

Nyerere, Reflections—Dec. 1997

Note:

Below is Nyerere's last statement on Pan-Africanism. It is a public speech in which he makes the case for a Sub-Sahara Pan-Africanism and also repudiates socialism. Since he had spent his career championing both Continentalism and African socialism,--he spent 18 years (1967-1985), the bulk of his tenure as President of Tanzania, building African socialism (*Ujamaa*) there-- his change of position on both should be the mandatory starting point for any serious discussion to chart a way forward for Africa and Pan-Africanism in the 21st century. What follows below are two pieces: first Haroub Othman's introductory account of the occasion in which Nyerere made the speech; and secondly, the text of the Nyerere speech.

--Chinweizu

Haroub Othman on Nyerere's speech

Mwalimu Nyerere's last visit to the University of Dar es Salaam was in December 1997 when he came to take part in the international conference on Reflections on Leadership in Africa – Forty Years after Independence. The conference was in honour of his 75th Birthday and was organised jointly by the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Dar es Salaam and the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation. Nkrumah Hall at the university, with a capacity of 500 to 600 people, was full to overflowing. The organisers had expected not more than 100 people. Ministers, leaders of political parties, academics, students (even though the University was on Christmas vacation), NGO activists, foreign diplomats, media people – they were all there. It was obvious that the centre of attraction was Mwalimu Nyerere, and that they all came to see him and hear him.

After the keynote address by Tanzania Vice-President, the late Dr Omar Ali Juma, Mwalimu Nyerere was asked to speak. He spoke for more than one and a half hours, entirely extempore. It was one of his best speeches, unfortunately the last one at the university. It was full of humour, but also deeply serious, thought provoking, and providing a sense of direction. The audience loved him. That speech has been produced in full in the book that I edited based on the conference papers called Reflections on Leadership in Africa – Forty Years After Independence, and was published in 2000 by VUB University Press in Brussels, Belgium.

In that speech, Mwalimu was making one very important point, that Africa South of the Sahara was on its own. North America, meaning the United States and Canada, had to do something to help Mexico, otherwise the Latin wanderers would simply cross over even if a steel wall were erected. The Slavs, Croatians, Czechs and others in Eastern Europe would be attracted to Western Europe, and the North Africans would be interested in Southern Europe. The South East Asians would be looking to Japan. But Africans South of the Sahara had no 'uncle' to depend on. We were on our own. We have to rely on ourselves, and to cooperate among ourselves.

After the opening ceremony, the conference went into workshops. In the workshops

where Mwalimu Nyerere was participating, he was very active, speaking with his usual lucidity of elaboration and illustration. In one session, the audience was pensive, watching him exchanging views with Issa Shivji on the land question; and at another he explained why he had to ask a group of freedom fighters to leave the country, an issue that was raised in the paper presented by a Russian scholar on African affairs, Vladimir Shubin. After one of the sessions, Mwalimu Nyerere wanted the South African academic, Patrick Bond, and a few others to follow him to his Msasani residence to continue with the discussion. Bond had raised the issue of Afrikaner capital in the Southern Africa region and the way it was behaving.

Mwalimu Nyerere's last intellectual work was the translation into Kiswahili of Plato's The Republic. As he was lying in bed at London's St. Thomas Hospital, he went through the manuscript, made the necessary corrections and completed them before he died. Unfortunately the work has not yet been published.

Mwalimu Nyerere was not a saint (though, according to press reports, there are discussions now amongst the Catholics in his native area to request the Church to start the process of beatifying him) and he did commit a number of mistakes. But his patriotism was unmistakable, his commitment and devotion to Africa unquestionable and his integrity outstanding. His achievements were many, and leaders in Tanzania (and in Africa), present and future ones, will be judged according to the yardsticks set by people like Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

At present the Southern African sub-continent is facing a deep crisis: legacies of colonialism and white domination, underdevelopment, debt problem, HIV/AIDS and natural and unnatural calamities. All these pose serious challenges to the intelligentsia of the region. The intellectuals of the colonial past could have been lured to the colonial trappings but decided to join the independence movement. The present intelligentsia have nothing to lure them into the post-colonial state. Our role is to transform our societies and to give content to human dignity. One should live so that in dying one can say: I gave all my strength for the liberation of humanity.

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Reflections

As published in *Reflections on Leadership in Africa – Forty Years After Independence*,
 ed. by Haroub Othman, Brussels: VUB University Press , 2000, pp. 17-24
 Yellow highlights by Chinweizu.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you, not for asking me to come here, but for the theme that you chose for this Conference. The excuse for holding this conference is a different matter, and that's why I was reluctant to be a main speaker here, because of that excuse. But the theme of this conference I think is very important to Africa. When you sent me the letter of invitation and the documents in which you listed the issues which you wanted this conference to tackle, I was extremely impressed, and I really hope, I sincerely hope that the participants will do a good job to the themes you have selected, because I think they are themes that are very important for the future of our continent. You wanted me to reflect. I told you I had very little time to reflect. I am not an engineer², and therefore what I am going to say might sound messy, unstructured and possibly irrelevant to what you intend to do; but I thought that if by reflecting, you wanted me to go back and relive the political life that I have lived for the last 30, 40 years, that I cannot do. And in any case, in spite of the fact that it's useful to go back in history, what you are talking about is what might be of use to Africa in the 21st Century. History's important, obviously, but I think we should concentrate and see what might be of use to our continent in the coming century.

What I want to do is to share with you some thoughts on two issues concerning Africa. One, an obvious one; when I speak you will realise how obvious it is. Another one, less obvious, and I'll spend a little more time on the less obvious one, because I think those will put Africa in what is going to be Africa's context in the 21st century. And the new leadership of Africa will have to concern itself with the situation in which it finds itself in the world of tomorrow—in the world of the 21st century. **And the Africa I'm going to be talking about, is Africa south of the Sahara, Sub-Sahara Africa.** I'll explain later the reason why I chose to concentrate on Africa south of the Sahara. It is because of the point that I want to emphasise. It appears today that in the world of tomorrow there are going to be three centres of power: some, political power, some economic power, but three centres of real power in the world. One centre is the United

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States of America and Canada, what you can call North America. That is going to be a huge economic power and probably for a long time the only military power, but a huge economic power. The other one is going to be Western Europe, another huge economic power. I think Europe is choosing deliberately not to be a military power. I think they deliberately want to leave that to the United States. The other one is Japan. Japan is in a different category but it is better to say Japan, because the power of Japan is quite clear, the economic power of Japan is obvious. The three powers are going to affect the countries near them. I was speaking in South Africa recently and I referred to Mexico. A former President of Mexico, I think it must have been after the revolution in 1935, no, after the revolution, a former President of Mexico is reported to have complained about his country or lamented about his country. "Poor Mexico", said the President, "so far from God and yet so near to the United States". He was complaining about the disadvantages of being a neighbour of a giant. Today, Mexico has decided not simply to suffer the disadvantages of being so close to the United States, but to take advantage of being so close to the United States. And the United States itself has realised the importance of trying to accommodate Mexico. In the past there were huge attempts by the United States to prevent people from moving from Mexico into the United States, people seeking work, seeking jobs. So you had police, a border very well policed in order to prevent Mexicans who seek, who look for jobs, to move into the United States. The United States discovered that it was not working. It can't work. There is a kind of economic osmosis where whatever you do, if you are rich you are attractive to the poor. They will come, they'll even risk their own lives in order to come. They're not going to allow you to have that wealth on your own. They'll come. So the United States tried very hard to prevent Mexicans going into the United States; they've given it up and the result was NAFTA. It is in the interest of the United States to try and create jobs in Mexico, because if you don't the Mexicans will simply come, to the United States, so they're doing that. Europe, Western Europe, is very wealthy. It has two Mexicos. One is Eastern Europe. If you want to prevent those Eastern Europeans to come to Western Europe you jolly well have to create jobs in Eastern Europe, and Western Europe is actually doing

that. They are doing that. They'll help Eastern Europe to develop. The whole of Western Europe will be doing it, the Germans are doing it. The Germans basically started first of all with East Germany but they are spending lots of money also in helping the other countries of Eastern Europe to develop, including unfortunately, or fortunately for them, including Russia. Because they realise, Europeans realise including the Germans, if you don't help Russia to develop, one of these days you are going to be in trouble. So it is in the interest of Western Europe, to help Eastern Europe including Russia. They are pouring a lot of money in that part of the world, in that part of Europe, to try and help it to develop.

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I said Western Europe has two **Mexicos**. I have mentioned one. I'll jump the other. I jump Europe's *second* Mexico. I'll go to Asia. I'll go to Japan. Japan — a wealthy island, *very* wealthy indeed, but an *island*. I don't think they're very keen on the unemployed of Asia to go to Japan. They'd rather help them where they are, and Japan is spending a lot of money in Asia, to help to create jobs *in* Asia, prevent those Asians dreaming about going to Japan to look for jobs. In any case, Japan is too small, they can't find wealth there. But apart from what Japan is doing, of course Asia is *Asia*, Asia has *China*'. Asia **has India**, and the small countries of Asia are not very small. The population of Indonesia is twice the population of Nigeria, your biggest. So Asia is virtually in a category, of the Third World countries, of the Southern countries, Asia is almost in a category of its own. It is developing as a power and Europe knows it, and the United States knows it. And in spite of the *huge* Atlantic, now they are talking about the Atlantic *Rim*. That is in recognition of the importance of Asia.

I go back to Europe. Europe has a second Mexico. And **Europe's Second Mexico is North Africa**. North Africa is to Europe what Mexico is to the United States. **North Africans who have no jobs will not go to Nigeria, they'll be thinking of Europe or the Middle East, because of the imperatives of geography and history and religion and language. North Africa is part of Europe and the Middle East.**

Nasser was a great leader and a great African leader. I got on extremely well with him. Once he sent me a Minister, and I had a long discussion with his Minister at State House here, and in the course of the discussion, the Minister says to me, "Mr. President this is my first visit to Africa". North Africa, because of the pull of the Mediterranean and I say history and culture, and religion, North Africa is pulled towards the North. When North Africans look for jobs they go to Western Europe and Southern Western Europe, or they go to the Middle East. And Europe has a specific policy for North Africa, specific policy for North Africa. It's not only about development, it's also about security. Because if you don't do something about North Africa, they'll come.

Africa, South of the Sahara is different, *totally* different. If you have no jobs here in Tanzania where do you go? The Japanese have no fear that you people will flock to Japan. The North Americans have no fear that you people will flock to North America.

Not even from West Africa. The Atlantic, the Atlantic is an ocean, like the Mediterranean, it has its own logic. But it links North America and Western Europe, not North America and West Africa.

Africa South of the Sahara is isolated. That is the first point I want to make. Africa South of the Sahara is totally isolated in terms of that configuration of developing power in the world of the 21st Century — on its own. There is no centre of power in whose self interest it's important to develop Africa, *no* centre. Not North America, not Japan, not Western Europe. There's no self-interest to bother about Africa South of the Sahara. Africa South of the Sahara is on

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its own. *Na sijambo baya*. Those of you who don't know Swahili, I just whispered, "Not necessarily bad".

That's the first thing I wanted to say about Africa South of the Sahara. African leadership, the coming African leadership, will have to bear that in mind. You are on your own, Mr. Vice President. You mentioned about, you know, in the past, there was some cold war competition in Africa and some Africans may have exploited it. I never did. I never succeeded in exploiting the cold war in Africa. We suffered, we suffered through the cold war. Look at Africa South of the Sahara. I'll be talking about it later. Southern Africa, I mean, look at Southern Africa; devastated because of the combination of the Cold War and apartheid. Devastated part of Africa. It could have been *very* different. But the Cold War is gone, thank God. But thank God the Cold War is gone, the chances of the *Mobutus* also is gone.

So that's the first thing I wanted to say about Africa South of the Sahara. Africa South of the Sahara in those terms is isolated. That is the point I said was not obvious and I had to explain it in the terms in which I have tried to explain it. The other one, the second point I want to raise is completely obvious. Africa has 53 nation states, most of them in Africa South of the Sahara. If numbers were power, Africa would be the most powerful continent on earth. It is the weakest, so it's obvious numbers are not power.

So the second point about Africa and again I am talking about Africa South of the Sahara; it is fragmented, fragmented. From the very beginning of independence forty years ago we were against that idea, that the continent is so fragmented. We called it the *Balkanisation* of Africa. Today I think the *Balkans* are now talking about the *Africanisation* of Europe. Africa's states are too many, too small, some make no logic, whether political logic or ethnic logic or anything. They're *unviable*. It is not a confession.

The *OUA* was founded in 1963, In 1964 we went to Cairo to hold, in a sense, our first summit after the inaugural summit. I was responsible for moving that resolution that Africa must accept the borders which we have inherited from colonialism, accept them as

they are. That Resolution was passed by the organisation with two reservations, one from Morocco, another from Somalia. Let me say why I moved that resolution. In 1960, just before this country became independent, I think I was then Chief Minister, I received a delegation of Masai elders from Kenya, led by an American missionary. And they came to persuade me to let the Masai invoke something called the Anglo-Masai Agreement so that that section of the Masai in Kenya should become part of Tanganyika so that when Tanganyika becomes independent, it includes part of Masai, from Kenya. I suspected the American missionary was responsible for that idea. I don't remember that I was particularly polite to him. Kenyatta was then in detention, and here somebody comes to me, that we should break up Kenya and make part of Kenya part of Tanganyika. But why shouldn't Kenya-

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atta demand that the Masai of Tanganyika should become Masai of Kenya? It's the same logic.

That was in 1960. 1961 we became independent. 1962, early 1962, I resigned as Prime Minister and then a few weeks later I received Dr. Banda. *Mungu amuweke mahali pema*. I received Dr. Banda. We had just, FRELIMO had just established itself here and we were now in the process of starting the armed struggle. So Banda comes to me with a big old book, with lots and lots of maps in it, and tells me, "Mwalimu what is this, what is Mozambique, there is no such a thing as Mozambique". I said "What do you mean there is no such a thing as Mozambique". So he showed me this map, and he said "That part is part of Nyasaland. (It was still Nyasaland at that time) "that part is part of Southern Rhodesia, that part is Swaziland, and this part, which is the northern part, Makonde part, that is your part." So Banda disposed of Mozambique just like that. I ridiculed the idea, and Banda never liked anybody to ridicule his ideas. So he left and went to Lisbon to talk Salazar about this wonderful idea. I don't know what Salazar told him.

That was '62. '63 we go to Addis Ababa for the inauguration of the OAU, and Ethiopia and Somalia are at war over the Ogaden. We had to send a special delegation to bring the President of Somalia to attend that inaugural summit, because the two countries were at war. Why? Because Somalia wanted the Ogaden, a whole province of Ethiopia, and saying, "That is part of Somalia". And Ethiopia was quietly, the Emperor quietly saying to us "that the whole of Somalia was part of Ethiopia". So those three, the delegation of the Masai, led by the American missionary, Banda's old book of maps, and the Ogaden, caused me to move that Resolution, in Cairo in '64. And I say, the Resolution was accepted, two countries with reservations, and one was Somalia because Somalia wanted the Ogaden, Somalia wanted northern Kenya, Somalia wanted Djibouti.

Throw away all our ideas about socialism. Throw them away, give them to the Americans, give them to the Japanese, give them...., so that they can, I don't know, they can do whatever they like with them. Embrace capitalism, fine! But you have to be self-reliant. You here in Tanzania don't dream, that if you privatise every blessed thing,

including the prison, then foreign investors will come rushing. No! No! You are dreaming! *Hawaji!* They won't come! You just try it. There is more to..... private in Eastern Europe than here. Norman Manley, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, in those days the vogue was nationalisation, not privatisation. In those days the vogue was *nationalisation*. So Norman Manley was asked as Jamaica was moving towards independence, "Mr. Prime Minister, are you going to nationalise the economy?" His answer was: "You can't nationalise *nothing*". You people here are busy privatising not *nothing*, we did *build* something, we built *something* to privatise. But quite frankly, for the appetite of Europe, and the appetite of North America, this is

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privatising nothing. The people with a really good appetite will go to Eastern Europe, they'll go to Russia, they'll not come rushing to Tanzania! Your blessed National Bank of Commerce, it's a branch of some major bank somewhere, and in Tanzania you say "It's so big we must divide it into pieces", which is *nonsense*.

Africa South of the Sahara is isolated. Therefore, to develop, it will have to depend upon its own resources basically. Internal resources, nationally, and Africa will have to depend upon Africa. The leadership of the future will have to devise, try to carry out policies of *maximum* national self-reliance and *maximum* collective self-reliance. They have no other choice. *Hamna* And this, this need to organise collective self-reliance is what moves me to the second part. The small countries in Africa must move towards either unity or co-operation, unity of Africa. The leadership of the future, of the 21st Century, should have less respect, less respect for this thing called "national sovereignty". I'm not saying take up arms and destroy the state, no! This idea that we must *preserve* the Tanganyika, then *preserve* the Kenya as they *are*, is nonsensical! The nation states we in Africa, have inherited from Europe. They are the builders of the nation state par excellence. For centuries they fought wars! The history of Europe, the history of the *building* of Europe is a history of war. And sometimes their wars when they get hotter, although they're European wars they call them *world wars*. And we all get involved. We fight even in Tanganyika here, we *fought* here, one world war. These Europeans, powerful, where little Belgium is more powerful than the whole of Africa South of the Sahara put together, these *powerful* European states are moving towards unity, and you people are talking about the atavism of the tribe, this is nonsense! I am telling *you* people. How can anybody think of the tribe as the unity of the future, *hakuna* Europe now, you can take it almost as God given, Europe is not going to fight with Europe any more. The Europeans are not going to take up arms against Europeans. They are moving towards unity — even the little, the little countries of the *Balkans* which are breaking up, Yugoslavia breaking up, but they are breaking up, at the same time the building up is taking place. They break up and say we want to come into the *bigger* unity. So there's a *building* movement, there's a *building* of Europe. These countries which have old, old,

old sovereignties, countries of hundreds of years old, they are forgetting this, they are *moving* towards unity. And you people, you think Tanzania is sacred? What is Tanzania! You *have* to move towards unity. If these powerful countries see *that* they have no future in the *nation* states — *nymyi mnafikin mna future katika nini*. So, if we can't *move*, if our leadership, our future leadership cannot move us to bigger nation states, which I *hope* they are going to try; we *tried* and failed. *I* tried and failed. *One* of my biggest failures was actually that. I tried in East Africa and failed. But don't give up because we, the first leadership failed, no! *Unajanbu tena!* We failed, but the idea is a good idea. That these countries

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should come together. Don't leave Rwanda and Burundi on their own. *Hawawezi kusurvive*. They can't. They're locked up into a form of prejudice. **If we can't move towards bigger nation states, at least let's move towards greater co-operation. This is beginning to happen. And the new leadership in Africa should encourage it.**

I want to say only one or two things about what is happening in Southern Africa. Please accept the logic of coming together. South Africa, small, South Africa is very small. Their per capita income now is, I think \$2000 a year or something around that. Compared with *Tanzanians*, of course, it is very big, but it's poor. If South Africa begins to tackle the problems of the legacy of apartheid, they have no money! But compared with the rest of us, they are rich. And so, in Southern Africa, there, there is also a kind of osmosis, also an economic osmosis. South Africa's neighbours send their job seekers *into* South Africa. And South Africa will simply have to accept the logic of that, that they are big, they are attractive. They attract unemployed from Mozambique, and from Lesotho and from the rest. They have to accept that fact of life, it's a problem, but they have to accept it.

South Africa, and I am talking about post-apartheid South Africa. Post-apartheid South Africa has the most developed and the most dynamic private sector on the continent. It is white, so what? So forget it is white, it is South African, dynamic, highly developed. If the investors of South Africa begin a new form of trekking, you *have to* accept it. It will be ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous, for Africans to go out to seek investment from North America, from Japan, from Europe, from Russia, and then, when these investors come from South Africa to invest in your own country you say, a! a! These fellows now want to take over our economy — this is nonsense. You can't have it both ways. You want foreign investors or you don't want foreign investors. Now, the most available foreign investors for you are those from South Africa. And let me tell you, when Europe think in terms of investing they *might* go to South Africa. When North America think in terms of investing, they *might* go to South Africa. Even Asia, if they want to invest, the first country they may think of in Africa *may* be South Africa. So, if

your South Africa is going to be *your* engine of development, accept the reality, accept the reality, don't accept this nonsense of sovereignty. South Africa will reduce your sovereignty.... What sovereignty do you have. Many of these debt-ridden countries in Africa now have no sovereignty, they've lost it. *Imekwenda. Iko mikononi miva IMF.na World Bank. Unafikiri kuna sovereignty gani.* So, Southern Africa has a tremendous opportunity. Southern Africa, the SADC Group, because of South Africa. Because South Africa now is no longer a destabiliser of the region, but a partner in development. Southern Africa has a tremendous opportunity, but you need leadership, because if you get proper leadership there, within the next ten fifteen years that region is going to be the ASEAN of Africa. And it is possi-

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ble. But forget the protection of your sovereignties. I believe the South Africans will be sensitive enough to know that if they are not careful there is going to be this resentment of big brother, but that big brother, frankly, is not very big.

West Africa. Another bloc is developing there, but that depends very much upon Nigeria my brother (looking at the Nigerian High Commissioner), very much so. Without Nigeria, the future of West Africa is a problem. West Africa is more balkanised than Eastern Africa. More balkamsed, tiny little states. The leadership will have to come from Nigeria. It came from Nigeria in Liberia; it has come from Nigeria in the case of Sierra Leone; it will have to come from Nigeria in galvanising ECOWAS. But the military in Nigeria must allow the Nigerians to exercise that vitality in freedom. And it is my hope that they will do it.

I told you I was going to ramble and it was going to be messy, but thank you very much.

Notes

¹ An abridged version of his speech at the conference. The Editor wishes to thank Mrs Magombe of the Nyerere Foundation for the transcription of the speech.

² Reference to the Vice-chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam's introductory words, in which he identified himself as an engineer.