

### 3] Colonialism: Arab & European compared

### **Black Power Pan Africanism (BPPA) Tract #3**

By Chinweizu © Chinweizu 2007

Afro-Arab relations in the Sudan and Mauritania have mainly been characterized by brutal wars, slavery, forced Islamisation and Arabisation, the systematic destruction of indigenous cultures, values and civilizations coupled with insatiable territorial expansion on the part of the [immigrant Arabs.] –[Garba Diallo, “Mauritania-The Other Apartheid” (1993)]

-----  
 We need to remind ourselves that Arab settler colonialism in Africa began with the Arab invasion of Egypt in 640 A.D. and persists today in Mauritania, Sudan and all of North Africa. The Arab settler colonies in East Africa (Zanzibar, Mombassa etc) predate by centuries the Dutch settler colony in Cape Town. Also, from 1821-1956, Egypt was a classic, European-type colonial ruler in Sudan. Thus, Arab colonialism in Africa is no figment of the imagination. And it persists today in different guises. Unlike European colonialism, it is not even in nominal retreat. The Arabs in Africa are colonialists and are even now, with great determination, expanding their territories.

	<b>Europeans in Apartheid South Africa etc</b>	<b>Arabs in Mauritania, Sudan etc</b>
<b>Civilizing Mission Doctrine</b>	<p><b>Europe's mission civilizatrice</b>, also known as the white man's burden, preached free trade, Christianity, science, and European administrative skills as the gifts that would bring peace, order, and civilization to the rest of the world: "Through imperialism, poverty would be transformed into prosperity, the savage would be saved, superstition would vanish into enlightenment, and order would be imposed where once only turmoil and barbarism reigned." Progress was the gift that imperialism sought to bestow on the colonized primitives/uncivilized. This was the self-serving justification for the massacres and slavery-like exploitation of the colonized by the colonizers--[See Douglas Porch: <i>Wars of Empire</i>, p.16]</p> <p>Kipling on <b>“White Man’s Burden”</b>          Take up the White Man's burden ---          Send forth the best ye breed--          Go bind your sons to exile          To serve your captives' need;</p>	<p><b>el Tawaja el Hadhariya—the Arab civilizational project in Africa:</b>          “ We certainly cannot, under any conditions, relinquish our responsibility to help spread the light of knowledge and civilization to the very depth of the virgin jungles of the continent . . . Africa is now the scene of a strange and stirring turmoil . . . We cannot . . . stand as mere onlookers, deluding ourselves into believing that we are in no way concerned. . .”—[Nasser in <i>Philosophy of the Revolution</i>, (1954), quoted in <i>The Arabs &amp; Africa</i>, London: Croom Helm, 1985, p.91]</p> <p>This Nasser doctrine of an Arab-Islamic civilizing mission in black Africa would be the altruistic-sounding, self-serving cover for the Arab expansionist ambition (1) to bring the entire Nile headwaters under Arab rule; (2) to conquer, enslave, Islamize and Arabize black Africans, as through the war on South Sudan; (3) to annex black African lands, as in Libya’s long campaign to annex Chad’s Auzou strip; and (4) to ethnic cleanse and change the demographic character of black African lands by importing Arab settlers, as in Darfur, Nubia and Mauritania today. Arabs would civilize black</p>

	<p>To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild-- Your new caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child (1899) --[Rudyard Kipling, <i>Collected Works</i>]</p>	<p>Africans by inflicting on them war, gang rape of boys and women, genocide, and land expropriation. This Nasser doctrine, like the White Man's Burden of the Europeans, "cloaked [Arab imperialism] with a mantle of idealistic devotion to duty." -- [Stavrianos, <i>The World Since 1500</i>, p.591]</p>
<p><b>Slavery and forced labor under colonialism</b></p>	<p><b>Forced Labor in the European colonies:</b> In the Belgian Congo, . . . peasants were pressed into forced labour on the roads or detailed to collect wild rubber. Crops were requisitioned. Long before [WWII], it had been a cardinal point of Belgian policy in the Congo that male Africans living in 'customary society' should perform 60 days of obligatory labour – paid or unpaid – for their local community. This included the construction and maintenance of roads, and the production of subsistence and cash crops . . . . By 1944 the maximum number of days devoted to obligatory labour had increased to 120. . . .In British Africa . . . compulsory production [used] forced labour in the Nigerian tin mines, and . . .the sisal plantations of Tanganyika. [(Unesco) <i>General History of Africa, Vol. VIII</i>, pp. 93-94] The Portuguese in Mozambique actually used brutal force in recruiting Africans for migrant labour [in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia] . . . . At its peak, South Africa employed around 600,000 and Southern Rhodesia around 250,000 migrant workers annually [from Nyasaland, Mozambique, Basutoland, Botswana, Zambia and Swaziland]. These official figures do not take into account the people who died in the transit camps and, especially, the many who entered South Africa and Southern Rhodesia through unorganised clandestine routes and methods. -- [(Unesco) <i>General History of Africa, Vol. VIII</i>, p.254] The much-hated <i>Indigenat</i> system of the French, which</p>	<p><b>Black Slavery in Sudan and Mauritania</b> Under Arab minority colonial rule, slavery continues till today. <b>Sudan:</b> Whether what is described is 'abduction' - as the NIF prefers to call it - or slavery, it registers no difference in essence: it is reminiscent of nineteenth-century slavery and the slave trade in the Sudan. Time and legislation has changed nothing. The methods of capture are similar: <i>ghazzia</i> (violent raid and capture); the perpetrators and the victims are the same as they were two hundred years ago; the exploitation of labour remains essentially the same: cattle herding, cultivation, fetching water, concubinage, and so forth, cruel and degrading treatment like rape of women, sexual assault of boys, girdling, breaking of the ankle to prevent running away, are just the same; the sale and exchange of the slaves are the same; and the Arab ideological legitimisation of the enslavement of the blacks remains the same. --[Nyaba, 2006, "Arab Racism in the Sudan", pp. 168-169] ----- "In the eyes of the Arab rulers of Sudan they [black slaves] were simply animals given by Allah to make the life of the Arab comfortable"--[quoted in Nyaba, "Arab Racism in the Sudan", p.163.] <b>Mauritania:</b> Mauritania's population consists of about two million inhabitants:</p>

	<p>levied forced labour under threat of harsh penal sanctions, was finally abolished in 1946.          – [See (Unesco) <i>General History of Africa, Vol. VIII</i>, pp. 62, 174]</p>	<p>32 per cent free black Africans of Fulani, Soninke and Wolof ethnic origins, 28 per cent white Moors of Arab-Berber origin, and 40 percent black slaves known as Abid or Haratin. The slaves belong to the white Moors, who have monopolized the government in the country since the French colonial regime transferred political power to them in 1960.          --[Garba Diallo, 1993, “Mauritania- the other Apartheid”]</p>
<p><b>Land expropriation</b></p>	<p><b>Southern Africa</b>          By the 1930s, [South Africa and Southern Rhodesia] had passed an array of segregationist laws . . . for the purpose of: (1) expropriating African lands and minerals; (2) procuring cheap African labour; (3) controlling the deployment and movement of African labourers; (4) eliminating inter-racial competition. . . . The division of the countries into European and African lands was systematically designed to destroy the African’s resources and ability to maintain self-sufficiency, by restricting him to barren rural reserves and urban locations.          – [(Unesco) <i>General History of Africa, Vol. VIII</i>, p. 252]          In South Africa, the Native</p>	<p><b>Egypt &amp; Sudan: Land expropriation in Nubia today</b>          In 1964 the construction of the High Dam in Aswan was completed, a matter that resulted in an area of 500 km along the Nile course (310 km in Egypt, 190 km in the Sudan) to be submerged under the reservoir. The reservoir, i.e. the lake, bears two names, 'Lake Nasser' in Egypt, and 'Lake Nubia' in the Sudan. This has led to the resettlement of about 16500 Nubian families in Egypt (with a similar number of Nubian families on the Sudan side) away from their historical lands. In the case of Egyptian Nubians, the area of resettlement was a barren place called Koum Ambo near Aswan. In the case of the Sudanese Nubians the area of resettlement was a place called Khashm al-Girba in middle-eastern Sudan, known to be of rainy autumn, contrary to the Saharan Nubian region . . . .          By the 1990s the Egyptian government began following a policy of repopulating the evacuated Nubian regions. It began encouraging Egyptians other than Nubians to settle in the evacuated areas around the reservoir lake. It did this while the Nubians were kept away from their own historical lands, living in a pigsty style of life in their barren area of Koum Ambo. The same thing happened in the Sudan, with tacit encouragement from the government to the Arab Bedouin who began settling in the evacuated area. The repopulation of the Nubian region in Egypt has become an official policy entrusted to both the Minister of Agriculture and the Military Governor of Aswan. Villages with full facilities and utilities were built by the Egyptian government and distributed to individuals and families from outside the regions with bank loans to start with. The latest of this is the inauguration of the settlement at the old Nubian village of Kalabsha with 150 non-Nubian families, which was opened by the Minister of Agriculture Amin Abaza (<i>cf. al-Wafd Newspaper</i>, 18/05/2006). On 11/06/2006 the <i>Al-Hram Newspaper</i> (the unofficial voice of the government) announced that tens of thousands of feddans were to be distributed in the Nubian region to people other than the Nubians.</p>

	<p>Trust and Lands Act (1936) allocated to the white 20% of the population the best 87% of the land. They still keep it, despite the “democratic” changes of 1994. In Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, efforts by the Mugabe Regime to take back the lands stolen by the white settlers have brought on a British-led international campaign against the regime for alleged unfair elections and violations of Human rights.**</p>	<p>When the Nubians demanded that their lands be returned to them, they get an arrogant reply from the military Governor of Aswan: "If you want your lands, go fetch them beneath the water <i>cf.</i> Rajab al-Murshidi in <i>Rousa al Yousef Newspaper</i>: <a href="http://www.rosaonline.net">www.rosaonline.net</a> . . . . In late 2003 news leaked out revealing that negotiations on highest levels with the Egyptian government had been made so as to facilitate the settlement of millions of Egyptian peasants, along with their families, in the triangle of the Nubian basin, Halfa-Dungula-Uwenat. The aim of this move is said to safeguard the Arab identity of Sudan against the growing awareness of Africanism in Sudan generally and among the Nubians in particular.</p> <p>—[M. J. Hashim, “The Policies of De-Nubianization in Egypt and Sudan: an Ancient People on the Brink of Extinction”, 2006]</p> <p>In 1962, as he flagged off his troops to the war front against the Black Africans in South Sudan, the Arab Sudanese General Hassan Beshir Nasr declared: “We don’t want these black slaves . . . what we want is their land.”—[Nyaba, 2006, “Arab Racism in the Sudan”, p. `52]</p>
<p><b>Racial discrimination</b></p>	<p>[The pro-fascist Vichy regime, during WWII,] introduced new racist measures hitherto not witnessed [in West Africa]. There were different rations for Africans and Europeans, different coaches for black travelers and white, even different prices according to one’s racial category . . . Africans were paid 2.6 francs per kg for their cocoa, while Europeans received 4.5 francs. Furthermore, whites were exempt from forced labour while whole black villages could be requisitioned to work at road-repairing or on the white-owned plantations.</p> <p>—[(Unesco) <i>General History of Africa, Vol. VIII</i>, pp. 68, 67]</p> <p>Portugal had commonly pursued a policy of segregation in Africa . . . in which Africans were relegated to the bottom of the social hierarchy. As in the French areas, the local people had few rights and were liable to a forced labour regime which was</p>	<p>Mauritania and South Africa are similar in that:</p> <p>The colour divide between the whites and black is clear in both countries. The Arabs in Mauritania call themselves <i>Beydane</i> (Arabic for white) as the Boers refer to themselves as <i>Blanke</i>. In contrast with South Africa, there are no straightforward racially discriminatory laws in Mauritania. For example there are no daily colour lines separating blacks from whites, there are no officially separate schools or housing for blacks and whites, or “independent homelands” whose citizens are foreigners in Mauritania. Blacks do not have to carry pass books in order to be allowed to move around the country, interracial marriage is not illegal; in principle, every mature citizen can vote and stand for election; there have always been 2 or 3 blacks in each government. Black militants attribute this lack of strict colour lines to the fact that Mauritania has been ruled by weak and violent dictatorship regimes which not only oppress the blacks but also their own race. They do not bother to create laws and regulations.</p>

	<p>almost a continuation of slavery.          – [(Unesco) <i>General History of Africa, Vol. VIII</i>, p. 63]</p>	<p>---[Garba Diallo, “Mauritania-The Other Apartheid” (1993)]</p>
<p><b>Language          oppression</b></p>	<p>Under the Assimilationist policy, which was premised on the superiority of French culture, the French always insisted on French as the language of instruction in colonial education. There was no tolerance or use of native languages, only French.</p>	<p><b>The silencing of an Ancient Tongue: Don't speak Nubian</b>          The Nubian languages, like all national languages in the Sudan, are on the brink of becoming extinct (<i>cf.</i> Hashim &amp; Bell, 2005). The state not only did nothing to help enhance and promote the national languages, but look at them as a threat to the national unity. Of over 100 national languages in the Sudan . . . not even a single one of them has been recognized by the state. The state-supported Arabic is encroaching at the expense of the dying national languages. The successive governments of post-Independent Sudan have never heeded the calls from concerned bodies such as UNESCO (<i>cf.</i> UNESCO, 1988; or for recent reference, see: <a href="http://www.unesco.org/most/ln2lin.htm#resources">http://www.unesco.org/most/ln2lin.htm#resources</a>) for using the national languages as means of instruction, especially in primary levels . . . the toll of the systematic onslaught on the national languages that has been going on for the last six centuries has begun to show . . . . For decades, right from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Nubian languages were fought against by the Arabization-oriented school administrations using the infamous tactic of the Ottoman Turkish Mijidi piaster (<i>cf.</i> Hashim, Forthcoming). The obsolete piaster was to be hung from a string on the neck of the pupil who dared utter a word in the Nubian language inside the school (they were mostly boarding schools). The piaster was to be passed to another pupil only when caught committing the sin of speaking one of the most ancient languages in the history of mankind. Checked twice a day, in the morning and the evening, the holder of the piaster was severely punished; four strong pupils would be summoned to hold the '<i>culprit</i>' [<i>sic</i>] from the feet and the hands to be whipped ten lashes.          On 27/05/2006 the Nubians in the Sudan were shocked to read the headline news that the regional Minister of Education in the Northern state had given his explicit orders that no Nubian pupil to utter a word of Nubian language within the precinct of the schools . . . This latest measure of official and systematic cultural persecution has caused an outcry by the Nubians in home and diaspora          —[M. J. Hashim, “The Policies of De-Nubianization in Egypt and Sudan: an Ancient People on the Brink of Extinction”, 2006]</p>

## Conclusion

In light of the evidence presented in these three digests {1] Racism: Arab and European compared, 2] Black Enslavement: Arab and European Compared, and 3] Colonialism: Arab & European compared} what is there to choose between the Arab and the European aggressors who have exploited, enslaved and oppressed black Africans for centuries? Or between Arab and European brands of colonialism. Yet some black Africans have, for the last 50 years, been urging us to embrace our Arab enemies as our brothers, and to join with them under some version or other of continental union government!

Should black Africans of today allow these advocates to prevail, then we have nobody to blame but ourselves for whatever the Arabs do to us within a USofAfrica that they dominate.

## References

- Agyeman, Opoku (2003) *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books,  
 Diallo, Garba (1993) “Mauritania - The Other Apartheid”  
 Haseeb, Kahir El-Din (1985) *The Arabs & Africa*, London: Croom Helm.  
 Hashim, M. J. (2006) “The Policies of De-Nubianization in Egypt and Sudan: an Ancient People on the Brink of Extinction”  
 Mazrui, Ali A. ed (1993) *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. VIII, Africa since 1935* Paris: Unesco  
 Nyaba, Peter Adwok (2006) “Arab Racism in the Sudan”  
     in Kwesi Kwaa Prah ed. (2006) *Racism in the Global African Experience*, Cape Town: CASAS,  
 Porch, Douglas (2000) *Wars of Empire*, London: Cassell and Co.  
 Stavrianos, L.S. (1988) *The World Since 1500*, Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall

-----  
 \*\*Land expropriation

[In Kenya in the 1920s] strikes occurred in reaction to a declaration of the Supreme Court of Kenya that Africans were not owners of their land, even in the Reserves, but were “tenants at the will of the Crown”—[Agyeman, Opoku *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism*, p.79.

[In South-West Africa, today’s Namibia] The Germans sought to turn the vanquished into a landless proletariat, stripped of its rights to the soil and of its ancestral institutions.—[ Gann & Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa 1884-1914*, p.75]

**Feel free notice**

Please feel free to fwd this document to any Pan-African persons, or to publish and reproduce it, unedited and in its entirety, to the Pan-African community, provided you credit the author, do not change, cut or add any word or otherwise mutilate the piece, i.e. publish as is or don't at all.

**If posted at a website, please email a copy of the web page to [sundoor777@hyperia.com](mailto:sundoor777@hyperia.com)**

For print media use, please obtain prior written permission, and then send two (2) copies of the publication wherein used, to Chinweizu, P. O. Box 988, Festac Town, Lagos, Nigeria.

**For further information please contact Chinweizu <[sundoor777@hyperia.com](mailto:sundoor777@hyperia.com)>**

All rights reserved.

© Chinweizu 2007

-----