

Africa and U.S. Imperialism: Post-Colonial Crises and the Imperatives of the African Revolution

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Image Patrice Lumumba

Five decades since the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) while the Pentagon and NATO escalates its war drive on the continent

The following lecture was delivered at the Africa & U.S. Imperialism Conference held in Detroit on May 18, 2013. The event was sponsored by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI)

May 25, 2013 represents the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the present African Union which formed in 2002. This conference today is taking place at a critical time within the history of Africa and the Diaspora.

Even though there has been tremendous progress in Africa and throughout the African world since 1963, the imperialists have devised mechanism to continue and expand the exploitation and consequent oppression of African people on the continent and indeed throughout Europe, North America and Latin America. This conference sends congratulatory messages to the AU in the midst of this anniversary.

We are following the situation surrounding the summit which begins on May 19 and extends through May 27. The meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is being held under the theme of "Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance," in an attempt to return the continental organization back to its political origins born in the ferment of the African revolutionary struggle of the 1960s.

According to the description on the African Union website publicizing the 21st Summit of the AU, it says that

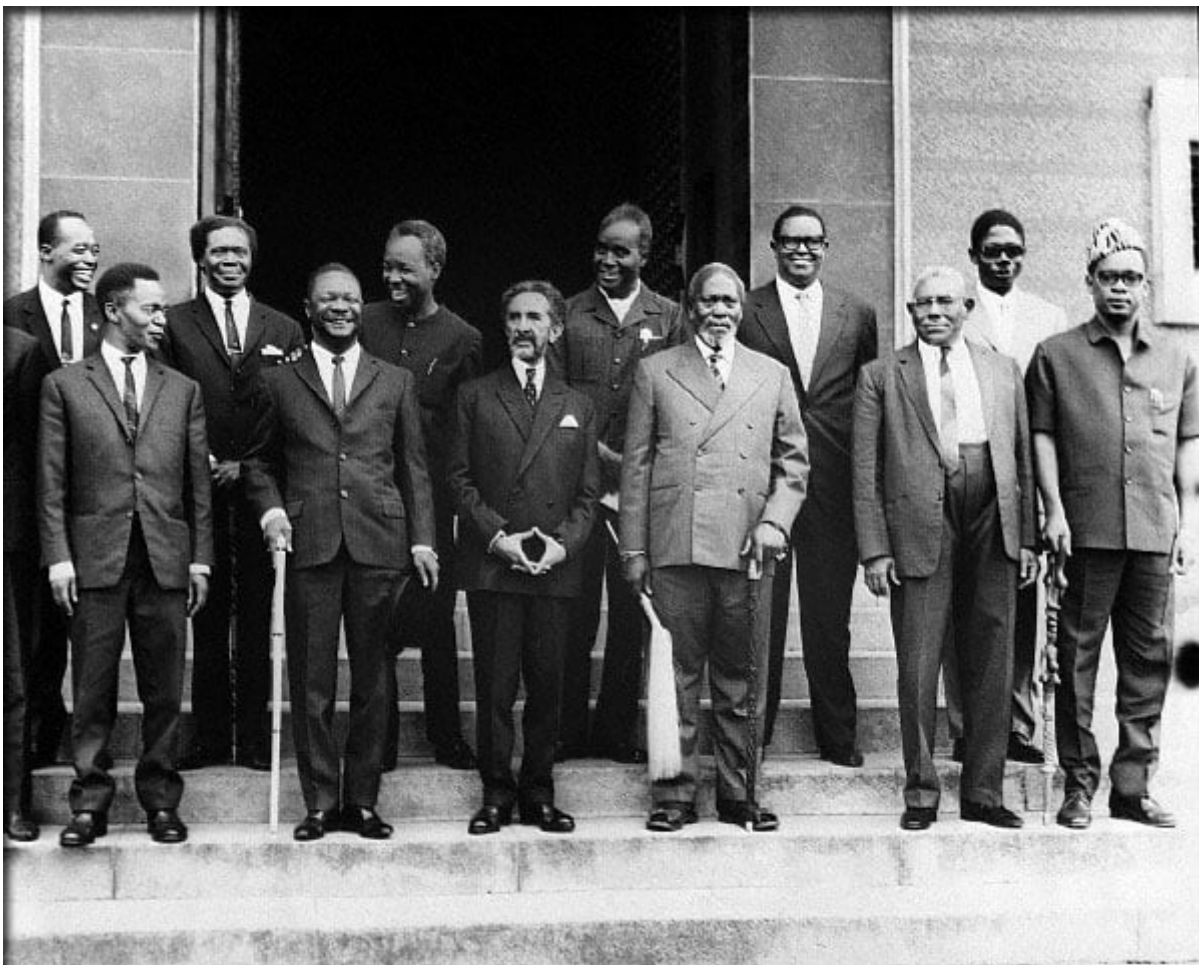
"The year 2013 marks the 50th anniversary celebration of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It will also be a little more than a decade since the formation of the African Union, which seeks to promote 'an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena.' Consequently, the Heads of State declared 2013 the Year of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance."

This same synopsis goes on to say that

“The anniversary is expected to facilitate and celebrate African narratives of past, present and future that will enthuse and energize the African population and use their constructive energy to accelerate a forward looking agenda of Pan-Africanism and renaissance in the 21st century. It provides a unique opportunity, and comes at a moment when Africa is on the rise, and must therefore build its confidence in its future. The 50th Anniversary commemorations will be anchored by the Theme Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance.” (AU website)

During the course of the following days through the Pan-African News Wire we will cover the deliberations and addresses extensively to provide the African world and the international community in general with the most comprehensive review of developments taking place in Addis Ababa. The peoples of Africa scattered throughout the globe are intensely awaiting the outcome of the summit in order to gain clearer insight into the character of the thinking and actions being advanced by the heads-of-state and other leading organs of this esteemed institution.

Nonetheless, our purpose here today is to reflect on the significance of the history of Africa and the African liberation struggles that have evolved over the last five decades. Where have we been and where are we going into the successive decades of the 21st century must be the questions that are paramount in our minds.



African Heads of State. Foundation of the OAU in May 1963

The Post World War II Political Situation

It has been acknowledged by the leading progressive and revolutionary African historians

that the advent of the Atlantic Slave Trade and colonialism shaped the character of African societies throughout the world. Beginning in the 15th century, Africa engaged Europe coming out of the so-called “Dark Ages”, a society and culture desperately seeking to advance its own internal development at the expense of other peoples around the globe.

Between the 15th and 19th centuries, millions of Africans were subjected to super-exploitation through slavery and colonialism. This period in the history of the continent spawned the conquering by Europe of the Western hemisphere and the building of an industrial empire which intensified the exploitation of both the indigenous people of the West as well as those of the African continent, Asia and the South Pacific.

Africans and other oppressed peoples of course resisted the onslaught of slavery and colonialism with vigor. History today is revealing even more detailed accounts of the heroic role that Africans played in the struggle against imperialism in its infancy and continuing into its maturity and consequent devolution under the present system of neo-colonialism.

All exploitative and oppressed systems meet resistance from within leading to the organization and mobilization of the forces which are victimized by the ruling interests within the society. These internal struggles along with challenges from the outside result in the transformation of the system into something different that could be an advance or a step backward in the development of humanity.

Although imperialism attempted to create a system of exploitation and oppression that was insulated from internal and external attacks, these efforts proved to be futile. By the conclusion of World War I, national liberation movements and communist tendencies were well in evidence in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and colonialism.

Rebellions and revolutionary uprisings spread throughout North America, Europe, Africa and Asia beginning in 1917 with the Bolshevik Revolution, the first total overthrow of capitalism and the replacement of this exploitative system with socialism which is based upon empowering the working class and the oppressed.

The 1920s saw additional uprising and attempts to build a worldwide alliance between national liberation movements and socialist parties. By the conclusion of the 1920s, the capitalist world would fall into its worst economic crisis which lasted for over twelve years until the entry of the United States into World War II in 1941.

This collapse of the capitalist system during the 1930s would also lead to the spreading of fascism in Europe and Japan. However, the fight against fascism in the 1930s and 1940s brought to the fore the communist and national liberation organizations which served as the decisive factor in the outcome of the war in 1945.

Beginning in 1945 the communist and national liberation movements accelerated their efforts aimed at the overthrow of capitalism and colonialism leading to decisive victories in Korea, Vietnam, Eastern Europe and eventually China. By 1947, India had gained its independence from British imperialism and the African continent had begun popular uprising aimed at breaking the yolk of colonial rule.

The aftermath of World War II resulted in the dominance of the U.S. ruling class throughout the capitalist world. Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Japan had experienced extensive fighting within its borders during the 1930s and 1940s leaving the U.S. unscathed

by the military impact of the war.

The Soviet Union which had experienced some of the most intense fighting during 1942 and 1943 at the “Battle of Stalingrad” emerged from World War II as a major power internationally only second in military might and political strength to U.S. imperialism. Socialism spread throughout Eastern Europe during this period and the people of Yugoslavia had largely liberated themselves through their resistance to fascism where they later would establish a socialist system.

Despite the devastation of World War II and the founding of the United Nations in 1945 whose objective in part was to avoid another international conflagration, war erupted on the Korean Peninsula in 1950 after the establishment of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in 1948. The DPRK and the people of China under Mao Tse-Tung fought to preserve their national sovereignty and socialism in Asia.

By 1954, the people of Vietnam defeated French imperialism forcing the U.S. to take total responsibility for the continued occupation of the south of that Southeast Asian nation. That same year, the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) began its armed struggle against French imperialism in North Africa, where it had occupied the country since 1830.



Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of the Ghana independence struggle through the Convention People’s Party (CPP), founded on June 12, 1949, and the chief strategist and tactician of the African Revolution between the late 1940s and the time of his death in 1972, pointed out that the movements led by Africans against colonialism and imperialism were not isolated but very much connected with the global struggle for freedom, justice and self-determination. Nkrumah placed the rising tide of the African liberation movements and the struggle for socialism on the continent within the context of the worldwide efforts against all forms of exploitation and oppression.

Nkrumah wrote that “A number of external factors affect the African situation, and if our liberation struggle is to be placed in correct perspective and we are to KNOW THE ENEMY, the impact of these factors must be fully grasped. First among them is imperialism, for it is mainly against exploitation and poverty that our peoples revolt.” (Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare, p. 1, 1968)

This Pan-Africanist revolutionary leader continues by pointing out that

“It is therefore of paramount importance to set out the strategy of imperialism in clear terms: the means used by the enemy to ensure the continued economic exploitation of our territories and the nature of the attempts made to destroy the liberation movement. Once the components of the enemy’s strategy are determined, we will be in a position to outline the correct strategy for our own struggle in terms of our actual situation and in accordance with our objectives.” (Nkrumah, p. 2)

With specific reference to the period after World War II, Nkrumah observes that

“after the war, serious economic, social and political tensions arose in both spheres” being the colonial territories and the industrialized capitalist states in Europe and North America. He notes that “Inside the capitalist-imperialist states, workers’ organizations had become comparatively strong and experienced, and the claims of the working class for a more substantial share of the wealth produced by the capitalist economy could no longer be ignored. The necessity to concede had become all the more imperative since the European capitalist system had been seriously shaken up by the near-holocaust which marked the experience of imperialist wars.”

During the same time period, he continues that

“While the capitalist system of exploitation was coming to grips with its internal crisis, the world’s colonized areas were astir with the upsurge of strong liberation movements. Here again, demands could no longer be cast aside or ignored especially when they were channeled through irresistible mass movements, like the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA), the Parti Democratique de Guinee (PDG) and the Convention Peoples’ Party (CPP) in Ghana. In certain areas, for example in Vietnam, Kenya and Algeria, direct confrontation demonstrated the readiness of the oppressed peoples to implement their claims with blood and fire.”

Nkrumah stresses that “Both in the colonial territories and in the metropolitan states, the struggle was being waged against the same enemy: international finance capital under its external and internal forms of exploitation, imperialism and capitalism. Threatened with disintegration by the double-fisted attack of the working class movement and the liberation movement, capitalism had to launch a series of reforms in order to build a protective armor around the inner workings of its system.”

Within the U.S. during the late 1940s through the 1970s, a deliberate division was institutionalized between the white working class and middle classes and the African American people, most of whom were working class with a shrinking number of farmers and agricultural proletarians in the rural areas. The advent of the mass Civil Rights Movement in the mid-1950s served to crack open the cloak of McCarthyism and bring broader sections of the oppressed into the struggle against racism and national discrimination.

By 1960, the student sector of the African American people would take the lead as the most militant force in the struggle against legalized segregation. These efforts by the youth led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and others awakened a generation of young people within the Latino, Native and Asian communities along with their counterparts inside the white community. A culture of resistance and protracted programmatic struggle was born which was able to challenge U.S. imperialist militarism in

Southeast Asia and in other parts of the world.

There developed during this period a movement against the status-quo which had not been experienced since the height of the Great Depression of 1929-1941. The role of the Left in building resistance to capitalist exploitation and racism created the conditions for the general strikes of 1934 and the subsequent formation of the Committee on Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the United Autoworkers Union (UAW).

The period of struggle between the Great Depression-interrupted with the force of the state during the McCarthy era of the late 1940s and early 1950s-and the burgeoning mass movements of the late 1950s leading into the early 1970s, opened up new avenues of struggle which threatened the ruling class and its system of exploitation. In response the system embarked upon a period of major restructuring by the mid-to-late 1970s which was specifically designed to preserve and enhance the world capitalist system.

Of this period, Nkrumah wrote that

“To avoid an internal breakdown of the system under the pressure of the workers’ protest movement, the governments of capitalist countries granted their workers certain concessions which did not endanger the basic nature of the capitalist system of exploitation. They gave them social security, higher wages, better working conditions, professional training facilities, and other improvements. (Nkrumah, p. 4)

Nkrumah points out that

“These reforms helped to blur fundamental contradictions, and to remove some of the more glaring injustices while at the same time ensuring the continued exploitation of the workers. The myth was established of an affluent capitalist society promising abundance and a better life for all. The basic aim, however, was the establishment of a ‘welfare state’ as the only safeguard against the threat of fascism or communism.”

Nevertheless, the objective was to maintain the system of ever-increasing profits for the banks and other multi-national corporations. Even with the establishment of the so-called “Welfare State” in Western Europe and North America in the aftermath of World War II extending through the early 1970s, the system of exploitation and oppression remained intact.

The world capitalist and imperialist system extended reforms not only inside the industrialized states but also within the oppressed nations outside its borders. The system began to depend to greater degrees on the extraction of strategic resources from Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as the exploitation of labor in these geo-political regions.

In assessing this strategy by imperialism, Nkrumah said that

“The urgent need for such reforms was made clear by the powerful growth and expansion of the liberation forces in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where revolutionary movements had not only seized power but were actually consolidating their gains. Developments in the USSR, China, Cuba, North Vietnam, North Korea, and in Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Algeria and other

parts of Africa, showed that not only was the world balance of forces shifting, but that the capitalist-imperialist states were confronted with a real danger of encirclement.” (p. 5)

Some Concrete Examples in the National Liberation Revolution

The imperialist states utilized its extensive resources and networks of global finance and political intrigue to undermine the independent African states as well as the Civil Rights, Black Power, Anti-War, Women and Left movements inside the U.S. and Western Europe. In this section we want to briefly review some of these developments which occurred between the 1950s and the 1990s in Africa and throughout the Diaspora.

These events can in no way be separated from trends within the world capitalist system. Africa is still very much integrated into the networks of finance capital making the continent dependent upon mineral extraction and the extension of credit from Western financial institutions for survival.

Ghana: The Fountainhead of Pan-Africanism

Kwame Nkrumah studied in the U.S. during 1935-1945 when he went to Britain to work with George Padmore in the organization of the Fifth Pan-African Congress in October of 1945. The outcome of the Fifth Pan-African Congress which was chaired by Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, led to the mass mobilization of the workers, farmers and youth of Africa for the national independence movement.

The Gold Coast in 1951 established a transitional government after Nkrumah was released from prison in order to move toward national independence in 1957. Nkrumah placed tremendous emphasis on state spending for education, social services, healthcare, economic plans for industrialization and unconditional support for the national liberation movements in other parts of Africa and the Diaspora along with a stated aim of building socialism in Ghana and throughout the continent.

The First Conference of Independent African States was held in Accra in April 1958 bringing together the peoples of Africa both north and south of the Sahara. In December of that same year, the First All-African People’s Conference was also held in Accra, bringing revolutionary Pan-African deliberations to the continent itself.

By 1960, when Ghana became a Republic, Nkrumah and the CPP had committed to building a socialist state where the formation of a United States of Africa was the principle foreign policy objective of the government. These actions were met with tremendous opposition by imperialism led by the U.S. in league with internal reactionaries who succeeded in overthrowing the Ghana state on February 24, 1966 through a military and police coup.

Nkrumah took refuge in Guinea where he had made an alliance with the ruling Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG) in 1958 at the time of independence under President Ahmed Sekou Toure. Nkrumah was made Co-President of the country and continued to write and organize for the realization of Pan-Africanism and Scientific Socialism in Africa.

Guinea followed similar policies as Ghana through state control of the economy and an anti-imperialist foreign policy. Like Ghana under Nkrumah, Guinea under Sekou Toure gave maximum support to the national liberation movements and progressive states on the

continent.

Guinea played a key role in the liberation of neighboring Guinea-Bissau which waged an armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism and NATO during the period of 1961 to 1973. Nkrumah after the coup placed more emphasis on the class struggle taking place throughout Africa as is reflected in his writing published after 1966.

Algeria and the Armed Phase of the African Revolution

The FLN triumphed in its national campaign to win independence in 1962. What is often overlooked is the support given to Ben Bella and the Algerian revolutionaries by the All-African People's Conference and in particular the independent government of Mali under **President Modibo Keita**.



The opening of a southern front in Algeria after 1960 ensured the success of the revolutionaries. **Dr. Frantz Fanon**, an African born in the Caribbean, Martinique, played a critical role in the foreign policy of the FLN during the late 1950s to 1961 when he died of cancer.

Algeria provided the first military training to the African National Congress military leaders known as Um Khonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) co-founded by **Nelson Mandela**. In fact when Mandela was arrested in 1962 he was charged with leaving the country to undergo military training in Algeria.

Algeria is rich in natural gas and oil and is strategically located in North Africa. The split within the FLN in 1965 leading to the coup against Ben Bella, although tragic, did not result in lessening the country's commitment to the African Revolution.

Algeria played a key role in apprehending and liquidating the CIA-backed neo-colonialist agent Moise Tshombe of Congo. In 1967 Tshombe was captured and later died in an Algerian prison two years later.

In 1969, Algeria hosted the Pan-African Cultural Festival which re-ignited the international struggle of Black people in the aftermath of the coup against Nkrumah three years earlier. That same year, Algeria would grant political asylum to the Black Panther Party, then under vicious attack by the U.S. government through its counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO).

The Black Panther Party set up an international section in Algiers and remained there until 1972. Algeria continued to support the national liberation movements in the still-colonized regions of the continent.

The Congo Crisis and the Consolidation of Neo-Colonialism in Africa

Patrice Lumumba, the first elected Prime Minister of the former Belgian Congo made his international debut at the All-African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana held during December 1958. Lumumba would win the support of the majority of people within Congo in his efforts to build revolutionary Pan-Africanism and a United States of Africa.

The imperialists saw developments in Congo in 1959-1960 as a threat to its neo-colonial designs for post-independence Africa. Lumumba was soon deposed, kidnapped, tortured and executed at the aegis of the CIA and other Western states.

For over three decades Congo remained within the orbit of imperialism serving as a vast reservoir for exploitation of its natural resources by the multi-national mining firms and international finance capital. Under Mobutu it also served as a rear base for the imperialists in their efforts to stifle and defeat the genuine liberation movements fighting for the total liberation of Southern Africa which was not realized until 1994 with the coming to power of the African National Congress in South Africa under Nelson Mandela.

Today, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains a bastion of Western intrigue and exploitation. Whole sections of the large country are still not under the control of the central government in Kinshasa.

Since 1996, it has been estimated that as many as six million people have been killed in the DRC through civil wars that are largely the result of imperialist intervention. This pattern of mass killings has its origins in Belgian colonialism where under King Leopold II, anywhere between 8-10 million were slaughtered between 1876 and 1908.

The OAU Compromise of 1963

With the efforts of the imperialist states to sabotage the African Revolution there developed to major political blocs on the continent after the Congo crisis of 1960-61. The Casablanca Group was composed of the anti-imperialist states committed to Pan-Africanism and the Monrovia Group, which encompassed the moderate and conservative forces still wedded politically to the former colonial powers and the now dominate U.S. government.

Nkrumah described the new situation in Africa as "collective imperialism." He wrote that

"The modifications introduced by imperialism in its strategy were expressed through the disappearance of the numerous old-fashioned 'colonies' owing exclusive allegiance to a single metropolitan country through the replacement of 'national' imperialisms by a 'collective' imperialism in which the USA occupies the leading position." (Handbook, p. 5)

He later goes on to highlight that "The militarization of the U.S. economy, based on the political pretext of the threatening rise of the USSR and later of the People's Republic of China as socialist powers, enabled the U.S. to postpone its internal crisis, first during the 'hot' war (1939-1945) and then the during the 'cold' war (since 1945)." (p. 6)

Nkrumah says that

“Militarization served two main purposes, it absorbed, and continues to absorb, an excess of unorganized energy into the intense armaments drive which supports imperialist aggression and many blocs and alliances formed by imperialist powers over the last twenty years. It also made possible an expensive policy of paternalistic corruption of the poor and oppressed people of the world.” (p. 7)

The formation of the OAU brought together both the majority of moderate and conservative states with the smaller number of anti-imperialist governments led by Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Tanzania and Algeria. Such a compromise would limit the capacity of the continental organization to take a firm position against imperialism and neo-colonialism, the major enemy of the African Revolution.

Despite these limitations Nkrumah continued to call for the formation of a United States of Africa. In 1963 at the founding summit of the OAU, Nkrumah distributed his newly-completed book entitled “Africa Must Unite” in an effort to wage ideological struggle against imperialism and its agents operating within various states on the continent.

A chapter entitled “Towards African Unity” it states that

“There are those who maintain that Africa cannot unite because we lack the three necessary ingredients for unity, a common race, culture and language. It is true that we have for centuries been divided. The territorial boundaries dividing us were fixed long ago, often quite arbitrarily, by the colonial powers.”(Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, p. 132)

Yet Nkrumah goes on to stress that “All this is inevitable due to our historical background. Yet in spite of this I am convinced that the forces making for unity far outweigh those which divide us. In meeting fellow Africans from all parts of the continent I am constantly impressed by how much we have in common. It is not just our colonial past, or the fact that we have aims in common, it is something which goes far deeper. I can best describe it as a sense of one-ness in that we are Africans.”

In this book a strong emphasis is placed on the successes of the Soviet Union and China in regard to economic development. Nkrumah attributes these advances in the socialist states to national unity, state planning and the empowerment of the working class and the peasantry.

He rightfully observes that the development of Western Europe and the United States was based upon centuries of enslavement and colonization of Africa and other regions of the world. The fact that Africa needs to develop rapidly and on an egalitarian basis rooted in collective planning, there is a chapter dedicated to Ghana’s commitment to socialist construction.

Also in 1964 and 1965, Nkrumah called for the formation of a United States of Africa at the OAU summits in Egypt and Accra respectively. This same theme was later taken up by Libya under Muammar Gaddafi through the Sirte Declaration of 1999 and the opening summit of the African Union in 2002 in South Africa.

OAU Liberation Committee: A Success Amid Challenges

Perhaps the most successful aspect of the OAU's history between 1963 and the early 1990s was the Liberation Committee which coordinated continental and international assistance to the national liberation movements. The decolonization process would reach a watershed in 1975-76 with the attempted sabotage of the national independence of Angola by imperialism.

The divisions between the three liberation groups provided an opening for the U.S. in alliance with the-then racist apartheid regime based in South Africa and Namibia to intervene in coordination with the CIA to impose a reactionary leadership over the state. The appeal by Dr. Agostinho Neto, leader of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), to the Cuban government under President Fidel Castro resulted in the deployment of 55,000 Cuban internationalist forces.

These forces in cooperation with anti-imperialist states in Africa such as Guinea-Conakry resulted in the first military defeat of the racist South African Defense Forces in early 1976. Cuban internationalists remained in Angola until 1989 when a comprehensive agreement for the withdrawal of South African Defense Forces from the country and the liberation of Namibia along with the release of political prisoners in South Africa and the beginning of negotiations to end the apartheid system was assured.

Earlier in Zimbabwe, the armed revolutionary forces of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriot Front and the Zimbabwe African People's Union-Patriotic Front led to the national independence of the country formerly known as Rhodesia in April 1980. Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania and Lesotho all served as rear bases for the ANC military and political forces which fought for the liberation of South Africa.

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) Reveal the Economic Face of Neo-Colonialism

After the overthrow of the CPP in Ghana in 1966, the country no longer took a progressive stand in regard to building socialism and Pan-Africanism on the continent. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank virtually took over the management of the state leading to the abandonment of state enterprises and the emphasis on industrialization and a progressive foreign policy.

By the 1980s this method of restructuring post-independence African states began to spread throughout the continent. In Ghana, the so-called Economic Recovery Program (ERP) was instituted in 1983 under military leader Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings who had come to power for a second time in a military coup on January 31, 1981.

The ERP would later be named the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and these methods were managed by the IMF and the World Bank in various African states. Uganda, after the coming to power of National Resistance Army leader Yoweri Museveni, the East African state moved in the same direction as Ghana.

Both Ghana and Uganda had been at the forefront of the Pan-African states attempting to advance continental unity and socialism during the 1960s. Ghana under Nkrumah was closely allied with Uganda under President Milton Obote who was overthrown by Gen. Idi Amin in a Western-backed coup in 1971.

Today there are many reports that would suggest that Africa is undergoing an economic revival. Nonetheless, there is still a heavy reliance on foreign exchange earnings from exports and unemployment and poverty remains high although there has been a reduction in poverty in several states.

During the so-called “Arab Spring” of late 2010 and early 2011, the underlying causes of the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria were related to the failure of these governments to provide employment to youth and workers in general. The governments of Tunisia and Egypt were forced to resign in January and February 2011 respectively where Algeria was able to weather the demonstrations which seemed to be related to the country’s long term positions that were independent of the West.

In Libya, even though the imperialists and the corporate press attempted to link the western-backed rebellion which erupted in February of 2011 to developments in Tunisia and Egypt, the character of these demonstrations quickly proved to be of a totally different character politically. When the Libyan rebellion took up arms against the Jamahiriya, the revolt was suppressed by the Gaddafi government.

Utilizing the successful military and political defense of the Jamahiriya as a pretext, the imperialist states rapidly went to the United Nations Security Council to pass two resolutions, 1970, placing an arms embargo on the Gaddafi government but not the CIA-trained rebels and defectors and 1973, which imposed a so-called “no-fly zone” over Libya which was a code name for a massive bombing operation that lasted for seven straight months and was carried out by the U.S. and NATO. In addition to an arms embargo and blanket bombing of Libya, the country’s foreign assets were frozen and the CIA was sent into the country to identify targets for aerial bombardment.

Several attempts were made on the lives of Gaddafi and his family during the course of the war. His family members were killed in airstrikes and eventually on October 20, 2011 Gaddafi’s convoy was struck by bombs in Sirte. He was later captured, brutally beaten, tortured and shot to death by an alleged militia group that was supported by the Pentagon, the CIA and NATO.

Since the overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya, the oil-rich North African state has sunk into chaos. Four U.S. CIA officers were killed in Benghazi last September 11 posing as Washington diplomats. The New York Times reported that the killing of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and the other three Americans was the greatest blow to the CIA in three decades.

AFRICOM-NATO and the Militarization of Africa



The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was formed officially in early 2008 with its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. Attempts to place the AFRICOM headquarters in Africa was met with substantial resistance from individual states and the African Union. However, the U.S. does have a military base in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti.

In addition to this base, there are drone stations, CIA stations and other joint operations between the U.S. and various African states in Somalia, Ethiopia, Seychelles, South Sudan, Uganda, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana and other states. Obama announced in December of 2012 that his administration was dispatching 3,500 Special Forces and military trainers to 35 African states in purported efforts to assist in the fight against "terrorism."

Yet the horrendous war crimes carried out by the U.S. under Obama gets relatively no opposition within the U.S. Congress even among the Congressional Black Caucus. In Libya some two million people were displaced and anywhere between 50,000-100,000 people were killed by the U.S.-NATO war of aggression and regime-change.

Thousands of Africans remain in post-Gaddafi Libyan jails that are run by militias who are given free reign by the U.S.-NATO backed General National Congress (GNC). An International Criminal Court (ICC) delegation which visited Libya during 2012 to investigate the conditions surrounding the detention of Seif al-Islam, the oldest son of Gaddafi and his heir apparent, was detained by the Zintan militia holding this political prisoner.

The ICC, commonly referred to as the "African Criminal Court" due to its sole preoccupation with African statesmen and rebel leaders, had indicted Gaddafi and members of his government during the imperialist war against Libya in 2011. These leaders were indicted on false charges related to the efforts to defend the country against the western-led rebels who had terrorized the country for months but have escaped the scrutiny of the ICC based in The Hague.

The United Nations and other international bodies have remained largely silent on the crimes against humanity being committed in counter-revolutionary Libya. This also holds true of developments in Somalia, where the CIA and the Pentagon has carried out drone and airstrikes that have resulted in the murder of thousands of people.

Africans have continued to resist the onslaught of AFRICOM and its surrogates on the continent. It was reported in May 2013 that at least 3,000 AMISOM troops have been killed

in Somalia in efforts to attempt to suppress the resistance by Al Shabaab to imperialist-backed interference in this Horn of Africa state.

The wars in Libya and Somalia have spilled over into neighboring Mali, Niger and Kenya respectively. Kenya has 2,000-3,000 troops occupying southern Somalia at the aegis of the U.S.

The military intervention by the Pentagon, the CIA and NATO countries will escalate in the short term due to the growing strategic role Africa is playing within the world capitalist system. Throughout East and Central Africa there have been large finding of oil, natural gas and other strategic resources. At present at least 25 percent of the oil that is imported into the United States is coming from the African continent, which now exceeds the amount of petroleum that is exported to the U.S. from the entire Arabian Peninsula.

The Way Forward For Africa and the Diaspora

In order for Africa and its people to develop there must be decisive a break with the imperialist system of finance capital. With the deepening crisis of the world capitalism, the economic system is providing no real solutions to the problems of Africa, nor for its own peoples in Europe and North America.

Europe remains in deep recession with the countries of the South facing astronomical unemployment rates that exceed 25 percent. Even in France, Britain and Germany, the economic crisis has drained the national reserves compelling the central banks to bailout the financial institutions in order to stave off a total collapse.

In the U.S. the rates of poverty and unemployment in real terms are staggering. Nearly half of the people in the U.S. consider themselves to be living in poverty or near poverty.

This economic crisis has become a political one since the White House, Congress, Downing Street, Brussels and Paris are providing no alternative ideas on how to extricate the capitalist system from the economic malaise impacting hundreds of millions of workers, farmers and youth. The only proposals coming out of the halls of the ruling class and their surrogates in government call for greater austerity measures and mechanism to limit any semblance of democratic debate, discussion and collective action.

Our task relates to political education, mobilization and organization of the masses of people to work towards the solutions of these challenges. The crisis in Africa and the Diaspora is by no means isolated from the broader struggle of the peoples of the world.

In Africa there has been a tremendous degree of movement towards alliances with other states on the continent and throughout the so-called Global South. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has held five summits since 2000 resulting in an escalation of both economic and political cooperation between the two regions. Africa is now the largest trading partner with the People's Republic of China.

In Zimbabwe the ZANU-PF government in 2000 took decisive action by seizing the land which the people fought long years for during the armed revolutionary struggle. The government of President Robert Mugabe was vilified by the West and its allies where today research has shown that the land seizures have improved both productivity and income for the African agricultural workers and farmers.

This experience in Zimbabwe is being looked at by other African states in the Southern Africa region and other areas. In South Africa and Namibia the masses of workers, youth and farmers long for the full realization of the objectives of the national democratic revolutions.

South Africa has the largest and most organized working class on the continent. The unrest in the mining industry and the agricultural sector is pushing the country towards looking at nationalization and seizure of the land and the means of production.

The African Union must take action to remove the U.S., France, Britain, Germany, Israel and other imperialist states and their partners from the continent. The ongoing problems of Africa can be traced back to the dominance of the imperialist system throughout the continent.

With reference to the African Diaspora in North America and Europe, the struggle against racism and national oppression takes on critical significance. The forces of the African Diaspora, motivated by Pan-African ideals has and can continue to play a decisive role in the overall consolidation of the African independence movement and the move towards Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance.

Nkrumah in *Africa Must Unite* wrote that

“The expression ‘Pan-Africanism’ did not come into use until the beginning of the twentieth century when Henry Sylvester Williams of Trinidad, and William Edward Burghardt Du Bois of the United States of America, both of African descent, used it at several Pan-African Congresses which were mainly attended by scholars of African descent. A notable contribution to African nationalism and Pan-Africanism was the ‘Back to Africa’ movement of Marcus Garvey.” (p. 133)

Since 1963, the African American and Caribbean African people have played a pivotal role in the struggle to popularize the concept of African liberation. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the Southern African solidarity struggle influenced by African Americans brought into existence the first legislative and administrative actions against the apartheid regime.

With the advent of the Obama administration the need to emphasize a class character to the Pan-African struggle is essential. Africa is not the backyard of U.S. imperialism and must be given the opportunity to exercise full and genuine independence and sovereignty.

In the U.S. the cities in which African Americans reside are facing monumental economic crisis and the evisceration of political power won through the popular struggles of the post-World War II period. Principled alliances with progressive African states and mass organizations will provide avenues for the struggle to eradicate underdevelopment and neo-colonialism from the continent and among the oppressed nations held captive by the West.

Therefore as Nkrumah stressed in the *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* “African unity implies that imperialism and foreign oppression should be eradicated in all their forms. That neo-colonialism should be recognized and eliminated and that the new African nation must develop within a continental framework.” (p. 27)

Nkrumah goes on to say that “At the core of the concept of African unity lies socialism and the socialist definition of the new African society. Socialism and African unity are organically

complementary. There is only one true socialism and that is scientific socialism, the principles of which are abiding and universal. "(p. 29)

Short of revolutionary Pan-Africanism based on scientific socialism, Africans and their allies throughout the world must work toward defining and exercising the maximum degree of organization and mobilization aimed at the transformation of capitalist society and the world imperialist system. These are the lessons of the last five decades and they must be assessed in order to move forward with the total liberation of Africa and its people.

Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The lecture was delivered at the Africa & U.S. Imperialism Conference held in Detroit on May 18, 2013. The event was sponsored by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI) and also featured presentations by Atty. Jeff Edison of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, Dr. Rita Kiki Edozie, Director of African American and African Studies at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Cheick Oumar and Moussa Rimau, two graduate students at MSU from Mali, Tachae J. Davis of Workers World Youth Fraction and a student at Macomb Community College. A special address was delivered by the Venezuelan Consulate in Chicago Jesus Rodriguez Espinoza. To watch the video of the address delivered by the Venezuelan diplomat just click on the website below:

[\(Part 1\)](#)

[\(Part 2\)](#)

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