

The Lies behind the West's War on Libya

Are Those Who Want to Export Democracy Themselves Democrats?

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Africans should think about the real reasons why western countries are waging war on Libya, writes Jean-Paul Pougala, in an analysis that traces the country's role in shaping the African Union and the development of the continent.

It was Gaddafi's Libya that offered all of Africa its first revolution in modern times - connecting the entire continent by telephone, television, radio broadcasting and several other technological applications such as telemedicine and distance teaching. And thanks to the WMAX radio bridge, a low cost connection was made available across the continent, including in rural areas.

It began in 1992, when 45 African nations established RASCOM (Regional African Satellite Communication Organization) so that Africa would have its own satellite and slash communication costs in the continent. This was a time when phone calls to and from Africa were the most expensive in the world because of the annual US\$500 million fee pocketed by Europe for the use of its satellites like Intelsat for phone conversations, including those within the same country.

An African satellite only cost a onetime payment of US\$400 million and the continent no longer had to pay a US\$500 million annual lease. Which banker wouldn't finance such a project? But the problem remained - how can slaves, seeking to free themselves from their master's exploitation ask the master's help to achieve that freedom? Not surprisingly, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the USA, Europe only made vague promises for 14 years. Gaddafi put an end to these futile pleas to the western 'benefactors' with their exorbitant interest rates. The Libyan guide put US\$300 million on the table; the African Development Bank added US\$50 million more and the West African Development Bank a further US\$27 million - and that's how Africa got its first communications satellite on 26 December 2007.

China and Russia followed suit and shared their technology and helped launch satellites for South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Algeria and a second African satellite was launched in July 2010. The first totally indigenously built satellite and manufactured on African soil, in Algeria, is set for 2020. This satellite is aimed at competing with the best in the world, but at ten times less the cost, a real challenge.

This is how a symbolic gesture of a mere US\$300 million changed the life of an entire continent. Gaddafi's Libya cost the West, not just depriving it of US\$500 million per year but the billions of dollars in debt and interest that the initial loan would generate for years to come and in an exponential manner, thereby helping maintain an occult system in order to

plunder the continent.

AFRICAN MONETARY FUND, AFRICAN CENTRAL BANK, AFRICAN INVESTMENT BANK

The US\$30 billion frozen by Mr Obama belong to the Libyan Central Bank and had been earmarked as the Libyan contribution to three key projects which would add the finishing touches to the African federation - the African Investment Bank in Syrte, Libya, the establishment in 2011 of the African Monetary Fund to be based in Yaounde with a US\$42 billion capital fund and the Abuja-based African Central Bank in Nigeria which when it starts printing African money will ring the death knell for the CFA franc through which Paris has been able to maintain its hold on some African countries for the last fifty years. It is easy to understand the French wrath against Gaddafi.

The African Monetary Fund is expected to totally supplant the African activities of the International Monetary Fund which, with only US\$25 billion, was able to bring an entire continent to its knees and make it swallow questionable privatisation like forcing African countries to move from public to private monopolies. No surprise then that on 16-17 December 2010, the Africans unanimously rejected attempts by Western countries to join the African Monetary Fund, saying it was open only to African nations.

It is increasingly obvious that after Libya, the western coalition will go after Algeria, because apart from its huge energy resources, the country has cash reserves of around €150 billion. This is what lures the countries that are bombing Libya and they all have one thing in common - they are practically bankrupt. The USA alone, has a staggering debt of \$US14,000 billion, France, Great Britain and Italy each have a US\$2,000 billion public deficit compared to less than US\$400 billion in public debt for 46 African countries combined.

Inciting spurious wars in Africa in the hope that this will revitalise their economies which are sinking ever more into the doldrums will ultimately hasten the western decline which actually began in 1884 during the notorious Berlin Conference. As the American economist Adam Smith predicted in 1865 when he publicly backed Abraham Lincoln for the abolition of slavery, 'the economy of any country which relies on the slavery of blacks is destined to descend into hell the day those countries awaken'.

REGIONAL UNITY AS AN OBSTACLE TO THE CREATION OF A UNITED STATES OF AFRICA

To destabilise and destroy the African union which was veering dangerously (for the West) towards a United States of Africa under the guiding hand of Gaddafi, the European Union first tried, unsuccessfully, to create the Union for the Mediterranean (UPM). North Africa somehow had to be cut off from the rest of Africa, using the old tired racist clichés of the 18th and 19th centuries, which claimed that Africans of Arab origin were more evolved and civilised than the rest of the continent. This failed because Gaddafi refused to buy into it. He soon understood what game was being played when only a handful of African countries were invited to join the Mediterranean grouping without informing the African Union but inviting all 27 members of the European Union.

Without the driving force behind the African Federation, the UPM failed even before it began, still-born with Sarkozy as president and Mubarak as vice president. The French foreign minister, Alain Juppe is now attempting to re-launch the idea, banking no doubt on the fall of Gaddafi. What African leaders fail to understand is that as long as the European Union continues to finance the African Union, the status quo will remain, because no real

independence. This is why the European Union has encouraged and financed regional groupings in Africa.

It is obvious that the West African Economic Community (ECOWAS), which has an embassy in Brussels and depends for the bulk of its funding on the European Union, is a vociferous opponent to the African federation. That's why Lincoln fought in the US war of secession because the moment a group of countries come together in a regional political organisation, it weakens the main group. That is what Europe wanted and the Africans have never understood the game plan, creating a plethora of regional groupings, COMESA, UDEAC, SADC, and the Great Maghreb which never saw the light of day thanks to Gaddafi who understood what was happening.

GADDAFI, THE AFRICAN WHO CLEANSED THE CONTINENT FROM THE HUMILIATION OF APARTHEID

For most Africans, Gaddafi is a generous man, a humanist, known for his unselfish support for the struggle against the racist regime in South Africa. If he had been an egotist, he wouldn't have risked the wrath of the West to help the ANC both militarily and financially in the fight against apartheid. This was why Mandela, soon after his release from 27 years in jail, decided to break the UN embargo and travel to Libya on 23 October 1997. For five long years, no plane could touch down in Libya because of the embargo. One needed to take a plane to the Tunisian city of Jerba and continue by road for five hours to reach Ben Gardane, cross the border and continue on a desert road for three hours before reaching Tripoli. The other solution was to go through Malta, and take a night ferry on ill-maintained boats to the Libyan coast. A hellish journey for a whole people, simply to punish one man.

Mandela didn't mince his words when the former US president Bill Clinton said the visit was an 'unwelcome' one - 'No country can claim to be the policeman of the world and no state can dictate to another what it should do'. He added - 'Those that yesterday were friends of our enemies have the gall today to tell me not to visit my brother Gaddafi, they are advising us to be ungrateful and forget our friends of the past.'

Indeed, the West still considered the South African racists to be their brothers who needed to be protected. That's why the members of the ANC, including Nelson Mandela, were considered to be dangerous terrorists. It was only on 2 July 2008, that the US Congress finally voted a law to remove the name of Nelson Mandela and his ANC comrades from their black list, not because they realised how stupid that list was but because they wanted to mark Mandela's 90th birthday. If the West was truly sorry for its past support for Mandela's enemies and really sincere when they name streets and places after him, how can they continue to wage war against someone who helped Mandela and his people to be victorious, Gaddafi?

ARE THOSE WHO WANT TO EXPORT DEMOCRACY THEMSELVES DEMOCRATS?

And what if Gaddafi's Libya were more democratic than the USA, France, Britain and other countries waging war to export democracy to Libya? On 19 March 2003, President George Bush began bombing Iraq under the pretext of bringing democracy. On 19 March 2011, exactly eight years later to the day, it was the French president's turn to rain down bombs over Libya, once again claiming it was to bring democracy. Nobel peace prize-winner and US President Obama says unleashing cruise missiles from submarines is to oust the dictator

and introduce democracy.

The question that anyone with even minimum intelligence cannot help asking is the following: Are countries like France, England, the USA, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Poland who defend their right to bomb Libya on the strength of their self proclaimed democratic status really democratic? If yes, are they more democratic than Gaddafi's Libya? The answer in fact is a resounding NO, for the plain and simple reason that democracy doesn't exist. This isn't a personal opinion, but a quote from someone whose native town Geneva, hosts the bulk of UN institutions. The quote is from Jean Jacques Rousseau, born in Geneva in 1712 and who writes in chapter four of the third book of the famous 'Social Contract' that 'there never was a true democracy and there never will be.'

Rousseau sets out the following four conditions for a country to be labelled a democracy and according to these Gaddafi's Libya is far more democratic than the USA, France and the others claiming to export democracy:

1. The State: The bigger a country, the less democratic it can be. According to Rousseau, the state has to be extremely small so that people can come together and know each other. Before asking people to vote, one must ensure that everybody knows everyone else, otherwise voting will be an act without any democratic basis, a simulacrum of democracy to elect a dictator.

The Libyan state is based on a system of tribal allegiances, which by definition group people together in small entities. The democratic spirit is much more present in a tribe, a village than in a big country, simply because people know each other, share a common life rhythm which involves a kind of self-regulation or even self-censorship in that the reactions and counter reactions of other members impacts on the group.

From this perspective, it would appear that Libya fits Rousseau's conditions better than the USA, France and Great Britain, all highly urbanised societies where most neighbours don't even say hello to each other and therefore don't know each other even if they have lived side by side for twenty years. These countries leapfrogged leaped into the next stage - 'the vote' - which has been cleverly sanctified to obfuscate the fact that voting on the future of the country is useless if the voter doesn't know the other citizens. This has been pushed to ridiculous limits with voting rights being given to people living abroad. Communicating with and amongst each other is a precondition for any democratic debate before an election.

2. Simplicity in customs and behavioural patterns are also essential if one is to avoid spending the bulk of the time debating legal and judicial procedures in order to deal with the multitude of conflicts of interest inevitable in a large and complex society. Western countries define themselves as civilised nations with a more complex social structure whereas Libya is described as a primitive country with a simple set of customs. This aspect too indicates that Libya responds better to Rousseau's democratic criteria than all those trying to give lessons in democracy. Conflicts in complex societies are most often won by those with more power, which is why the rich manage to avoid prison because they can afford to hire top lawyers and instead arrange for state repression to be directed against someone one who stole a banana in a supermarket rather than a financial criminal who ruined a bank. In the city of New York for example where 75 per cent of the population is white, 80 per cent of management posts are occupied by whites who make up only 20 per cent of incarcerated people.

3. Equality in status and wealth: A look at the Forbes 2010 list shows who the richest people in each of the countries currently bombing Libya are and the difference between them and those who earn the lowest salaries in those nations; a similar exercise on Libya will reveal that in terms of wealth distribution, Libya has much more to teach than those fighting it now, and not the contrary. So here too, using Rousseau's criteria, Libya is more democratic than the nations pompously pretending to bring democracy. In the USA, 5 per cent of the population owns 60 per cent of the national wealth, making it the most unequal and unbalanced society in the world.

4. No luxuries: according to Rousseau there can't be any luxury if there is to be democracy. Luxury, he says, makes wealth a necessity which then becomes a virtue in itself, it, and not the welfare of the people becomes the goal to be reached at all cost, 'Luxury corrupts both the rich and the poor, the one through possession and the other through envy; it makes the nation soft and prey to vanity; it distances people from the State and enslaves them, making them a slave to opinion.'

Is there more luxury in France than in Libya? The reports on employees committing suicide because of stressful working conditions even in public or semi-public companies, all in the name of maximising profit for a minority and keeping them in luxury, happen in the West, not in Libya.

The American sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote in 1956 that American democracy was a 'dictatorship of the elite'. According to Mills, the USA is not a democracy because it is money that talks during elections and not the people. The results of each election are the expression of the voice of money and not the voice of the people. After Bush senior and Bush junior, they are already talking about a younger Bush for the 2012 Republican primaries. Moreover, as Max Weber pointed out, since political power is dependent on the bureaucracy, the US has 43 million bureaucrats and military personnel who effectively rule the country but without being elected and are not accountable to the people for their actions. One person (a rich one) is elected, but the real power lies with the caste of the wealthy who then get nominated to be ambassadors, generals, etc.

How many people in these self-proclaimed democracies know that Peru's constitution prohibits an outgoing president from seeking a second consecutive mandate? How many know that in Guatemala, not only can an outgoing president not seek re-election to the same post, no one from that person's family can aspire to the top job either? Or that Rwanda is the only country in the world that has 56 per cent female parliamentarians? How many people know that in the 2007 CIA index, four of the world's best-governed countries are African? That the top prize goes to Equatorial Guinea whose public debt represents only 1.14 per cent of GDP?

Rousseau maintains that civil wars, revolts and rebellions are the ingredients of the beginning of democracy. Because democracy is not an end, but a permanent process of the reaffirmation of the natural rights of human beings which in countries all over the world (without exception) are trampled upon by a handful of men and women who have hijacked the power of the people to perpetuate their supremacy. There are here and there groups of people who have usurped the term 'democracy' - instead of it being an ideal towards which one strives it has become a label to be appropriated or a slogan which is used by people who can shout louder than others. If a country is calm, like France or the USA, that is to say without any rebellions, it only means, from Rousseau's perspective, that the dictatorial system is sufficiently repressive to pre-empt any revolt.

It wouldn't be a bad thing if the Libyans revolted. What is bad is to affirm that people stoically accept a system that represses them all over the world without reacting. And Rousseau concludes: 'Malo periculosam libertatem quam quietum servitium - translation - If gods were people, they would govern themselves democratically. Such a perfect government is not applicable to human beings.' To claim that one is killing Libyans for their own good is a hoax.

WHAT LESSONS FOR AFRICA?

After 500 years of a profoundly unequal relationship with the West, it is clear that we don't have the same criteria of what is good and bad. We have deeply divergent interests. How can one not deplore the 'yes' votes from three sub-Saharan countries (Nigeria, South Africa and Gabon) for resolution 1973 that inaugurated the latest form of colonisation baptised 'the protection of peoples', which legitimises the racist theories that have informed Europeans since the 18th century and according to which North Africa has nothing to do with sub-Saharan Africa, that North Africa is more evolved, cultivated and civilised than the rest of Africa?

It is as if Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Algeria were not part of Africa, Even the United Nations seems to ignore the role of the African Union in the affairs of member states. The aim is to isolate sub Saharan African countries to better isolate and control them. Indeed, Algeria (US\$16 billion) and Libya (US\$10 billion) together contribute 62 per cent of the US\$42 billion which constitute the capital of the African Monetary Fund (AMF). The biggest and most populous country in sub Saharan Africa, Nigeria, followed by South Africa are far behind with only 3 billion dollars each.

It is disconcerting to say the least that for the first time in the history of the United Nations, war has been declared against a people without having explored the slightest possibility of a peaceful solution to the crisis. Does Africa really belong anymore to this organisation? Nigeria and South Africa are prepared to vote 'Yes' to everything the West asks because they naively believe the vague promises of a permanent seat at the Security Council with similar veto rights. They both forget that France has no power to offer anything. If it did, Mitterand would have long done the needful for Helmut Kohl's Germany.

A reform of the United Nations is not on the agenda. The only way to make a point is to use the Chinese method - all 50 African nations should quit the United Nations and only return if their longstanding demand is finally met, a seat for the entire African federation or nothing. This non-violent method is the only weapon of justice available to the poor and weak that we are. We should simply quit the United Nations because this organisation, by its very structure and hierarchy, is at the service of the most powerful.

We should leave the United Nations to register our rejection of a worldview based on the annihilation of those who are weaker. They are free to continue as before but at least we will not be party to it and say we agree when we were never asked for our opinion. And even when we expressed our point of view, like we did on Saturday 19 March in Nouakchott, when we opposed the military action, our opinion was simply ignored and the bombs started falling on the African people.

Today's events are reminiscent of what happened with China in the past. Today, one recognises the Ouattara government, the rebel government in Libya, like one did at the end of the Second World War with China. The so-called international community chose Taiwan to

be the sole representative of the Chinese people instead of Mao's China. It took 26 years when on 25 October 1971, for the UN to pass resolution 2758 which all Africans should read to put an end to human folly. China was admitted and on its terms - it refused to be a member if it didn't have a veto right. When the demand was met and the resolution tabled, it still took a year for the Chinese foreign minister to respond in writing to the UN Secretary General on 29 September 1972, a letter which didn't say yes or thank you but spelt out guarantees required for China's dignity to be respected.

What does Africa hope to achieve from the United Nations without playing hard ball? We saw how in Cote d'Ivoire a UN bureaucrat considers himself to be above the constitution of the country. We entered this organisation by agreeing to be slaves and to believe that we will be invited to dine at the same table and eat from plates we ourselves washed is not just credulous, it is stupid.

When the African Union endorsed Ouattara's victory and glossed over contrary reports from its own electoral observers simply to please our former masters, how can we expect to be respected? When South African president Zuma declares that Ouattara hasn't won the elections and then says the exact opposite during a trip to Paris, one is entitled to question the credibility of these leaders who claim to represent and speak on behalf of a billion Africans.

Africa's strength and real freedom will only come if it can take properly thought out actions and assume the consequences. Dignity and respect come with a price tag. Are we prepared to pay it? Otherwise, our place is in the kitchen and in the toilets in order to make others comfortable.

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