

THE STATE IN AFRICA – WHOSE IS IT?

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ABSTRACT

Who owns the state in Africa? or whose interest does this state really serve?

Despite incredible riches in human as well as agricultural and mineralogical resources, the state in Africa demonstrates an incapability to serve its peoples even at a time it performs exceptionally well in the wider global economy, year in, year out. Currently, the immense challenge for Africans is to construct new democratic and extensively decentralised states to utilise the vast wealth therein to transform the lives of millions of people

Keywords: Cargo cult mentality. Restoration of independence. Failed-state. Post-Berlin-state of African freedom. Over-population fallacy. Father of African Literature.

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RESUMO

A quem pertence o Estado da África? A que interesse este Estado realmente serve? Apesar das inacreditáveis riquezas humanas, bem como dos recursos agrícolas e mineralógicos, o Estado em África demonstra incapacidade para servir seus povos, mesmo em um momento quando atua excepcionalmente bem na economia global mais abrangente, ano após ano. Atualmente, o grande desafio para os africanos é construir novos estados democráticos extensamente descentralizados para utilizar a grande riqueza lá existente para transformar a vida de milhões de pessoas.

Palavras-chave: A mentalidade de cultuar produtos manufaturados importados. Restauração da independência. Estado falido. Liberdade do estado africano pós-Berlim. Falácia do excesso de população. Pai da Literatura Africana.

THE STATE IN AFRICA – WHOSE IS IT?

RESUMEN

¿A quién pertenece el estado de África? El interés que este estado realmente sirve? A pesar de la riqueza humana increíble, así como los recursos agrícolas y mineralógicas, el estado en África demuestra incapacidad para servir a su pueblo, incluso en momentos en que los actos excepcionalmente bien en la economía mundial más amplio, año tras año. En la actualidad, el principal desafío para los países africanos es la construcción de nueva democracia ampliamente descentralizado para utilizar

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la gran riqueza que existe para transformar la vida de millones de personas.

Palabras clave: La mentalidad de culto importado bienes manufacturados. La restauración de la independencia. Estado fallido. Libertad del Estado africano post-Berlín. Falacia de hacinamiento. Padre de la literatura africana.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CARGO CULT MENTALITY

Chinua Achebe, the Father of Africa Literature, once described as the “cargo cult mentality” (ACHEBE, 1983, p. 9) the illusion, or rather the delusion of many leaders of so-called developing countries who feel that without sustained hard work, internally, their states could somehow achieve the status of socio-political transformation that they had envisaged in many a “development programme.

This mentality manifests in the form of a perpetual gaze across the seas, across the horizon, hoping/awaiting a “fairy ship [to] dock in their harbour laden with every goody they have always dreamed of possessing” (ACHEBE, 1983, p. 9). This gaze, as can be imagined, is frustratingly a chore that triggers bewildering ranges of emotion: When, for instance, is this ship arriving? Where is it coming from? What will it contain that will transform our existence? More loans? More aid packages? A privatisation scheme? Oh! Is that the mast of the mysterious ship coming over the horizon – at last? Oh yeah! The ship is already here... Good news: the goodies are here, fellow countrymen (and women, presumably!). We are now developed, We are a world power... No, not yet... We need the arrival of 3, 4, or 5 more of these ships to achieve this target. Oh dear! How long will this now take? The time span for all these arrivals will be in the order of 10 years... No, twice as long; sorry, to be more precise, 21 years... Therefore, my administration needs another term, maybe two, perhaps three, to oversee these arrivals, the offloading of the goodies, and the sustainable implementation of this multisectoral development programme!

To focus more specifically on the Africa example, and perhaps less humourlessly, the “cargo cult mentality” is pointedly a perverse case right from the outset. African regimes in the late 1950s/1960s (baseline decades for the “restoration of African independence” after centuries of the European conquest and occupation) uncritically keyed into the Fraudulent Developmentalism music of the age which was trumpeted noisily and widely by the Western World – led strategically by none other than Britain and France, the core conqueror states of Africa. Thanks to the nauseating naivety of these leaderships, Britain, France and other European World states and institutions that had committed heinous crimes of conquest and occupation in Africa for 500 years, were overnight “entrusted” with a role, the central role for that matter, to embark upon Africa’s seeming project of societal reconstruction in the wake of the holocaust.

South Korea, for instance, has demonstrated that if the country's leaderships in the late 1940s/1950s (after the country's liberation from Japanese conquest and occupation) had "allowed" Japan to play a similar role in their reconstruction project as the Africa example just cited, their society would not have been "endowed" with the scientific know-how in the very short 50 years time lag to co-stage the 2002 World Cup Football competition with Japan and with such comparable dazzling technological finesse as the latter.

In Nigeria, in 1979, nearly a decade after it had murdered 3.1 million Igbo people in the most devastating genocide in Africa since the 19th century, few in the country were prepared for the extraordinary pronouncement of optimism on the country's future from the regime in power. There was no semblance of any reconstructionary programme on the ground to support this claim. Olusegun Obasanjo, then head of the country's military junta, had, in effect, gazed across the hallucinatory horizon of expectation embedded in the "cargo cult mentality" and made the following prediction with all the certitude at his disposal: "Nigeria will become one of the ten leading nations in the world by the end of the century" (ACHEBE, 1983, p. 9). Of course in 1999, 20 years later, Nigeria was anything but a world power. It had become a failed-state!

2 "FAILED-STATE" DISCOURSES

The concept "failed-state" carries an understandable melodramatic import! It refers to the inability or failure of a state to fulfil some of its key roles and responsibilities to its people(s) and others domiciled within its territory and consequently to its neighbour(s) and the wider global community of states. According to the latest Washington-based Fund for Peace think-tank's annual research publication, "The Failed States Index 2013", there are 12 indicators at which state failure materialises and these can be grouped into three broad spheres or categories with respect to the impact on the lives of the people(s): social, political and economic (FUND FOR PEACE, 2013a). African countries, unsurprisingly, fare most poorly at each and across these 12 crucial variables at the centre of the fund's research, but particularly in the following, with the inescapable crushing consequences on the lives and wellbeing of the peoples: legitimacy of the state; rise of fractionalised elite; chronic and sustained human rights violation; 4. uneven economic development; poorly, sharp and severe economic decline; massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons.

Thus, the highlights for Africa in the fund's current research make for depressing reading and are as follows (FUND FOR PEACE, 2013b): 16 out of the world's "worst 20 states"; 20 out of the "worst 30 states"; 34 (well over one-half of all the continent's so-called sovereign states) of the "worst 54 states". It is not inconceivable, given this rate of state failure, that by the time this ENABED biennial assembly

has its first conference of the next decade, in 2021, “54 out of the worst 54 states” in the world could be in Africa!

For the purposes of this paper, the following two key empirical determinants of state failure are keenly explored: the state’s inability to provide security; and the state’s inability to provide essential social services. Let us elaborate on each of them:

The state’s inability to provide security to its population – This situation may have arisen because the state no longer exercises control across part/parts or all of its territory. Factors such as catastrophic breakdowns in vital internal sociopolitical and economic relations, intra-regime fractionalism and rivalries, external invasion and occupation of territory, and unmanageable natural disasters would contribute to the failure. It could also be due to the state’s violation of the human rights of the people(s) including a deliberate state policy to embark on the destruction of one or more of its constituent nations/peoples/religious groups, and any others.

The state’s inability to provide essential social services (communication infrastructure, health care, education, housing and recreation, development of culture) to its people(s) or the state’s deliberate policy to deny or partially offer such services to some of its constituent nations/peoples/religious groups... This failure could be the consequence of a state’s dwindling fiscal/material resources or just sheer incompetence in its management capacity. Alternatively, this inability points to the staggering nature of corruption and largely institutionalised norm of non-accountability in the access and control of public-owned finances by state officials and their agents.

Christopher Clapham has argued that the concept “failed-state” is “one of those categories that is named after what it isn’t, rather than what it is” (CLAPHAM, 2000). This is vital in the discourse to the effect that a state, such as Nigeria or Sudan for instance, that embarks on the genocide of its population or does not provide basic services for its people or immanently churns out successive regimes that fleece the collective wealth of the country can hardly merit such a definition in social science. All we need do to highlight the obvious flaw in applying this concept in Africa is to reflect on the fact that crucial state functions such as the provision of security, rule of law, a rationalising but flexible structure of management, accountability and open and unfettered competition, especially with respect to regime change, have not been in operation in any African state since the conquest and occupation of most of the continent by a constellation of European countries in the 19th century. Tragically, in the 57 years since the concerted African drive towards the restoration of its independence resulted in the supposedly 1956 breakthrough in the Sudan, followed soon in 1957 by Ghana, the situation has not changed significantly in Africa for the realisation of these attributes of the state.

Ultimately, the major limitation of the use of the “failed-state” concept to assess the catastrophic situation in contemporary Africa is that it confers an unjustifiable presumption of rationality to an enterprise in which a spectrum of outcomes ranging from perhaps “failure” to “outright failure” to “disaster” is pre-

determined; it is assumed that those who run the state in Africa (Obasanjo, Idi Amin, Taylor, Moi, Habre, Doe, Gowon, Mobutu, Ahidjo, Jonathan, Rawlings, Obote, Babangida, Mengistu, Abacha, Mugabe, Mohammed, Banda, Abubakar, Bokassa, Jammeh, Eyadema, Buhari, Toure, Museveni, Yar'Adua, Biya, Al-Bashier...) are aware of this test and its evaluative scruples and, like any rational participant, would want to succeed... If they do not do so well, at some instance, so goes the logic, they will try to improve on their previous score and, hopefully, do better... Success is always a possibility! It is on the basis of this possibility that Roland Oliver concludes his own controversial contribution to this debate. If one, for a moment, ignores the gratuitous racism and paternalism embedded in the premise of Oliver's contribution as well as the highly contestable analytical category on which it is hinged, which I will be focussing on shortly, Oliver notes: "With its overriding population problem, Africa can hardly expect to achieve First World standards of economic development within the next century [i.e. 21st century] but with just a little more day-to-day accountability, it could at least recover the confidence to continue the uphill struggle with more success" (OLIVER, 1991, p. 9). On the contrary, there is limited indication on the ground that African state operatives currently or indeed in the past 57 years have approached statecraft as a challenge to succeed in transforming the lives of their peoples. "Success" is never a goal set along the trajectory of their mission. To that extent, Oliver's conclusion is, ironically, quite optimistic. Furthermore, it should be noted that given the evidently limited concerns on just "measuring" the scoreboard of performance, "failed-states's" discourses tend to overlook the much more expansive turbulence of underlying history – the kind of project that is being mounted here in this presentation.

So, rather than relations that bring benefits to many of its people, the state in Africa has "evidently been a source of suffering", to quote Clapham (2000), an imagery consistent with Basil Davidson's description of the impact of this state on the African humanity as a "curse" (DAVIDSON, 1992). Richard Dowden also uses a health metaphor to capture the legacy of the African state when he notes, alluding to its genesis: "[this European]-scissors and paste job [has indeed caused Africa] much blood and tears" (DOWDEN, 1987). For her own observation, Lynn Innes is in no doubt that the African state has created what she describes as a "deeply diseased [outcome]" on the continent (INNES, 1990, p. 151). The health metaphor stretches even to the psychiatric as Thomas Pakenham observes: "One has only to think of the bloody... wars that followed decolonisation to see the craziness of these lines drawn on maps in Europe by men ignorant of African geography and history" (PAKENHAM, 1988). Chester Crocker points to the fundamental problem of the state in Africa. It is "not the absence of nations; it is the absence of states with the legitimacy and authority to manage their affairs... As such, they have always derived a major, if not domi-

nant, share of their legitimacy from the international system rather than from domestic society” (CROCKER, 2003, p. 37). It is this question of alienability that is at the crux of this grave crisis.

These references help to underscore the lack of consensus among scholars studying the “failed states” of contemporary Africa on the terms of the evaluative parameters of this enterprise including the crucial constitutive timeframes of assessing and therefore concluding when this or that African state “began to fail” or/and when indeed it “failed”. There is a tendency by some experts, including the Fund for Peace, which we referred to earlier, to arbitrarily circumscribe the limit of the focus of interrogation to the so-called African post-conquest epoch (i.e., post-January 1956 – following the presumed restoration of independence in the Sudan from the British conquest and occupation) with the underlying presumption that the state, as formulated and constituted on the eve of the “restoration of independence”, has a definitive and enduring internal logic to its being. I would wish to question this presumption in this paper by arguing that, to the contrary, quite a number of African states were already “failed states” on the eve of the so-called restoration of independence. Furthermore, there is a surprising “missing link” in these studies. Fund for Peace and others do not interrogate the intrinsic capacity and performance of any of these African states on their pivotal role in the global economy all the while, essentially the primary reason for their existence – since their creation. An exploration and a restoration of this “missing link” is very important as we shall realise shortly, and is therefore the primary concern of this paper. It will enable us answer the question posed in the title of the presentation: The state in Africa – Whose state is it?

Africa has uninterruptedly been a net-exporter of capital to the Western World since 1981. The thundering sum of US\$400 billion is the total figure that Africa has transferred to the West in this manner to date (EKWE-EKWE, 2011, p. 41-42; p. 176-177). These are legitimate, accountable transfers, largely covering the ever-increasing interest payments for the “debts” the West claims African regimes owe it, beginning from the 1970s. A 2010 study by Global Financial Integrity, another Washington-based research organisation, shows that Africa may have also transferred the additional sum of US\$854 billion since the 1970s (“this figure might be more than double, at [US]\$1.8 trillion”, the study cautions) through illegitimate exports by the “leaderships” of corrupt African regimes – with Nigeria, a state that I have argued severally failed in 1945 whilst still under British occupation (see, for instance, EKWE-EKWE, p. 136), topping this league at US\$240.7 billion. In effect, the state, in Africa, no longer pretends that it exists to serve its peoples.

Additionally, and this might appear paradoxical, trade figures and associated data readily obtainable indicate that these African states of seeming dysfunction have performed their utmost, year in, year out, in that key variable for which their European World creators established them in the first place: redoubts for export

services of designated mineralogical/agricultural products to the European World/overseas. There are no indications, whatsoever, that any of these countries has found it difficult to fulfil its principal obligations on this accord – not genocidist and kakistocratic Nigeria, number 16 on the Fund for Peace’s current failed states index; not genocidist Democratic Republic of the Congo, number 2, which has 80 per cent of the world’s reserves of coltan¹, refined columbite-tantalite, critical in the manufacture of a range of small electronic equipment including, particularly, laptop computers and mobile phones; not genocidist Sudan, number 3; not Chad, number 5; not even Somalia, the world’s number 1 worst state. This is the context that that seemingly contradictory aphorism, “Africa works”, becomes hugely intelligible. Appositely, the *raison d’être* of the “state” in Africa is not really to serve its people(s), African peoples; it is, on the contrary, to respond, unflinchingly, to the objective needs of its creators overseas. And to that extent, Africa, contrary to popular, predictable perception is a success, is working!

For instance, thanks to the continuing inordinate leverage that Britain and France, the two foremost conqueror-states of Africa, exercise in these fundamentally anti-African principalities tagged “the state” in Africa, both European countries have a greater secured access to Africa’s critical resources today than at any time during decades of their formal occupation of the continent. France, right from the post-World War II leadership of Charles de Gaulle to the current François Hollande’s has such glaring contempt for the notion of “sovereignty” in the so-called francophonie Africa, ensuring that France has invaded most of these 22 African countries 51 times since 1960 (for an excellent study on French hegemonic control of the finances/economies of these countries, see BUSCH, 2013). As for Britain, sheer greed and opportunism appear to be the guiding principle to attaining its unenviable position as the leading arms-exporter to Africa, including Africa’s leading genocide-states (See, for instance, journalist Charles Onyango-Obbo’s candid insight on the subject in a BBC interview, 2013). Indeed, France and Britain have never had it so good in Africa. This is the background to which the brazenly racist epithet “sub-Saharan Africa” is operationalised currently (EKWE-EKWE, 2013).

Those crucial African capital exports referred to earlier, legitimate or/and illegitimate, are funds of gargantuan proportions produced by the same humanity that many a commentator or campaign project would be quick to categorise as “poor” and “needy” for “foreign aid”. In the past 30 years, these funds could and should easily have provided a comprehensive healthcare programme across Africa, the establishment of schools, colleges and skills’ training, the construction of an in-

1 Refined columbite-tantalite, coltan, is critical in the manufacture of a range of small electronic equipment including, particularly, laptop computers and mobile phones; 80 per cent of the world’s reserves of this mineral is in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which is being currently subjected to a genocidal conflict where 5 million people have been murdered since the 1990s

tegrative communication network, the transformation of agriculture to abolish the scourge of malnutrition, hunger and starvation, and, finally, it would have stemmed the emigration of 12 million Africans, including crucial sectors of the continent's middle classes and intellectuals to the Americas, Europe, Asia and elsewhere in the world since the 1980s.

Yet, despite these grim times of pulverised economies and failed and collapsing states in Africa, we shouldn't ever forget that those who still ensure that the situation on the ground is not much worse for the peoples than it is, are Africans – individuals, working alone, conscientiously, or working in concert with others or within a larger group to feed, clothe, house, educate and provide healthcare and some leisure to immediate and extended families, communities, neighbourhoods, villages and the like. For example, the surgeon who not only works tirelessly in a city hospital, with very limited resources, but uses his scarce savings to build a health centre and an access road in his village with subsidised treatment and prescription costs; the nurse who travels around her expansive health district, unfailingly, bringing care to the doorsteps of the people who neither can afford nor access it physically; the retired diplomat who has mobilised her community to set up a robust environmental care service that has involved the construction of public parks, regular refuse collection and some recycling, after-school free tuition for children with a planned community newspaper in the pipeline; the coach transport operator who lays out scores of his coaches to ferry survivors of a recently organised pogrom 350 miles away to safety; the civil rights activist and intellectual who rallies members of his internet discussion groups within the course of a month's intense campaign to successfully apprehend a contractor who was about to abscond with millions of (US) dollars worth of public funds meant for a crucial upgrade of an international airport initially built by the community; a stretch of individuals' programmes of scholarships for students at varying levels of school life, provision of staff salaries in schools and colleges, maintenance of libraries and laboratories in schools and colleges, construction and maintenance of vital infrastructure in villages and counties, etc., etc. These are the authors busily scripting the path of the renaissance Africa.

To cap these phenomenal strides of Africans, the 12 million African émigrés mentioned earlier presently constitute the primary exporters of capital to Africa itself. Africans now dispatch more money to Africa than "Western aid" to the continent, year in, year out. In 2003, according to the World Bank, these African overseas residents sent to Africa the impressive sum of US\$200 billion – invested directly in their communities (WORLD BANK, 2003, p. 12). This is 40 times the sum of "Western aid" in real terms in the same year – i.e. when the pervasive "overheads" attendant to the latter are accounted for (EL TOM, 2013). In a sentence: The African humanity currently generates, overwhelmingly, the capital resource that at once sustains its very existence and is intriguingly exported to the Western World. It is precisely the same humanity that those who benefit immeasurably from this conundrum (over

several decades and are guaranteed to benefit indefinitely from it, except this is stopped by Africans) have consistently portrayed, quite perversely, as a “charity case”. The notion that Africans are in any way dependent on a European World/Western World or any other overseas’s “handout” is at best a myth or at worst an all-out lie – perpetuated by a circle of academics and in the media who in fact in the not-too-distant-past would have been in the vanguard “justifying”/“rationalising” African enslavement or/and the conquest and occupation of Africa.

Surely, this historic big lie of characterisation can no longer be sustained. Africa is endowed with the human resource and capital resource (in all its calibration and manifestation) to build advanced civilisations provided Africans abandon the prevailing “Berlin-states” of dysfunction that they have been forced into by the latter’s creators as we shall be elaborating soon. Thus, Africa’s pressing problem in the past 57 years of presumed restoration of independence has been how to husband incredible range of abundance of human and non-human resources for the express benefits of the peoples rather than it being fritted away so criminally.

3 FUTURE: POPULATION, FOOD, PROGRESS

There has often been a “politically correct” rhetoric bandied about incessantly by some in academia, media and elsewhere who discuss this grave crisis of contemporary Africa in the context of population, as a useful background to this rhetoric, see, particularly Oliver (1991). Africa, it is concluded in these assertions, requires some “decrease” in its population and/or population-growth as an important measure towards achieving a “solution”. On the contrary, as we now demonstrate, Africa is, indeed, in no way overpopulated. The population argument is usually advanced on a number of fronts. First, there is a “theory” that the given landmass which presently defines Africa and its various so-called 54 nation-states cannot sustain the existing populations, but, more critically, the “projected populations” in years to come. We shall examine the degree to which this “theory” is able to stand up to serious scientific scrutiny first by comparing Africa’s landmass vis-à-vis its population and those of some of the countries of the world.

Africa’s population is currently one billion covering an incredible vast landmass of 30,221,533 sq km or about four times the landmass of Brazil, all the statistics here on countries’ population, landmass and the like are derived from The World Bank (2012) and United Nations Development Programme (2012). Ethiopia’s landmass is 1,221,892 sq km, five times the size of Britain’s at 244,044 sq km. Yet Britain’s population of 62 million is three-quarters that of Ethiopia’s 83 million. As for Somalia, it is 2.6 times the size of Britain but has a population of only 9 million. Sudan and South Sudan provide an even more fascinating comparison. Whilst both countries are 10 times the size of Britain, they support a population of 45 million – about 70 per cent the size of Britain. In fact the Sudans have a landmass equal

to that of India which is populated by 1.22 billion people – i.e., more than the population of all of Africa! Britain is one-tenth the size of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) which has a landmass of 2,345,395 sq km, similar to the Sudans and India. In other words, the DRC is about ten times the size of Britain but with a population of 71 million, nine million more than the population of the latter. Even though the DRC landmass is about twice that of all of Britain, France and Germany (1,275,986 sq km), it has just about one-third of these three west European countries' total population of 208 million. Inevitably, the evidence does beg the question as to where this population really is!

Second, let us examine similarly sized countries. France has a landmass of 547,021 sq km close to Somalia's. However, France's population of 65 million is about seven times the population of Somalia. Similarly, Botswana is slightly larger than France at 660,364 sq km but with a population of 2 million, a minuscule proportion of France's. Uganda's landmass at 236,039 sq km is about the size of Britain's 244,044 sq km. Yet with a population of only 33 million, Uganda is about half that of Britain's. Similarly, Ghana's landmass of 238,535 sq km makes it approximately equal to the size of Britain. Ghana is however populated by only 25 million people, far less than one-half Britain's population.

Southern World to Southern World comparisons can also prove useful in exposing the fallacy of either Africa's "large population" or "potential explosive population". Iran's size of 1,647,989 sq km is about two-thirds that of Sudan and South Sudan combined. Yet its population, unlike the Sudans' 45 million, is at least one and one-half times as large at 75 million. Mexico's landmass is 1,943,950 sq km. This is approximately the same size as the Sudans but with a population of 115 million, Mexico is two and one-half times the former. Pakistan's landmass of 803,937 sq km is just about Namibia's 864,284 sq km but Pakistan's population is 174 million while Namibia's is 2 million! Even though Bangladesh's 143,998 sq km-landmass makes it roughly one-eighth the size of Angola (1,246,691 sq km) as well as that of South Africa's (1,221,029 sq km), Bangladeshi population at 159 million outstrips Angola's 13 million and South Africa's 50 million. If we were to return to our earlier comparisons, Angola and South Africa are about 4-5 times the size of Britain but with one-fifth and four-fifths respectively of the latter's population.

4 POST-GENOCIDE STATE, POST-BERLIN STATE, RESTORATION OF AFRICAN FREEDOM

Finally, we should turn to the question of resource, its availability or lack of it, and therefore its ability or inability to support the African population – another component of Africa's "over-population" fallacy. Well over 50 per cent of Uganda's arable land, some of the richest in Africa, remains uncultivated. Were Uganda to expand its current food production significantly, not only would it be completely self-

sufficient, but it would be able to feed all the countries contiguous to its territory without difficulty, and GM free too! The overall statistics of the African situation are even more revealing as with regards to the continent's long-term possibilities. Just about a quarter of the potential arable land of Africa is being cultivated presently (FAO; IIED, 2008). Even here, an increasingly high proportion of the cultivated area is assigned to so-called cash-crops (cocoa, coffee, tea, groundnut, sisal, floral cultivation, etc.) for exports at a time when there has been a virtual collapse, across the board, of the price of these crops in international commodity markets. In the past 30 years, the average real price of these African products abroad has been about 20 per cent less than their worth during the 1960s-70s period which was soon after the "restoration of independence". As for the remaining 75 per cent of Africa's uncultivated land, this represents 60 per cent of the entire world's potential (ENDRES, 2012, p. 1). The world is aware of the array of strategic minerals such as coltan, cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, industrial diamonds, iron ore, manganese, phosphates, titanium, uranium, and of course petroleum oil found in virtually all regions across the continent.

Africa remains one of the world's most wealthy and potentially one of the world's wealthiest continents. What is not always associated with the profiles of Africa is its vast acreage of rich farmlands with capacity to optimally support the food needs of generations of African peoples indefinitely. In addition, the famous fish industry in Sénégal, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana for instance, Botswana's rich cattle farms, west Africa's yam and plantain belts extending from southern Cameroon to southern Sénégal, the continent's rich rice production fields, etc., etc., all highlight the potential Africa has for fully providing for all its food needs. Thus, what the current African socioeconomic situation shows is extraordinarily reassuring, provided the acreage devoted to cultivation is expanded and expressly targeted to address Africa's own internal consumption needs. Land-use directed at agriculture for food output must become the focus of agricultural policy in the new Africa, as opposed to the calamitous waste of "cash-crop" production for export and/or the more recently observed "land-grab" – parcelling away of land to foreign governments and organisations – occurring across the continent (AKA-EZUWA, 2013).

It is an inexplicable and inexcusable tragedy that any African child, woman, or man could go without food in the light of the staggering endowment of resources in Africa. Africa constitutes a spacious, rich and arable landmass that can support its population, which is still one of the world's least densely populated and distributed, into the indefinite future. There is only one condition, though, for the realisation of this goal – Africa must utilise these immense resources for the benefit of its own peoples within newly negotiated, radically decentralised sociopolitical dispensations which must abandon the current murderous "states" or "Berlin-states" as they should be more appropriately categorised (EKWE-EKWE, 2011, p. 27,

41, 44, 69, 200). These principalities that dutifully go by the very fanged names of their creators (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, the Sudan, Central Africa Republic... whatever!) are an agglomeration of inchoate, inorganic and alienating emplacements that have been an asphyxiating trap for swathes of African constituent nations with evidently distinct histories, cultures and aspirations.

5 ALMOST CONCLUSION

We now no longer require any reminders that the primary existence of these principalities is to destroy or disable as many enterprisingly resourceful and resource-based constituent peoples, nations and publics within the polity that are placed in their genocide march and sights. Here, the example of the Igbo people of west Africa cannot be overstressed. This is one of the most peaceful and industrious of peoples subjected to the longest-running genocide of the contemporary epoch by the Nigeria state. The Igbo genocide is the foundational genocide of post-(European) conquest Africa. It inaugurated Africa's current age of pestilence. During the course of 44 months (29 May 1966-12 January 1970) of indescribable barbarity and carnage not seen in Africa since the German-perpetration of the genocide against the Herero people of Namibia in the early 1900s, the composite institutions of the Nigeria state, civilian and military, murdered 3.1 million Igbo people or one-quarter of this nation's population. To understand the politics of the Igbo genocide and the politics of the "post"-Igbo genocide is to have an invaluable insight into the salient features and constitutive indices of politics across Africa in the past 50 years. Africans elsewhere remained largely silent on the gruesome events in Nigeria but did not foresee the grave consequences of such indifference as subsequent genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan (all three in the Sudan) and Zaïre/Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in other wars in every geographical region of Africa during the period have demonstrated catastrophically. Just as the Nigerian operatives of mass murder appeared to have got away without censure from the rest of Africa, other genocidal and brutal African regimes soon followed in Nigeria's footpath, murdering a horrifically additional tally of 12 million people in their countries considered "undesirables" or "opponents". These 12 million murdered in the latter bloodbaths would probably have been saved if Africans had intervened robustly to stop the initial genocide against the Igbo people.

It is abundantly clear that the factors which have contributed to determining the very poor quality of life of Africa's population presently have to do with the nonuse, partial use, or the gross misuse of the continent's resources year in, year out. This is thanks to an asphyxiating "Berlin-state" whose strategic resources are used largely to support the Western World and others and an overseer-grouping of local forces which exists solely to police the dire straits of existence that is the

lot of the average African. As a result, the broad sectors of African peoples are yet to lead, centrally, the entire process of societal reconstruction and transformation by themselves. Surely, an urgently restructured, culturally-supportive political framework that enhances the quality of life of Africans is really the pressing subject of focus for Africa.

One immediate move that states across the world, especially Britain, the leading arms exporter to Africa, and the rest of the West, Russia and China and others can make to support the ongoing efforts by peoples across Africa to rid themselves of such frighteningly genocidal and dysfunctional states is to ban all arms sales to Africa. This ban must be total and comprehensive. A total and comprehensive arms ban on Africa will radically advance the current quest on the ground by Africans, across the continent, to construct democratic and extensively decentralised new state forms that guarantee and safeguard human rights, equality and freedom for individuals and peoples. Africans have both the vision and the capacity to create alternative states – for them it is an imperative upon which their survival is based.

Forty-seven years and 15 million murders on, Africans finally realise that there cannot be any meaningful advancement without abandoning the post-conquest state, essentially a genocide-state. This state is the bane of African existence and progress. It is in the longer-term interest of the rest of the world, especially in the West, to support African transformations initiated by the peoples rather than the “helmspersons”/“helmsconstituent nations” ostensibly entrenched in the hierarchical architecture that maps the typical continent’s genocide-state.

Thus, the pressing point to reiterate here is that the immediate emergency that threatens the very survival of African peoples is the “Berlin-state” encased in African existence coupled with the pathetic bunch that masquerades here and there as African leaderships but whose mission is to oversee this enthralling edifice. African women and men will sooner, rather than later, abandon this fractured, fracturing, conflictive, alienating and terror contraption. Africans must now focus on real transformation – the revitalisation and consolidation of the institutions of Africa’s constituent nations and polities, or what Okwuonicha Nzegwu (2001, p. 41) has described, succinctly, as the “indigenous spaces of real Africa”. In these institutions and spaces of African civilisation lie the organic framework to ensure transparency, probity, accountability, investment in people, humanised wealth creation, respect for human rights and civil liberties, and a true commitment to radically transform African existence.

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