



African Advocate

Voice of African Immigrants & Refugees in Illinois



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OBAMA: L'Espoir de la Nation

By Haidara Cherif

Vous vous souvenez? Il n'était pas suffisamment noir, il était inexpérimenté et quoi d'autre encore...ha oui, il n'avait pas vécu dans sa chair les affres de la ségrégation puisqu'il était plus blanc et africain qu'Africain Américain ; hé oui vous avez bien lu et compris. Barack Obama, c'est de lui qu'il s'agit a défrayer la chronique ici aux Etats-Unis depuis qu'il s'est senti capable de postuler pour la plus haute fonction du pays.

Mais bien avant, dans sa conquête pour le poste sénatorial de l'Illinois, état où il réside avec sa famille, son concurrent Républicain Allan Keyes (plusieurs fois candidat a la présidentielle et docteur en théologie) lui-même Africain Américain, comme un mercenaire de son parti, il avait été dépêché en Kamikaze pour barrer la voie au jeune Obama, déclarait impromptu que s'il (Obama) était noir, il n'était pas pour autant ce genre de noir comme lui. Ces origines mixtes (son père étant Kenyan et sa mère blanche de Kansas) ne lui permettaient pas de représenter la vaste majorité des Africains Américains qui, eux ont vécu la discrimination, les préjugés néfastes des autres communautés et l'esclavage dont ils sont les héritiers. Nous avons pensé en ce moment que s'étaient les propos d'un politicien illuminé et d'un mauvais perdant pas très fair play.

Aux âmes bien nées, la valeur n'attend point le nombre d'années.

Il semble que le nom que porte le Sénateur Obama était prémonitoire de sa fulgurante ascension académique et professionnelle ; puisque Barack signifie en langue arabe la bénédiction, et quel africain dans son for intérieur ne croirait pas à la bénédiction de ses parents et



Senator Barack Obama

de sa famille pour affronter les vicissitudes de la vie ?

Premier Noir à être responsable du journal de la célèbre Université de Harvard, activiste communautaire dans le sud de Chicago aux services de ses 'frères noirs' du ghetto, Obama n'a jamais rejeté ses origines blanches et africaines. Sénateur d'état (State Senator) avant d'être Sénateur fédéral (U.S. Senator) il y a une grande différence entre les deux, il est d'un charisme époustoufflant et d'une amabilité évidente. Barack représente un espoir pas seulement pour les noirs et autres minorités mais aussi et surtout pour les blancs.

Il n'est plus un secret pour personne que les huit années du cow-boy du Texas Georges Bush ont été un désastre pour l'image, le crédit et le poids des Etats-Unis dans le monde. Il faudra un électrochoc dans la conscience populaire américaine et mondiale pour pouvoir restaurer un début de crédibilité à ce pays

Il devient impératif que l'Amérique questionne au plus profond d'elle-même les fondements de sa démocratie, faire l'état des lieux ou les états généraux de sa société.

A revisiter les débâcles successifs de l'actuel locataire de la Maison Blanche (les multiples mensonges et reniements sur la guerre

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UAO Summit on African Immigrants & Refugees

By Gwen Austin

Chicago - The 2nd Chicago Summit on African Immigrants and Refugees will take place on Saturday, May 31, 2008. It is a unique collaboration between the United African Organization (UAO) and the DuSable Museum of African American History, marking a historic chapter in forging a link between the recent African immigrant and refugee experience and the larger narrative of the African American experience.

The summit is a public education and organizing program of the United African Organization aimed at raising awareness about the state of the African immigrant and refugee community, which is often relegated to mere passing footnotes in academic discourse and token remarks in media commentaries on immigrant communities in the United States.

The theme of this year's summit is "Harvesting Hope...Weaving Change: Contemporary Africa and the African Experience in the US." It will be held at the DuSable Museum of African American History located at 740 East 56th Place, Chicago.

The first summit, whose theme was "Planting Seeds for a New Season," took place last May at the Illinois Institute of Technology. It was an unprecedented success in terms of the quality of presentations by eminent scholars, clergy, public servants, community advocates and service providers. By all accounts, the summit provided a constructive forum to discuss the often overlooked experience of African immigrants and refugees. It was funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services - Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services and the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. Support was provided by the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations - Advisory Council on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs and the Advisory Council on African Affairs, the South African Consulate in Chicago and member organizations of the United African Organization.

This year's summit will have three significant plenary sessions to share perspectives on contemporary Africa, the African immigrant and refugee experience, and building bridges of understanding and shared vision between immigrant communities and the African American community around a common agenda for civil rights and immigrant rights in the US. In addition, there will be a cultural performance, tour of the DuSable Museum and a luncheon. It will be an all-day event beginning with a continental breakfast and registration from 8:00a.m. - 8:45a.m. The program will end at 4:00p.m.

Panelists and attendees for the summit will

include scholars, community- and faith-based organizations, social and legal advocates, public policy analysts, diplomats, a cross-section of Africans and the American African community, representatives of immigrant communities, as well as students and youth.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Carol Adams, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services. Appointed by Governor Rod Blagojevich in February 2003, this former Executive Director of Northeastern Illinois University's undergraduate and graduate Center for Inner City Studies is a career public servant and public policy innovator who, for more than 30-years, made substantial contributions to human services, community development, sociological research and African-American education and culture.

Since her appointment to Secretary of the Department of Human Services, Dr. Adams has launched new initiatives to support the agency's mission to provide seamless, qualitative human services.

As guest of former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, whom she visited at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City in October 2003, she participated in a forum to discuss ways in which the African-



Dr. Carol Adams, Secretary Illinois Department of Human Services

American community can contribute to the work of the UN.

In February 2004, she was selected to join a highly-acclaimed group of African-American educators, lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs and internationally renowned experts from South America and the Caribbean who traveled to the African nation of Uganda to promote community redevelopment and revitalization at Kampala, its capital city. There she delivered

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Inside: Advocate Spotlight

Celebrating Ghana's Independence Anniversary





Le nouveau "Vent de l'Est" venu du ... Kenya!

By Calvin Tchatchoua

Qui ne se souvient de la chute du fameux Mur de Berlin ? N'avons pas encore en mémoire l'éclatement de l'union des républiques socialistes soviétiques à l'aube des années 90 après plusieurs décennies d'implosion et de guerre froide?

On avait alors parlé à l'époque du "vent de l'Est". Ce vent qui a soufflé dans le sens de la trajectoire du soleil levant, c'est à dire de l'Est à l'Ouest.

Ce vent a décapité au passage quelques dictatures de par le monde. On se souvient à coup sûr des revendications persistantes pour plus de démocratie sur le continent africain.

Cette vase de revendications a créé sur le continent quelques réformes politiques, conférences nationales par ci, conférences constitutionnelles par là, rencontres tripartites opposition-gouvernement-société civile par ailleurs, avec des fortunes diverses.

Après cette phase tumultueuse de cet ouragan, ce fut une période "d'accalmie" avec le "multipartisme", des soi-disant élections pluralistes avec ou sans fraudes massives parfois organisées ou commanditées par l'occident à des fins inavouées.

Bref le processus de démocratisation a été péniblement amorcé et a connu des vitesses d'implémentation très variées.

Ce fameux multipartisme forcé n'a alors répondu ni aux questions ni aux besoins fondamentaux des peuples africains, péniblement en quête de développement, d'indépendance et de prospérité.

La situation d'implosion des années d'avant "multipartisme" a donc refait surface suite à toutes ces déceptions et désagréments connus dans la gestion de nos nations, la crise de confiance persistante entre les soi-disant dirigeants de nos républiques et le peuple théoriquement supposé être souverain.

En Décembre 2007, suite à des élections présidentielles dont les résultats ont été hautement contestés, le Kenya avait été plongé dans un cycle de violence sans précédent. Le président sortant d'alors Mwai Kibaki et son principal rival, chef de file de l'opposition Raila Odinga n'ont pas pu accorder leurs violons par rapport aux résultats des élections présidentielles. Bilan : plusieurs milliers de morts dans ces affrontements violents devenus très rapidement tribaux. Le peuple qui mourait de soif pour le changement devra encore attendre, mais néanmoins le message a été passé. Le vent de l'Est est en action, il souffle sur le continent, l'ouragan se propage et se déploie : C'est le nouveau vent de l'Est.

C'est alors que nous avons connu des mouvements de grève au Burkina Faso où les populations avaient marre de la hausse des prix des denrées de première nécessité, suite à une incapacité flagrante des dirigeants à gouverner le pays.

Même mouvement de grève en Guinée où les jeunes ont envahi les rues, brûlant des pneus, avec moins d'ampleur certes mais plein de signes avant-coureurs d'une situation implosive dans le pays. Ce pays est tout de même confronté à des crises redondantes et récurrentes de plusieurs ordres : Quand ce ne sont pas les jeunes qui sont dans la rue pour con-

tester une décision présidentielle, ce sont les militaires qui revendiquent de meilleurs salaires, ou alors des appels pressant des populations vers le Président Lansana Conte, à passer la main et s'occuper de son état de santé dégradant. Après plus de 23 années de pouvoir sans partage suite à une conquête sanglante, le guerrier devrait se reposer ! Il est à noter que suivant le classement de Transparency International l'an dernier, la Guinée est le pays le plus corrompu d'Afrique.

Pour ce qui est du Tchad, la situation a été plus que rocambolesque. Le Président du Tchad Idriss Deby n'a pu sauver son régime qu'en quémandant l'assistance militaire de son maître colonisateur. En effet les forces françaises ont pu "sauver" en une vitesse éclair, le palais présidentiel Tchadien de l'emprise des rebelles qui l'avait déjà encerclé. Reste à savoir à quel prix ce sauvetage a été négocié et bien entendu au détriment des populations plus qu'appauvries, et vivant dans un état de déliquescence matérielle avancé.

Au Cameroun voisin, c'est un autre son d'une même cloche. Les populations sont descendues dans la rue pour manifester contre la hausse des prix des denrées alimentaires, de l'essence à la pompe, les produits de première nécessité, pour l'augmentation des salaires, bref pour une vie acceptable et possible. Il est à noter que le pouvoir d'achat des populations s'est considérablement dégradé depuis plusieurs années. Ce mécontentement généralisé de la population a été favorisé par un climat on peut plus délétère dans la vie politique camerounaise, où Paul Biya, le dictateur en service depuis 1982, se trouve rattrapé par le temps. En effet, à la faveur d'une révision constitutionnelle survenue comme échappatoire à la conférence nationale fortement revendiquée dans les années 90, le Cameroun est passé d'un système de mandats présidentiels quinquennaux illimités aux mandats septennaux renouvelables une seule fois. A l'époque, à la faveur d'une certaine myopie politique et un patriotisme limité, les gouvernants ont cru que deux septennats c'est-à-dire quatorze années étaient largement suffisants pour eux pour mourir au pouvoir et débarrasser le plancher. Que non ! Quatorze années dans la vie d'une nation, c'est comme quatorze jours. A trois années de la fin de ce mandat, le glas commence à sonner, l'épée de Damoclès tourne tout près de la tête, et les inquiétudes montent. Bref l'avenir bien que déjà sombre et obscur, devient incertain. On a peur et on veut s'éterniser au pouvoir.

Le bilan de dernières manifestations de rue au Cameroun est très lourd, suivant les sources, il oscille entre 40 et plus de 100 morts. Les blessés et les arrestations sont légion.

Qu'à donc pu se passer subitement dans le mental de ce peuple réputé "pacifique"?

En tout état de cause le vent de l'Est, venu du Kenya est en marche et d'ailleurs déjà atteint des cimes inespérées ici même aux états unis d'Amérique : le Sénateur Barack Obama ne vient-il pas du ... Kenya ? Suivez mon regard !



Voice of African Immigrants & Refugees in Illinois

Editor-in-Chief
Calvin M. Tchatchoua

Editors
Haidara Cherif
Belinda A. McKwartin

Assistant Editor
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Graphic Design
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E-mail your comments, feedback or submit articles to
Editor@uniteafricans.org

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Barack Obama's Historic Speech on Race in America

By Rev. Walter Coleman

Part 1: *Barack Spoke... And Harold Smiled*

Like thousands of other pastors and students of theology, I was seething with anger and frustration at the crucifixion of Rev Jeremiah Wright last week. I wondered and worried at what Obama would say. As I listened to his historic speech, I remembered a particular moment during Mayor Harold Washington's time with us.

The Mayor called me into his office, about three years into his first term, and asked me to sit down. "Slim," he said, "It's time to stop this racial stuff."

I had been charged with organizing the precinct structure in 30 white majority wards during the 1983 primary. We built a coalition with Latinos, through the courageous leadership of young men like Rudy Lozano and Luis Gutierrez, and a few whites. I was on the ground during the Epton reaction where they threw everything, every racial stereotype, every personal attack imaginable, at Harold. We came to blows more than once on the street corners. I watched as the Latino community enthusiastically embraced Harold in the general election but as most whites on the northwest and southwest side became overnight republicans to vote against Chicago's first African American Mayor. Then I had been charged to target Vrdolyak, the leader of the Council 29 that sought to mobilize the white community against the Mayor. "If Harold is elected again then let the last white man out turnout the lights," he said.

Harold had fought a tough fight. He never backed down. After he won control of the city council through bitterly fought special elections, he was ready to move on to make sure his term in office would go down, not as a racial civil war, but a time of accomplishment and problem solving – and he did!

Shortly after our conversation, Harold made a bold political move, negotiating the "Dream Ticket," supporting Aurelia Puchinski for county office and creating the spot for the first African American U.S. Senator from Illinois, the spot that Barack Obama now occupies. From the hard fought battle in this nation's most segregated city, a Presidential candidate would come to move a nation out of the paralysis of the past.

As Barack was speaking, I could see Harold smiling. "Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant" he seemed to be saying, "It's time to move on, America. Let's stop the war, get healthcare, schools, straighten out the economy, etcetera, etcetera, ad infinitum - without once forgetting the hole racism has left so many people to dig out of. Let's give them fairness – for the undocumented worker and for the blue collar white as well. Let's give 'em all fairness whether they want it or not!"

"But Harold, what about what they are doing to Rev. Wright?" I asked.

"Barack is what America is ready for now.

It's time to move on. It will take a little while longer for them to come to know the truth of the Gospel according to Jeremiah Wright. My friend up here reminds me that the stone the builders threw away became the cornerstone... In the meantime, tell Hillary Clinton to get out of the race. Her time is past."

"O.K, Chief. I can live with that."

Part 2: *Race and Immigration in the Christian Nation*

The stone the builders threw away will be the cornerstone...

As we have reflected positively in part 1 on the admirable position taken by Barack Obama, let us now, among ourselves, reflect on the naked truth.

The attack on Senator Obama came as an attack on his pastor—on his faith. Those who attacked Rev. Wright declared that his comments should not have been made in a Christian church. The controversy was about both race and Christianity. This should show us that the issue of race cannot be resolved without a cataclysmic reaction in Christianity.

From the beginning of the European occupation in this hemisphere the Christian justification of conquest, colonialism, white supremacy and slavery has been at the center of religious debate. The contradictions that surfaced last week between an African-centered, liberation theology church and the dominant Christian culture was only the latest chapter in this debate.

*As race—and racism—
comes to the forefront of
the Presidential elections
in this nation, it is
important that we reflect
on the history and present
day reality of racism and
its expression in what has
come to be known as the
"immigration issue".*

For the immigration issue is not about immigrants but about the complex history of the colonization and continuing legacy of that colonization on the continents of North and South America. The continuing legacy of that history is found in the continuing contradictions in the Christian faith and the struggle amongst Christians over the issue of immigration.

To say that "the immigration issue" is about immigrants is to forget the history of the colonization of this hemisphere.

The colonization of the north by largely

protestant Anglos was one in which the colonizers were concerned with their own salvation. They were involved in a project they considered blessed and ordained by Almighty God. The indigenous were considered savages to be swept from the land so that the new project of a United States Democracy could be completed and perfected.

That this launch on the wings of genocide would turn immediately to build its wealth on the institution of African Slavery was a testament to the deformed Christianity of the Settlers. The notion that slavery and later Jim Crow were minor aberrations in an otherwise sound Christian faith is incomprehensible and unintelligent. The poisoned fruits were fruit of poisoned roots.

Yet slavery was also the foundation of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the Caribbean and Latin America. The enslavement of the indigenous of the south was some of the most brutal in the history of the world, ending in the genocide of over half the population, the dehumanization of the separation of families and the attempted spiritual genocide of the imposition by force of a false Christianity.

There were differences in the conquest of the north and the south, even as they were founded on the common institution of slavery. The Spanish Catholics sought to evangelize, even as they exploited and enslaved. They lacked the commitment to racial purity of the Anglos to the north. What evolved was a racial mixing that did not and still has not occurred in the United States. What also evolved was a spiritual rebellion and the appropriation of the Gospel by a peasant population that incorporated and did not deny their own spirituality. These differences led the Anglo's of the north to despise and seek to dominate the south, claiming racial purity and divine right.

Tension and fierce discrimination still remain

Surely deep tensions and fierce discrimination remained and still remains towards the indigenous population and color or shade of skin remained and remains as a gateway to privilege. Into this mix, came the importation of African Slaves, brought at first to fill the void left by the destruction of so many Indigenous slaves.

While tensions and divisions remained, the collective and racially mixed population of the south was offensive to the white culture and self-righteous presumption of manifest destiny of the north. They viewed the mixed race of the south as inferior and pagan. With the very self-righteousness and hypocrisy that Jesus fought in his day, they labeled the poor as sinners and claimed their own stolen prosperity was a sign they were blessed by God And so it was that in 1848 the U.S. would send its armies from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, bringing the nation to its knees and stealing half of Mexico, the half of Mexico on which the modern prosperity of the U.S. has been built.

The conquest of these rich territories was instigated by the most reactionary factions in a

nation unified by the wicked concepts of manifest destiny: the slave owners. The annexation of Texas, in fact, was to add a new slave state to the union and was in reaction to the prohibition of slavery in Mexico by the sons of former slaves.

The Mexicans, including the sons and daughters of indigenous and African slaves, who were left to the north of the new border were promised respect. Instead, they were dehumanized, sometimes enslaved, lynched and beaten down for a century and a half, until their increasing numbers gave them some protection.

Mexico was not alone. The white supremacist doctrine of manifest destiny subjected every country and every people of the Caribbean and Latin America to ultimate submission, to the cruel reality of a dependent economy and political structure. These conquests of manifest destiny imposed internal divisions and suppressions of the indigenous and the African Diaspora, a Diaspora that is greater in numbers south of the U.S. border than north of it.

Certainly, the domination of this hemisphere has not been without resistance. The emancipation proclamation that ended slavery in Mexico was delivered by the son of an African father and an indigenous mother who fought his way to the Presidency of an independent Mexico. Everywhere in the south, the sons and daughters of African slaves and indigenous slaves joined together to confront the neo-colonial governments imposed on them and again and again they scored victories, most of which were stolen away from them by the Empire to the north.

As time went on and the globalization of the U.S. economy become more virulent, the dependent economies of the south accepted the "perfect marriage" between the capital rich nation to the north and the cheap labor nations of the south. The system of undocumented labor in the United States is in fact the legacy of the slave labor system imposed on this continent first from England and Europe and then by the United States on the nations of the south.

The "immigration issue" is not about immigrants.

To suggest that those who have emerged from the system of colonialism, slavery and imperialist domination are the same as the white Europeans who came to join their Anglo neighbors in the scheme of manifest destiny is a tragic and ignorant interpretation of present day realities.

The United States is not a nation of itself. It is the headquarters of a dominion of a continent. Through that dominion it has exercised its military and economic power to dominate most of the world – to the world's detriment. The arrogant and self-righteous claim to a superior democracy in the United States is not only a deception which disguises the source of its wealth in the exploitation of the south, it is the basis for the imposition of a "Pax Romana" on countries all over the world.

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Remember Amilcar Cabral

A Symbol of a New, Fearless Leadership on the Continent

By Kwame Opoku

“A people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if, without complexes and without underestimating the importance of positive accretions from the oppressor and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of their own culture, which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign culture. Thus, it may be seen that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture.”

On January 20, 1973 Amilcar Cabral was kidnapped in Guinea-Conakry and shot by an assassin in the service of the Portuguese secret police, PIDE. The African world was aghast with shock and many of the African intellectuals were devastated. Cabral was a symbol of a new leadership emerging on the continent, a fearless leadership which was viscerally anti-imperialist but non-racist. A leadership which was willing to talk to the colonialists but was determined to be independent in thought and action. The Portuguese know why Cabral had to go. With Agostinho Neto in Angola and Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique, Cabral had coordinated and spearheaded a series of military actions against the Portuguese in their colonies in Africa that would weaken the fascist colonial power in Lisbon and finally oblige them to accept and grant independence to their African colonies.

The collapse of the Portuguese empire was a prelude to the 25 April 1974 Revolution in Lisbon. Not only did the oppressive colonial wars exhaust the resources of the Portuguese Fascist State and thereby hasten its demise but many of the soldiers from the colonial wars returned home with new ideas about liberty. In contact with the colonial peoples, especially with the PAIGCV (*Partido africano da independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*), MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*) and FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*), the Portuguese soldiers had learnt to understand the meaning of freedom; they asked themselves why they were fighting thousands of miles away from home to defend a regime that was oppressing their families and friends. They came into contact with Marxist ideologies that were forbidden at home by the fascist regime of Salazar and Caetano. Thus Cabral, Neto and Mondlane contributed directly or indirectly to the demise of the fascist regime in Portugal and thus paved the way for a new free and modern Portugal. The Portuguese should remember this when they enjoy

their freedom and other Europeans come with proposals directed against the African peoples.

Portuguese commanders attracted by the ideas of Cabral

Manuel Alegre, the Portuguese writer and politician, has acknowledged that the various commanders of the Portuguese army were attracted by the ideas of Cabral and that it was in fighting against the PAIGCV that many of the soldiers understood the need for effecting what was to become the 25 April 1974 revolution. In an interview which Cabral gave to Manuel Alegre, Cabral addressing himself directly to the Portuguese people, asked them why a people who had always defended their own liberty would support the Fascist Salazar government in its oppressive wars in the colonies. As an African fighting colonial oppression, he was ready to fight side by side with the Portuguese in Portugal to regain their liberty. According to Manuel Alegre, many young soldiers, hearing Cabral's appeal deserted that very evening the colonial army.

In any case, the Portuguese and their secret police PIDE understood the importance of Cabral for the freedom fighters in the Portuguese colonies. Cabral enjoyed the absolute confidence of Agostinho Neto and Eduardo Mondlane whom he had known in Lisbon where they created an African Studies Centre (*Centro de Estudos Africanos*) in 1948, ostensibly to study African culture.

Cabral attached great importance to culture in all its manifestations

His revolutionary theories and praxis had been solidly based on the culture of Cape Verde and Guinea. As a trained agronomist, Cabral knew his country very well, having traveled through the length and breadth of the country doing research both as a student in Lisbon and later as an official in the colonial period for the Portuguese administration.

Cabral, like Agostinho Neto, was also a poet. His poetry often reflected his experience as an agronomist and often, the real conditions of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. He did not believe in art for art's sake.

“Poetry, like any artistic manifestation, and apart from any individual characteristics, emanating from the personality of the poet, is necessary a product of the milieu in which it is expressed. That is to say, however great the influence of the individual may be on the work he produces, it is always, in the final analysis a product of the social complex in which it was produced.”



Amilcar Cabral

Amilcar Cabral is considered by most Africans as an outstanding leader. He has a great prestige and is usually put in the same category as Africa's great personalities: Abdel Gamal Nasser, Ben Bela, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Touré, Patrice Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, Agostinho Neto, Eduardo Mondlane, and Samora Machel.

In a long line of prominent African politicians eliminated by Western imperialism

The assassination of Amilcar Cabral stands in a long line of prominent African politicians eliminated by Western imperialism in its attempts to stabilize its political hegemony in Africa. Ever since Western Europeans arrived on the coasts of Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries they have sought to exploit the resources of the continent and its peoples by all means possible. They have tried to ensure that leaders in African countries are amenable to European designs and those who could not be persuaded that being under European rule was the best thing for Africans were either eliminated in battle or sent to exile (see Prempeh of Asante, Behanzin of Dahomey and Oba Ovonramwem of Benin). In modern times, they have tried to corrupt these leaders and if that did not work, they simply eliminated them (see in addition to Cabral (Cape Verde), Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique), Felix Moumie (Cameroon), Sylvanus Olympio (Togo) and Patrice Lumumba (Zaire). Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) escaped several assassination attempts. Western imperialism has always reserved for itself the possibility of resort to violence if persuasive methods fail to achieve the desired objectives; violence has been used by Western States to achieve the objectives, or to demonstrate their determination of will and purpose.

The Eurocentric epistemological order that supports the hegemonic system of the West has tried to offer explanations about the failing leadership qualities on the African continent: corruption, inefficiency, vainglory, tribalism etc. But whenever we have had leaders dedicated to the cause of their peoples, they have been mostly eliminated. The Eurocentric theory gives the impression that the continent is somehow cursed and could never bring out good leadership or make any useful contribution to civilizations hence the tendency to dismiss accounts about ancient African

empires - Ghana, Mali, Songhai and where this is not possible, for instance in the case of Egypt, to assert that such a civilization was not African at all. But was it European? The Eurocentric approach is apparently able even to move countries out of continents.

Cabral distinguished himself from other revolutionary leaders and theorists by the emphasis he put on culture and its role in the liberation struggle and in the transformation of society.

He would have been in the forefront to rehabilitate African culture and to reclaim our culture, including the significant cultural objects stolen by the colonial masters and now located in many European and American museums. The colonial masters knew the need for every society to have its cultural icons and understood the power and significance that symbolic objects possess. They themselves will never part with cultural objects which symbolize their societies and their cultural achievements. But what should we think of some of our African leaders who show no interest in reclaiming our stolen cultural objects? How do we move forward in our cultural development when most of our cultural icons are elsewhere? When shall we tell the Europeans and Americans to stop the foolish talk and insults that our cultural icons are better preserved in Europe and America? Do they understand our culture better than ourselves when hardly any of them understand our languages? Have they all now become Africans and adopted African customs and religions as some of their museum directors would have us believe when they proclaim in their infamous Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums that our cultural objects have become part of their culture? Can they present and represent African culture better than the Africans? Cabral would have been amazed by such assertion and the lack of vigorous reaction on the part of many African leaders.

Amilcar Cabral showed by his own life and works the exemplary leadership which seems to be missing in some of the countries on the continent. He will forever be remembered by those who are not prejudiced as a selfless leader who contributed to the liberation of Africa and demonstrated that with the confidence of the people one could defeat an oppressor who had powerful armies behind him. African youth can only gain by learning about Amilcar Cabral and pondering over his writings, the problems and conflicts of his times. That is the least we can do for the memory of a man whose life was sacrificed in the pursuit of liberty. 



(continued from page 3)

In truth, we will never get past the racism that prevents real progress and peace as long as we view racism as an issue between black and white in the United States, for the truth is that racism at its core, is in the concept and reality of manifest destiny.

In truth, the way in which this nation confronts the "immigration issue" which is not about immigrants, will determine the humanity, faith and survival of both black and white and Latino in the United States.

The presence of 12 million undocumented and the resulting growth and power of the brown and black people of the south now in the United States has brought out the historic, self-righteous, hateful arrogance in the white population of the United States. It has also accelerated the false consciousness of an African American community that has been denied its original culture and offered a second-class seat in the headquarters of manifest destiny.

We cannot get past – and we are not past – the divisions of race in the United States because the attitudes and beliefs and faith perversions of white supremacy are based not just in the attitudes of white citizens and black citizens of the U.S., but in the history and continuing professions of the supremacy of the U.S. "experiment in democracy," which in reality has been an exercise in manifest destiny of a continent and of the peoples of color of that continent.

The damnation of this supremacy, it seems, can creep into even the sons and daughters of former slaves. The election of Barack Obama – if God willing he prevails - may signal a new stage in the development of the United States. Perhaps from that fertile soil, the seeds of a confrontation will come, a confrontation with the perversion of the Gospel and the perversion of humanity that has taken hold of the souls of men.

The great danger in the notion that we can move beyond the prophetic faith of a Jeremiah Wright is that we don't yet grasp that Wright's vision is the only foundation from which the legacy of colonialism and slavery can be over come and from which colonial Christianity can be redeemed.

Jeremiah Wright's theology not only gave strength to an African-Centered Church but also provided the basis for the unity of Africans in the United States with Latinos in the United States and with Africans and Indigenous and meztizos of the south. That unity is the future of the continent and the future of a faith, freed of the perversions of white supremacy, the dualisms of western capitalistic individualism and the inversion of the source of the Kingdom among the people of God. That unity is the only force which can prevent the United States from maintaining the world in a perpetual state of conflict, war and death as it seeks to hold on to a dying prosperity that it cannot produce



Temporary Relief for Somalis 18-Month Extension of Temporary Protected Status

US Department of Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced an 18-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for nationals of Somalia through September 17, 2009. Under this extension, those who have already been granted TPS are eligible to live and work in the United States for an additional 18 months and continue to maintain their status.

DHS also automatically extended the validity of Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) held by eligible Somalis for an additional six months from March 17, 2008 through September 17, 2008. This will allow sufficient time for eligible TPS beneficiaries to receive their new EAD without any lapse in employment. There are approximately 300 nationals of Somalia (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Somalia) who are eligible for re-registration.

The extension of TPS for Somalia is effective March 17, 2008 and will remain in effect through September 17, 2009. Nationals of

Somalia who have been granted TPS must re-register for the 18-month extension during the 60-day re-registration period beginning March 12, 2008 and remaining in effect until May 12, 2008. Somali TPS beneficiaries are encouraged to apply as soon as possible following the start of the 60-day re-registration period. Please note that re-registration applications from Somali nationals will not be accepted by USCIS until the re-registration period opens on March 12, 2008. Details on where, when and how to file under each designation will soon be published in the Federal Register and additional information will be provided online at: <http://www.uscis.gov/>.

To re-register for TPS under this extension, a TPS beneficiary must submit Form I-821 (Application for Temporary Protected Status) without the application fee and Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization). If the applicant is only seeking to re-register for TPS and not seeking an extension

of employment authorization, he or she must submit Form I-765 for data-gathering purposes only, and is not required to submit the I-765 filing fee. All applicants seeking an extension of employment authorization through September 17, 2009 must submit the required application filing fee with Form I-765. The biometric service fee must be submitted by all re-registrants age 14 and older, as well as re-registrants under age 14 who are requesting an EAD.

Applicants may request a fee waiver for any of the application or biometric service fees in accordance with the regulations. Failure to submit the required filing fees or a properly documented fee waiver request will result in the rejection of the re-registration application.

More information can be obtained from the USCIS National Customer Service Center toll-free number: 1-800-375-5283. TPS forms are available from the toll-free USCIS Forms line, 1-800-870-3676, or from the USCIS Web site: <http://www.uscis.gov/>.



West Africa: Bad Economic Policies Driving Migration

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

If West African governments are serious about reducing migration from their countries they must invest in improving living conditions and reducing inequality, according to sociologists, economists and other experts meeting in the Senegalese capital, Dakar.

"As long as governments do not attack the longstanding and structural problems that make people leave, I think they are completely off-track," said Cheikh Omar Ba, a Senegalese sociologist with the Initiative for Rural and Agricultural Futures.

Ba was among technical experts and government officials at the Dakar conference on migration and development in Africa.

A principal aim of the conference—organized by the International Organization for Migration, the Dakar-based foundation TrustAfrica and the UN's African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP)

—was to urge African governments to incorporate migration into their national development strategies.

Inequality

Conference participants noted that migration was inevitable and had both negative and positive effects for countries of origin. But many at the conference said too many people in West and Central Africa were unnecessarily being forced out of their home regions or countries because of bad policies.

"The distribution of economic gains is still largely inequitable, leaving the vast majority of the people below the poverty line," IDEP's Aloysius Ajab Amin told participants, blaming economic policies that are failing people in much of sub-Saharan Africa.

Amin said youths across the continent

lived in "misery" caused by soaring unemployment and inadequate basic infrastructure while seeing their peers who have migrated sending money back home. "What readily comes to their mind is how to join the migration train."

Abdoulaye Kane, who is with the University of Florida's Centre for African Studies, said he was concerned that in many societies in the Sahel region of West Africa where migration has become the norm, other options were dissolving.

"If you go to the border area of Senegal, Mali and Mauritania now you have a whole social pressure on young people to move, to migrate, to go out, because it's seen as the only way to succeed socially speaking," Kane told IRIN.

"People are now saying you don't need to go to school, because they compare those who went to school and those who have migrated in terms of their buying power. I think African states have to find a way to promote education and also find a way to retain people they train by giving them better working conditions and higher salaries."

Climate dangers

The fallout of climate change is increasingly seen as a driver of migration. While global effects from climate change are inevitable, in this area, too, participants said, governments can help rural communities adapt so they can continue to feed themselves.

"Governments must focus on what they can tackle themselves," sociologist Ba said. "They can put in place more equitable policies, invest more in rural infrastructure, including roads and water supply; they can invest in better agricultural production at the small farmers' level."

African governments have developed plans for adapting to climate change - covering several sectors including agriculture - but they have yet to be implemented.

"Migration is a reaction to scarcity - scarcity created by external forces but also by government policy," he said.



from within its borders.

A nation still enslaved by its own self-righteous belief in its manifest destiny and false illusions of being a democracy will only continue the undermining of faith and family, as one generation after another sink into ignorance and criminalization.

Let us not leave Jeremiah behind us, relegating him to struggles that have been won. Let us keep him in front of us, a prophet of struggles we must yet fight.

Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman, a Chicago-based immigrant-rights advocate and critical commentator, is pastor of the Adalberto United Methodist Church. He can be reached at wrevcoleman@aol.com



President Bush and Africa's Debt—Who Owes Whom?

By Neil Watkins

Editor's note: Neil Watkins tackles the unfinished agenda on debt, calls for an audit of past lending in Africa by the United States and international financial institutions including the IMF and World Bank in order to look at which debts are odious, onerous, or illegal.

President Bush in Africa was looking to secure his legacy in part through the lens of his administration's development initiatives on the continent. One of those initiatives is the administration's support for expanded debt relief for the continent.

To take a closer look at this Administration's record on debt, let us start with a question that Africa-based civil society groups often start with when describing the debt issue: Who Owes Whom?

Take the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The United States, the World Bank and IMF, and other creditors lent former President Mobutu Sese Seko billions of dollars in the 1970s and 1980s, knowing full well that the funds would not benefit the people. This was a price they were willing to pay in the context of the Cold War to win then Zaire's allegiance to the West. But this clearly odious and illegitimate debt remains on the books today—over \$9 billion worth in fact, and the people of the DRC are still paying for the sins of a leader they didn't want.

Does Africa owe President Bush a debt of gratitude?

But the Bush administration has supported debt cancellation in Africa. Does Africa owe President Bush a debt of gratitude? Let's look at the Bush administration's record on Africa's debt. In 2005, the Bush administration, together with the UK, took strong leadership at the G-8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland that year, and agreed to provide the possibility of 100% debt stock cancellation of eligible debts to eligible countries. This was important because up until this point, only debt relief - reduction of payments - rather than outright cancellation, was possible.

The initiative championed by the Bush Administration has since become known as the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Under this program, 23 countries have received 100% cancellation of eligible debts, 19 of them in Africa. Another 20 countries are potentially eligible for the program but have not yet seen their debts cancelled. Added together with previous rounds of debt cancellation, this has meant that eligible nations are saving about \$2 billion in debt payments each year.

The money saved from debt relief has been put to good use. Of the five countries President Bush will visit on his trip, four—Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Ghana - have received debt cancellation under the MDRI. In Tanzania, debt relief led to a 50% increase in primary school enrollment. In Ghana, freed up funds supported the rehabilitation of essential major highways and feeder roads in the main agricultural areas, and to support education

and health initiatives. In Benin, relief bolstered investment in health and education and funded small-holder projects in agriculture.

The other country President Bush will visit on his trip - Liberia - just recently moved towards eligibility for the official IMF/World Bank debt relief program with the strong support of the administration. But Liberia has not yet seen its more than \$3.5 billion debt - much of it run up by the odious regimes of Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor - cancelled outright yet.

More could be done

It is clear that the Bush Administration has provided leadership on debt relief that has benefited a number of African countries. But President Bush could do even more. He could return from Africa—inspired by seeing first-hand the impacts of relief to date—and address the unfinished agenda on debt, in turn cementing his legacy in this area.

He should support the expansion of debt cancellation to all countries that need it to reach global poverty-reducing goals, including countries devastated by HIV/AIDS—such as Lesotho—that have not been included in agreements for debt cancellation to date.

Second, Bush should put an end to unconscionable practices of so-called “vulture funds.” Vulture funds are private creditors that buy up distressed developing country debt on the secondary markets, then refuse to join other creditors in the debt relief process and instead sue poor country governments for a big mark-up. Last year, Zambia had to pay \$15 million to Donegal International, a vulture fund that paid \$3 million for the debt originally. The President should support changes to US law that would make profiteering by vulture funds illegal. While that work is underway, he could immediately reach out to non-Paris Club creditors in the US's sphere of influence and urge them to sign onto a new Paris Club agreement that commits creditors not to on-sell claims on the secondary market.

Another problem facing Africa now is a rapid re-accumulation of debts, including massive new lending from China. The administration's plan to address this problem has focused on an IMF/World Bank framework which punishes debtors by hardening the terms of soft loans they get from the World Bank if they borrow too much. But this approach is likely to only worsen the problem and punishes poor countries without addressing creditor co-

responsibility for the problem. Only a strong, binding international system for responsible lending and sovereign debt restructuring which holds creditors and debtors responsible can ensure debt sustainability in the future.

Finally, to finally answer the question of who owes whom, there should be an audit of past lending in Africa by the United States and international financial institutions including the IMF and World Bank. Such an audit should look at which debts are odious, onerous, or illegal. Having this information will help us to learn lessons from the past and avoid the same mistakes in the future.

To enhance his legacy in this area, President Bush could announce his support for the bi-partisan Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending (S. 2166 / H. 2634) which addresses many of the aforementioned elements of the unfinished agenda on debt and is currently pending in Congress. 

Neil Watkins is National Coordinator of Jubilee USA Network, an alliance of religious organizations, development agencies, and human rights groups working for debt cancellation and responsible lending for impoverished nations.



African Proverbs

African languages are seasoned with proverbs to transmit profound knowledge. Proverbs are the majestic branches of the tree of ancestral wisdom; the vital arteries and vessels of self-expression in everyday conversation throughout Africa. Here are some proverbs to wet your appetite. Hey, marinate and chew them well for everyday use!

 Until the lion has his or her own storyteller, the hunter will always have the best part of the story.

 No matter how long a log stays in the water, it doesn't become a crocodile.

 Patience can cook a stone.

 If God breaks your leg, He will teach you how to limp.

 When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you.

 Two birds disputed about a kernel, when a third swooped down and carried it off.

 A bird is in the air but its mind is on the ground

 An okra tree does not grow taller than its master.

 One who enters a forest does not listen to the breaking of the twigs in the brush.

 The hunter in pursuit of an elephant does not stop to throw stones at birds.

 If you climb up a tree, you must climb down the same tree.

 Peace is costly but it is worth the expense.

 Return to old watering holes for more than water; friends and dreams are there to meet you.

 The egg shows the hen where to hatch.

 The lion does not turn around when a small dog barks.

 When an elephant steps on a trap, no more trap.

 When you live next to the cemetery, you cannot weep for everyone.

 Whether the knife falls on the melon or the melon on the knife, the melon suffers.

 The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them.

 Lack of knowledge is darker than night

 A man does not wander far from where his corn is roasting

Compiled by Alie Kabba





Rwanda: Paul Kagame's Vision

Setting Himself Apart from Other African Leaders

By Simon Kasyate

In just one month, Rwandan President Paul Kagame of Rwanda has appointed some of the world's greatest minds in business and strategic investment to his council of economic advisers besides hosting UN secretary-general Ban-Ki Moon and US President George W. Bush.

This is clearly a sign of an attempt by Mr Kagame to set himself apart from other African leaders.

President Bush, while addressing a press conference in Kigali during his recent visit, said: "I want my fellow citizens to know that I am dealing with a respected leader, not only here in Rwanda, but regionally."

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair offered his services to help raise donor funds and boost Rwanda's economic growth by giving advice on policy and government efficiency, but without any pay.

According to Mr Blair, his motivation for taking up his Rwanda job is to help make the country the continent's most economically attractive outsourcing and information technology hub, which is in line with President Kagame's vision of uplifting a country that would otherwise be economically doomed, given its history.

But, some critics say that Mr Kagame's latest efforts are all a façade by a leader who is growing increasingly unpopular due to his clamping down on the Opposition and free Press.

Education for all

But, improvements in health care, increased education opportunities for all, an investor-friendly environment and the transformation that Kigali has seen into a modern city pours water on this argument.

To the West, and perhaps the rest of the world, President Kagame epitomizes the new breed of progressive African leaders. But then, many other leaders began the same way. On ascending to power they condemned the ineptitude and corruption of their predecessors and set their countries on reformist paths, only to become despots.

The question is, will President Kagame follow the same path?

To find an appropriate answer, one needs to look at Mr Kagame closely.

With an election victory of slightly over 95 per cent in 2003, Mr Kagame started off his first seven-year term with overwhelming support. His party, the Rwandese Patriotic Front won over 73 per cent of the total seats in Parliament. But, there were reports of irregularities and intimidation of opposition parties.

But at the same time, the election got a clean bill of health from the African Union and other poll observers and, President Kagame is now, more than ever, a darling of the West.

Forget earlier indictments by French judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere and a recent one by a Spanish judge for his role in perpetuating the 1994 genocide. President Kagame remains firmly on top of the list of the most respected African leaders at the moment.

In the fourth year of his first seven-year



President Paul Kagame

term, there is little - if any - doubt that President Kagame, 50, will not seek re-election for a second term. The Rwandan constitution allows for a maximum two-terms, so he may seek re-election if he so wishes.

President Kagame is unlikely to amend the constitution to allow for a limitless presidency.

His views about his peers who have entrenched themselves in power for too long and taking their citizens for granted are well documented.

However, at the last Africa governance Forum in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, President Kagame toned down his earlier hard line position on life presidency, saying different countries had different leadership styles.

The most important thing is to look at the achievements Rwanda has made under his leadership and try to make projections for the future.

It appears that President Kagame is determined to woo as much foreign investment into the country as possible. And his travels across the globe have resulted in the signing of several deals, and there is plenty to show for it, especially in Kigali.

The amount of construction going on in the capital is evidence of this.

A Rwandan government official who requested anonymity said the new construction ventures currently in the capital include a \$300 million (Sh20 billion) modern convention centre, complete with a five-star hotel and an IT park aimed at making Kigali the regional IT hub.

There is also construction of a ring road around the capital to ease motor traffic flow, even though there is no traffic jam worth talking about in Kigali or anywhere in Rwanda. All this is against a backdrop of advisory services from the government of Singapore on building a new city.

Notably, while in other African countries

millions of dollars are used to patch up potholed roads ahead of a visit by a dignitary like President Bush, Rwanda had no such problem.

The city has good roads and is kept clean by an efficient council that collects garbage promptly and enforces bylaws.

In a region where commuter taxis and motorcycles are a menace on the streets, Rwanda's are well-behaved and adhere to traffic rules.

"I cannot work without an extra helmet for the passenger; the police cannot allow me," said Mr Nicholas Nzeyimana, a motorcyclist.

And, education is already free at the primary level school and free education at secondary and university level is projected to be effective by 2015.

Meanwhile, corruption, an evil that has taken a toll on many African states, remains remarkably low in both the public and private sectors in Rwanda.

Recently, the ombudsman, Mr Tito Rutaremara spearheaded a move by all government officials in declaring their wealth; failure to do so meant facing prosecution. The compliance rate was 100 per cent!

But, Kagame's critics say that he presides over a police state, a claim the establishment has dismissed. The government has also dismissed claims by the independent media that it has come up with draconian laws to curb their activities.

"They have denied us adverts, some colleagues have been assaulted, threatened or their media outlets shut down when they write or say critical things about the government," said Mr Didas Gasana, managing editor of Newline, an independent publication.

But Mr Oscar Kimanuka, the director general of the Rwanda Bureau of Information and Broadcasting, says the biggest bottleneck to press freedom in Rwanda is not so much the state as lack of adequate training by the practitioners, which limits their ability to perform their duties properly. If anything, Mr Kimanuka argues, the laws regulating media practice in Rwanda are weak and allow room for rookies to ply the trade in a manner that compromises the very tenets that journalism stands for: truth and fairness.

The opposition

Another journalist, Mr John Bosco Gasasira, alleges that the government views the independent media in the country as the opposition.

But these seem like the few anti-Kagame voices you are likely to hear. It is not clear whether others are too afraid to speak out, or whether it is only a handful that are not comfortable with President Kagame's rule.

But, President Kagame's appointing of high profile personalities as his advisers, admirers say, clearly imposes limits on how he exercises power in Rwanda.

Some critics assert that all his advisers have selfish interests they meet by being his advisers and for as long as he meets his side of the bargain, they are likely to turn a blind eye to whatever excesses might creep into Mr Kagame's hold on power.



Community Events

April 26, 2008 6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Please join the Sierra Leone Community Association of Chicago

47th Independence Anniversary Celebration of Sierra Leone & 5th Annual Fundraising Dinner

Authentic Sierra Leonean Cuisine, Cultural Performance, and Awards & Recognition

10 W. 35th Street, 6th floor, Chicago, IL. 60616

For more information and tickets, call 312-808-9560 or visit www.slac.org

Save the Date!

May 31, 2008 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Join the United African Organization for

Harvesting Hope... Weaving Change: Contemporary Africa and the African Experience in the US

2nd Chicago Summit on African Immigrants & Refugees

For more information, contact the UAO at summit@uniteafricans.org





No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century 1950-2000

Editor's note: In an excerpt from the book, *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000*, journalist Charles Cobb Jr. tells of a meeting with the Kenyan leader Oginga Odinga and of looking to Africa to find alternative ways of organizing.

Cobb was a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Mississippi from 1962 to 1967. He moved to Tanzania in 1970. In this interview, he traces the beginnings of his involvement in the civil rights movement and his introduction to Africa.

As I came of age, the things that are dramatic in my memory are the 1954 Supreme Court decision, the events in Little Rock, and the events in Montgomery, Alabama, and tangled in there are the independence of Ghana and the Mau Mau struggle in Kenya.

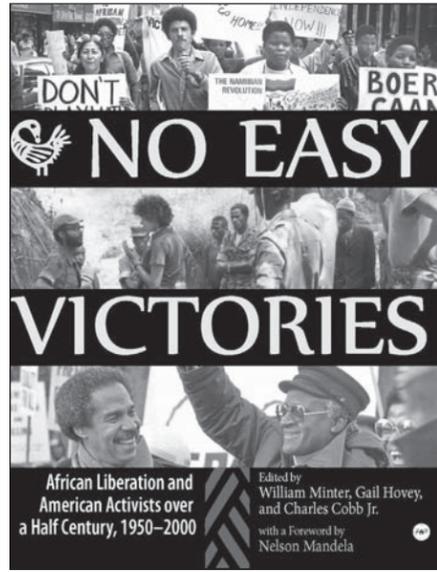
I remember the Pittsburgh Courier used to run a little box on the front page that talked about the conflict in Kenya, the conflict in Congo, the Sharpeville demonstrations, Lumumba, Tshombe, Kasavubu, all of which were happening when I was in high school. These things were part of my consciousness, growing up.

A lot of us in 1960 and '61 who were in college were caught up in the student sit-in movement, which was more or less a spontaneous movement, though not quite as spontaneous as some historians would suggest. I was living in Massachusetts and had been picketing the Woolworth's in support of Southern students in 1960. The students who were protesting in Greensboro and Nashville had the greatest dramatic impact; they were shown on television and so forth. People my age were strongly affected by that because it was, for our generation anyway, the first time in the South that we saw blacks taking the initiative.

By the time the Freedom Rides happened, I was at Howard University, literally sitting on the grass on campus and reading in the student newspaper about the Howard students who had been involved in the Freedom Rides. Somebody gave me a leaflet about a sit-in demonstration in Maryland, which I went to, and I became involved in that way.

The name that kept coming up was SNCC, simply because that was an organization that the students had formed. There was a discussion going on among a lot of students

An Excerpt from



about whether sit-ins would really change anything, whether you should commit a real chunk of time to working in the South.

What made up my mind was a very small blurb in the New York Times which talked about a voter registration project in Mississippi, run by Bob Moses in fact. The story was about the fact that Moses had brought some people down to register to vote and had gotten beaten up. And it struck me that more than sitting at lunch counters, this was probably something important, and I began to cast about for a way to get into that....

What we were organizing people to do was to register to vote, mainly because that was the most legitimate thing. The law was pretty clear, at least the federal law: all people have the right to vote... But we were also organizing in a deeper sense. Mississippi at that time, Alabama, the Arkansas Delta, the north of Louisiana, the northern Florida panhandle, the whole Black Belt South, southwest Georgia: if you were black and living in those areas, you were really living almost in a state of paralysis.... As an organizer the idea, the real idea behind organizing, was to begin to get people in motion around something, just to break that paralysis.

It was in '63 that we really started to become aware of Africa, as I remember. Oginga Odinga, who was at that time the vice president of Kenya, was touring the United States, and one of the places he visited was Atlanta, Georgia.

A whole bunch of us went to see him, just because he was an African leader. There was no political assessment of Kenya, or any of that. He was a black guy who was a vice president of a country, and we had just never seen that. He was staying at some posh hotel in downtown Atlanta, and he saw us. We had this talk, and shook his hand; it was a big thing.

Afterwards we decided to go have coffee at a restaurant next door to the hotel, and we were all refused service. We were kind of high on meeting this black leader, and so naturally we refused to leave the restaurant, and we all got arrested. Oginga Odinga became a known name in the organization. There were songs written about him. Because of this incident, discussion started.

Oginga Odinga

*I went down to the Peach Tree Manor
To see Oginga Odinga
The police said "Well, what's the matter?"
To see Oginga Odinga.*

*Oginga Odinga, Oginga Odinga
Oginga Odinga of Kenya
Oginga Odinga, Oginga Odinga
Oginga Odinga of Kenya.*

*Uhuru, uhuru
Freedom now, freedom now
The folks in Mississippi
Will knock you on your rump
And if you holler FREEDOM
They'll throw you in the swamp.*

Then in '64 Harry Belafonte, who was a supporter of SNCC and other organizations, arranged a trip to Africa for some SNCC people. It was a big thing, and built the discussion more and more in the organization. In the media by this time you're starting to get the whole business with Rhodesia and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, and all this was filtering into the organization.

Our expanding consciousness of Africa and the discussions within the organization revolved around two key words: power and alternatives.

All along we were asking ourselves whether what we were doing was really going to provide the answers for blacks. You work in a county, or you work in some rural town, and because you're working some blacks get killed or shot, something like that. And you inevitably ask yourself, "Is it really worth it? If they actually get this vote, what will it really mean for them? Is what we are about, making blacks Democrats or Republicans, is that really freedom, is that liberation?"

And that question really became very intense in 1964, in the aftermath of the Democratic Party convention in Atlantic City, where clearly, legally and morally, the black delegation that we had organized as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party should have been seated. By any standard, it should have been seated and wasn't. It didn't have anything to do with the merits of our case; it had to do with politics that were at play at that particular convention. As a consequence, coming out of that convention a few people were looking around for alternatives.

What we had learned essentially was that the things that affected blacks in Ruleville, Greenwood, or Sharkey County, Mississippi, didn't just stop at the county line or the state line. What we really had was a national structure. The sheriff and the Ku Klux Klan

and White Citizens Council were all tied into the Congress and the president, and even if we got everybody registered to vote in Sunflower County it wasn't going to provide the complete answer for black people. We were beginning to see the relationship between economics and politics.

Then the question became—and this began to lead us into Africa and more broadly into the Third World—where do we find alternative designs for organizing ourselves as a people? So Africa then begins to loom very large, partly because we were meeting poor people from ZANU and ZAPU and ANC, and African students.

They would talk to us about their situation, and they knew what we were talking about and we knew what they were talking about, and there was something to share there. We began to talk to people more and more about independent institutions. The question of power—Black Power—became a discussion. The question of race intensified.

The work in the counties went on pretty much the same way it always had, but in addition our own broadening consciousness entered into those discussions. For Fannie Lou Hamer to go to Guinea the way she did didn't lead to some African institution developing in Ruleville, Mississippi, but perhaps it made Africa a little less alien to our friends and neighbors. Julius Lester and I went to Vietnam, people went to different parts of Africa, people went to Cuba, to Puerto Rico. We had taken a position on the Vietnam War, and we were becoming interested in the African liberation movement.

As a field secretary for SNCC, I came into contact with journalists and saw what they wrote. Inevitably one says, "I can do a hell of a lot better than that." I traveled widely; I was in south Asia and Africa. It seemed to be important to begin to figure out ways to communicate what I'd seen.

What looks simple turns out to be complex

In 1969 I was teaching school in the United States and decided to go to an African country long enough to really learn something about it. I chose Tanzania simply because it seemed to be the place where the liberation movements were concentrated and because I just happened to know more Tanzanians than anybody else. And one of the things I started to do was write.

The thing that I learned in the South, which I didn't know before going into it, was that what looks simple turns out to be complex. The same thing is true about rural Africa. And if you want to write about it, as I did when I got to Africa, or if you want to organize it, which is what I did in Mississippi, then you have to learn to deal with these complexities. 

The book, *No Easy Victories*, is available from <http://www.noeasyvictories.org> and <http://www.africanworldpressbooks.com>

UAO Internship Program: Social Justice & Advocacy

by Gwen Marie Austin

As a returning adult student, I have exceeded far more than I ever expected when I decided to pursue an undergraduate degree at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). Not only will I receive a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the College of Arts and Sciences in the Justice Studies program in May 2008, but will also receive it with honors and hopefully go onto graduate school in the Fall of 2008. The Ronald E. McNair Scholars program has been very instrumental in laying the groundwork for me to pursue graduate studies. My minor in Human Resource Development (HRD) has also provided me with an additional set of academic tools that will lend itself to understanding the need for teaching and training adults in the changing global workforce.

I have been fortunate to do my internship at the United African Organization (UAO), which is a grassroots social justice advocacy organization that advocates for African immigrants and refugees. As a Justice Studies major, I am concerned about the inequality and injustices Americans face; therefore, I will employ myself in the academia field to address some of the policy challenges and disparities this nation faces. This will be done largely in part to advocate for those who lack or have limited knowledge of their legal rights, those who face economic hardships, and those who fall victim to racial and gender profiling, especially women and people of color that oftentimes find themselves working against the currents of life.

My internship with the UAO is a great learning opportunity to translate classroom theories into practical community organizing models for systemic change.

As the Event Coordinator for the UAO's 2nd Chicago Summit on African Immigrants and Refugees, I am right at the center of an exciting and challenging initiative to give voice to the social justice aspirations of African immigrants and refugees.

Promoting unity with immigrant communities.

Alic Kabba, UAO Executive Director, provides me with the necessary supervision and guidance to make my internship an in-depth experience for future career opportunities.

My experience as an African American makes it all the more critical that I use my internship to promote unity with immigrant communities. We can and we must work together for a strong progressive coalition that will inspire African Americans, Latinos, Asians and other communities to effect deep change in society.

As Senator Barack Obama said, "We can no longer afford to build ourselves up by tearing each other down. We can no longer afford to traffic in lies or fear or hate. It is the poison that we must purge from our politics; the wall that we must tear down before the hour grows too late."

I can be reached at Gwen.Austin@UniteAfricans.org



Gwen Marie Austin

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the keynote address at the Opening Ceremonies of this two-week sojourn.

Dr. Adams is affiliated with ETA Creative Arts Foundation, Chicago Project for Violence Prevention, the A. Phillip Randolph Pullman Porters Museum, the Bronzeville Arts Trust and the Harold Washington Research and Policy Institute. Her memberships in professional associations include the American Sociological Association, the Conference of Minority Public Administrators, the Illinois Ethnic Coalition and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Councils.

Educated at Fisk University, she matriculated at Boston University, the University of Chicago and The Union Graduate School where she earned the Doctorate of Philosophy. During the summer of 2004 she pursued further studies at the prestigious John F. Kennedy School of Governmental Affairs at Harvard.

Among her awards and honors are: the Illinois Arts Council Governor's Award In the Arts; the Winnie Mandela Award; the Outstanding Leadership Award presented by the Senior Citizens of the Chicago Housing Authority; and a Certificate of Merit presented by the Board of Aldermen of Louisville, Kentucky, her hometown.

For the African immigrant and refugee community of Illinois, Dr. Adams is the *Grande YéYé*, a dedicated and passionate fighter for fairness, inclusion, and equal opportunity.

The United African Organization is a coalition of African national associations dedicated to social justice, civic participation and empowerment of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. Through its democratic organizing framework of equal representation of all African national communities in its decision-making structures, the UAO is the legitimate voice of the more than 100,000 African immigrants and refugees that now call Illinois home. For more information about the UAO, visit the website at www.uniteafricans.org

The DuSable Museum of African American History, located at 57th Street and Cottage Grove in Washington Park, is a Chicago independent institution and the first museum

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de l'Irak, les fabrications sur l'arsenal nucléaire de l'Iran, les revirements sur les accords de Kyoto pour l'environnement, son implication dans l'affaire ENRON, le mis management de la crise sur New Orléans et l'état actuel de l'économie pour ne s'arrêter que là car la liste est incommensurable) nous pouvons affirmer qu'il est permis à tout américain de rêver diriger ce pays aussi mieux que Bush.

Ce dernier à démontrer qu'être blanc ne suffit plus pour être un bon président, que les blancs aussi peuvent être incompétents et dictateurs. Il a mis à nu les insuffisances de cette majorité qui s'était accaparé le monopole de l'exécutif américain.

Si des minorités comme Bill Richardson, Gouverneur de New Mexico (Nouvelle Mexique) et un Latino d'origine, Patrick Devall gouverneur du Massachusetts un autre Africain Américain comme Barack Obama et cet autre Congressman de Minnesota qui est de surcroît le seul musulman dans la courante législature peuvent être acceptés par une vaste majorité de blanc et soulever des foules, c'est que l'Amérique se réveille peu à peu.

dedicated to the collection, documentation, preservation and dissemination of the history and culture of Africans and Americans of African descent. Permanent galleries include Africa Speaks, a collection of artifacts from the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western parts of Africa, Freedom Now mural depicting the journey of Africans in America from Africa to the Civil Rights Movement, and Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures: Masterpieces from the DuSable Museum Collection which displays the works of Black artists from the DuSable Museum's own collection. The Harold Washington exhibit is now being expanded into a larger installation entitled A Slow Walk to Greatness: The Harold Washington Story. In mid April, a new permanent exhibition titled Red, White, Blue and Black: A History of African Americans in the Armed Forces will open.

The museum's current traveling exhibitions are And Freedom for All: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement and Soul Soldiers: African Americans and the Vietnam War. The latter will explore the Vietnam War and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement through historical items such as soldiers' letters and Black music.

The DuSable Museum has grown since its inception in 1961 in the home of the late Charles Burroughs and Dr. Margaret Burroughs. In 1971, the Chicago Park District granted the DuSable Museum's request to use a former park district administration building in Washington Park as its new location. In 1991, the completion of the Harold Washington Wing provided the museum with additional gallery space and a 450 seat auditorium.

If you would like more information about the museum's public, family and educational programs, please visit the website at www.dusablemuseum.org. Hours of operation are Monday through Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sunday from 12:00 noon to 5:00pm.

Registration for the *2nd Chicago Summit on African Immigrants and Refugees* is on-going. Although there is no charge for the conference, please RSVP at Gwen.Austin@UniteAfricans.org or call 1-866-363-0333.

Les noirs ne représentant qu'à peine 13% de la population, il est évident qu'ils ne pèseront pas très lourd dans la décision d'élire qui que se soit. Quant aux latinos, à peine 19% de la population eux aussi ne pourront faire la pluie et le beau temps.

Le succès d'Obama réside surtout dans le support de cette nouvelle génération de jeunes blancs et blanches d'une certaine éducation et d'une certaine ouverture d'esprit que n'avaient pas leurs parents.

Nous n'affirmeront pas ici que le racisme a disparu de la vie américaine, car il y a au jour d'aujourd'hui des personnes qui ont clairement annoncées préférer voter n'importe qui mais un noir, ce que nous pouvons affirmer cependant, c'est de dire que la nature du racisme n'est plus la même. Si hier le noir n'était pas un être 'humain' donc incapable d'intelligence et de savoir, ces préjugés ne sont plus de mise aujourd'hui puisque c'est connu, ce n'étaient que des préjugés racistes et franchement ignorants. On a beau occulter la contribution des noirs dans l'essor du monde qu'elle rejaille quelque part d'autre, mais ça, c'est un autre débat pour demain.

Barack représente la lisière de l'acceptable pour les camps en présence.

Contrairement aux Jesse Jackson et autres Al Sharpton qui tiennent un discours effrayant pour beaucoup de blancs qui voient en ces leaders de conscience noirs des revanchards invétérés et prêt à leur rendre la monnaie du passé, Obama se veut ce noir qui dit à sa communauté de se tourner résolument vers l'avenir en s'éduquant, en contribuant pour le moins qu'on puisse le faire à l'émancipation des blacks sur la scène politique, professionnelle et économique.

L'atout majeur du premier candidat noir à atteindre ce summum dans la course à la présidentielle américaine est l'espoir qu'il crée pour les générations de couples mixtes et à ces générations d'enfants d'immigrés qui représente une frange importante qui jusque là ne pouvaient se permettre de rêver.

Pour notre part, nous ne supportons pas Obama parce qu'il est noir, non, loin de là. Nous n'avions pas encore oublié ce juge noir de la Cour Suprême des U.S.A., Clarence Thomas qui est devenu la honte et le cauchemar de tout les noirs qui l'ont supportés en 1991 lors de sa tumultueuse nomination, et franchement nous n'attendions pas tomber dans ce carcan rétrograde qui est de supporter quelqu'un parce qu'il est de la même couleur, de la même religion ou de la même culture, non, nous supportons le candidat qui représente l'avenir, l'espoir, celui qui défendra les intérêts de nos enfants, celui qui fera de ce pays l'Amérique de tous sans discrimination aucune.

A notre humble avis, ce candidat est Barack Obama. Candidat de la rupture avec le statut quo, candidat du changement de cette nouvelle Amérique qui va bouleverser beaucoup d'idées reçues et influencer sur un bon nombre de pays d'Europe, d'Afrique et d'ailleurs.

Que vous ne votiez pas Obama pour ces idées que vous soyez noir, blanc ou hispanique quoi de plus normal après tout c'est cela la démocratie, mais que vous ne le votiez pas parce qu'il est jeune, inexpérimenté, noir ou que sais-je encore, alors soit vous manquez de lisibilité dans les signes du moment ou alors vous manquez de courage.

Il y a des excuses à ne pas pouvoir lire dans les signes du temps, après tout il n'est pas demandé à tous d'être devin; et si c'est un manque de courage, souvenez vous qu'aucune valeur ne vaut le courage car sans lui, aucune autre n'est possible.