foreign Policy. A cursory look at the nature of investors that are trekking to Harare for the 'mega deals' points to a very rapacious type of 'wild west' frontier robber barons like the Moti Group, Mbada Diamonds, and Anjin.

**Fig 2. ED and General Chiwenga: Who really rules Zimbabwe?**

To solve ZANU PF's succession matrix, the usurpers of November descended on the capital, like a bolt of lightning, with guns and rusty tanks and the politics of the state and the party got even more complex. In the opposition ranks Nelson Chamisa stormed into the political annals with ambition, eloquence and *hard, hard work* and with that the Professors' epitaph can now be thrown into the bin, or at least be kept as a souvenir of how intellectual flights of fancy can blind the human mind. But we must

not even indict Professor Chan and friend for their superficial description of the 'Zimbabwean condition'. Theirs are tourist *safaris* cobbled together into analyses so they can keep coming to Africa with the indulgence of their universities and an advisory note here and there for the 'foreign office'. We must instead turn our heads to our own intellectual class. The Zimbabwean intellectual class that has been missing in action.

We dare charge that Zimbabwe's intellectual class has been sleeping on duty and we have the evidence to prove it: when was the last time our esteemed Professors in Zimbabwe's 'ivory towers' published a single authored volume *tour de force* on any subjects? Here we agreed with Stanley Nyamufukudza's analysis, in an article titled 'To Skin a Skunk', that 'year after year thousands of kids unfit for any sort of work without training from scratch, barely literate and incapable of self-evaluation are tipped onto the streets' and yet 'year after year politicians have mouthed off about education being one of the major achievements since independence'. The better summing of the situation of Africa's universities, especially in Zimbabwe, are the words of indictment by Professor A.B. K Kasozi who said that 'all we see are endless graduation ceremonies and wasteful graduation parties afterwards. Most of our universities are really glorified high schools teaching already known, and in most cases, imported knowledge'. Africa has no Walter Rodney any more, does not have an Archie Mafeje anymore, or a Guy Mhone and we can not even think of an Angela Davis. Then we wonder why our youth do not even know about the NDR but can sing all the songs by Drake, Kendrick Lamar and Beyonce. The young and 'born frees' are told its time to celebrate Uhuru and Malina musician Salif Keita's warning, 'not yet Uhuru' is conveniently ignored. But let us return to Zimbabwe, first to the revived MDC and the 1990s vision of a social democratic project for Zimbabwe.

MDC Alliance, Nelson Chamisa and the Re-Articulation of Social Democracy

When the MDC Alliance published its manifesto, it was a clear testimony that somewhere in the Alliance, maybe in its allies too, the search for human dignity continues and at the centre of that project is the re-articulation of the *social democracy project* based on the *Beyond ESAP* project by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). Since its formation, within the milieu of the labour movement, the MDC represented a cross class project which attempted to move Zimbabwe beyond the fetishism of a decadent nationalism. Morgan Tsvangirai led the MDC for about two decades and in that period managed to create a formidable opposition as well as championing the constitutional reform movement that resulted in a new constitutional order in Zimbabwe. The constitution was delivered with some blemishes but against much resistance from the ruling apparatus and its attendant social class.



Fig 1.3 MDC Alliance Presidential Candidate: Nelson Chamisa

Now that Morgan Tsvangirai lies in peace in his village the re-invigorated MDC Alliance is pounding the roads and stadiums to keep the hope for democratic change alive. But most importantly the MDC Alliance's SMART document silences the critics of the MDC who have always relished in the mystification that the opposition lacked ideological clarity and policy direction. But the emergence of Nelson Chamisa has done much more for Zimbabwe.

The promise of liberation is back to the fulcrum of our politics. It is the projection that Zimbabwe can dream again, and that the liberation promise of Africa's liberation movement needs to be taken forward one more step and this might mean the pensioning of some of its leaders. The military nationalist usurpers on the other hand produced a manifesto that is at best an ensemble of incoherent ideas and this is not a mistake, it is because the military nationalist class has never paid attention to ideas, theories and articulation of policies. The project to have concrete and objective analysis was guillotined when the 'axe' fell on '11 March Movement' and ZIPA moment. The military-nationalist class now in charge is an utterly idealess, hedonistic volatile ensemble which parades its ignorance masked in uniforms and they are desperate to 'camouflage the camouflages' that they bee lined with when they stormed the emperor's Blue Roof Palace. This class is a tragic charade: they don't have Thomas Sankaras or Wilfred Mhandas (Dzinashe Machinguras) in their ranks.

Pombe sina maziwa (Beer is not milk)!

The Swahili proverb, '*pombe sina maziwa*' (beer is not milk) is instructive to understand our times and make informed decisions as Zimbabwe votes on the 30th of July 2018. The elections pit a repackaged and nicely rebranded 'Old Order' versus a 'the New Order'. We are at a crossroad and the re-invigoration of the *National Democratic Revolution* must take centre stage. Revisiting the *Arusha Declaration* may assist Zimbabweans. It suffices to quote extensively, the voice of *Mwalimu Nyerere*, from the *Arusha Declaration*:

TANU is involved in a war against poverty and oppression in our country; the struggle is aimed at moving the people of Tanzania (and the people of Africa as a whole) from a state of poverty to a State of prosperity. We have been oppressed a great deal, we have been exploited a great deal and we have been disregarded a great deal. It is our weakness that has led to our being oppressed, exploited and disregarded. Now we want a revolution – a revolution which brings an end to our weakness, so that we are never again exploited, oppressed, or humiliated (*Arusha Declaration*, 1967).

Four decades of ZANU PF rule, have resulted in *human indignity*, where citizens have lost their hard-earned savings, property and quality of life. There have been attempts by a few privileged cosmopolitan elites to equate Nelson Chamisa and the MDC Alliance to Emmerson Mnangagwa and ZANU PF. Our brother Alex Magaisa aptly characterized this as the 'Politics of False equivalence'. This group is found both, within the ruling party and opposition. The reasoning is that we are superior, yet the superiority is determined by amassing hordes of certificates, that are not tied to the production of a single idea or good that can transform any nation. They are mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for the global neo-liberal order.

There are no intellectuals like Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Samir Amin, Patrice Lumumba, Samora Machel and Julius Nyerere. The ruling party's strategy is simple: deflate the wheels of the revolution by painting everyone black. Why bother then, if there are no angels. Through the 'politics of false equivalence', the dreams are killed, leaving society to the vagaries of yesterdays' nightmares (read the coup brewers). By killing the audacity of hope, the net result is the status quo remains. The benefit for these ruling party intellectuals and privileged class is the expectation of rents to finance their palacious and poshy Marie Antoinette-like lifestyles. It is all about looting and plundering the state in collusion with extractive international capital and a locally complicit comprador class and the so called intellectual class can't grasp political economy. This explains the simplistic and reductionist approaches to falsely equate the MDC Alliance to ZANU PF. The wisdom from Dar to Zimbabweans is simple: *Pombe sina maziwa* (beer is not milk)!

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Asante sana, ndugu Maxwell Saungweme, for the host in Dar Es Salaam and your ever-multiplying service for *human dignity* in Africa. You have played provocative host since the days Professor Chengetai Zvobgo attempted to shove down the Chidyausiku Commission Constitutional Draft down our throats and the nation vomited it to cure itself.

If ever in *Dar* make sure to visit the Mkuki WaNyota Book Shop, right on 24 Samora Machel Avenue.