

**NURTURING REVOLUTIONARY HOPE: TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY
AND COOPERATION FOR A DECOLONIZED FUTURE**



The Activist-in-Residence Programme 2023

A COMPILATION OF NOTES AND THOUGHTS FROM THE ACTIVIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAMME 2023.

INTRODUCTION

“My bones shall rise again” - Mbuya Nehanda Chare Nyakasikana.

In February 2023, we gathered at MS-TCDC in Arusha, Tanzania, for the Activist in Residence (AiR) program, a month-long engagement aimed at bringing together progressive organisers, theorists, writers, artists, activists, and/or other practitioners looking for a quiet and safe space to strategize on how to advance radical visions and build power together across borders.

Co-organized and co-designed by **MS-TCDC** and the Pan-African popular pedagogy collective **Mwamko**, the 2023 AiR program brought together small transnational groups (or the core members of much larger groups) who are currently cooperating across and/or beyond the African continent, spanning diverse contexts, to build on their ongoing efforts and scale up transnational solidarity.

Over this period, we shared our stories of struggle, communed and rested, and also interrogated critical questions of concern to the unfinished African liberation struggle. Some of the key themes that informed our thoughts and discussions over this period include:

- Pan-Africanism and Internationalism.
- 1804 and 1945: History of African revolt as a medium of understanding the current conjuncture.
- Unity in diversity: The question of North Africa.
- Gendering and queering the agenda.
- The African Revolution: Today and Tomorrow.
- Steps toward a Movement of African Unity.

We recognise that the time has come to leave the Arusha region - this historic place where the Arusha declaration was drafted in 1967 - and head back to our homelands. This beautiful land became our home in February 2023 - a period in which we interacted with many people, currents and ideas from different struggles, movements and organisations.

We give special thanks to Issa Shivji, Charlotte Hill O’Neill (Mama C), Mireille Fanon and Jihad Abdulmumit for the meaningful contributions they made to our programme, the experiences they shared with us over laughter, smiles, poetry and serious discussion - not forgetting the questions they left us grappling with. They are living gems who we will continually link with as we move forward with our work.

We also thank all the staff at MS-TCDC for hosting us during the duration of our stay, and all other individuals and organisations who contributed toward the actualisation of our programme in one way or the other.

We wish to state that the notes above are a pointer to our discussions, but are not exhaustive. In addition to the key themes listed above, we also engaged in discussions around ***historical and current dimensions of the African left, historicising social movements, political economy of the neo-colonial state, reparations, language as a site of struggle and the NGOization of struggle***. We commit to producing more work centred around these themes in the coming months and years.

Lastly, we recognise and celebrate the work that our movements and organisations are doing around the thematic areas outlined throughout this document. As we head home, we reiterate our commitment to the unfinished African liberation struggle - and commit to strengthening our work and organising across the themes that informed our deliberations and reflections during the 2023 Activist-in-Residence programme.

A luta continua!

The 2023 Activists-in-Residence.

Arusha, February 2023

PAN-AFRICANISM & INTERNATIONALISM

“I wish to make it clear again that we are anti-nobody. We are pro-Africa. We breathe it, we dream it, and we live it because Africa and humanity are inseparable.” - Robert Sobukwe

Pan-Africanism, which rose out of the resistance of African people to oppression, has guided and anchored the struggles of African people, both at home and abroad, over the past few centuries. The gestations of Pan-Africanism through different epochs are critical to our understanding of Pan-Africanism in today’s concrete context and beyond theoretical expositions. The pan-African struggle, whether explicitly referred to as such or not, has manifested in different ways in different eras: as the struggle for recognition of our right to existence as a people; as the struggle for decolonization; and onward to a current conjuncture that again demands the anchoring of our struggles on Pan-Africanism.

How do we make Pan-Africanism a viable political programme today? How do we extend Pan-Africanism beyond a political programme? How do we make Pan-Africanism a movement again? How do we equip our people on the ground, or rather, how do we localise Pan-Africanism in a manner that enables our people to understand who their friends and opponents are? And what does decolonization mean for African social movements today?

We recognize the historical pathways to Pan-Africanism, and the struggles it guided. On the continent, Pan-Africanism was anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. In the diaspora, Pan-Africanism was anti-racist, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. Pan-Africanism was anti-capitalist both home and abroad.

We must today move beyond a liberal and romantic conceptualization of Pan-Africanism - for the current context demands that we arrive at a political conceptualization of Pan-Africanism. A Pan-Africanism that enables the forward march of our people and movements. We must build a Pan-Africanism from below and ensure our people understand the forces they are up against in clear terms. There also must be what Prof. Issa Shivji brilliantly referred to in an evening chat with our group of Activists-in-Residence as “an insurrection of ideas”. It is these ideas that inform our practice, and our practice that strengthens these ideas.

We recognize that Pan-Africanism birthed African nationalism, and that African nationalism can only make sense if it is Pan-African. Our Pan-Africanism cannot be territorial - it must be liberatory and devoid of narrow nationalisms.

Our Pan-Africanism is anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and feminist.

We further note that at the peak of Pan-Africanism, there was synergy and solidarity between Africans in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Americas. As part of our historical responsibility, we recognize that Pan-Africanism today has a clear role to play in reviving that

political moment through connections between progressive forces both home and abroad. Our Pan-Africanism is internationalist - for a Pan-Africanism that exists without standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other oppressed people around the world and their struggles is a moribund form of Pan-Africanism.

At an intellectual level, one of the main tasks of our time and generation that we all must work toward is to make Pan-Africanism a distinct category of thought as Prof. Souleymane Bachir Diagne reminds us.

1804 AND 1945: HISTORY OF AFRICAN REVOLT AS A MEDIUM OF UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT CONJUNCTURE.

“History is not just the past. It is the present” – James Baldwin

We recognize Haiti as a historical pivot of the African revolution, and affirm the struggle of the Haitian people in its current and historical dimensions. In the 18th Century, Haiti was the richest colony in the world, with its plantation economy anchored on a brutal system of enslavement.

On 22nd August 1791, the enslaved in Haiti revolted against the slave-masters and the capitalist system that subjugated them in the plantations - a protracted struggle that culminated in Haiti's declaration of independence in 1804.

Haiti was isolated by the West before independence and soon after France demanded a ransom of 90 million Francs which Haiti only finished paying 122 years later. Besides having to pay France for the recognition of its independence and territorial sovereignty, Haiti faced international interference in the form of coups orchestrated by the U.S. and England in the 19th century, endured the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes that liberalised and deregulated its economy from the 1980's, and was again confronted by military occupations like MINUSTAH and the humanitarian response following recent earthquakes. Systems have as of today collapsed in Haiti, with gangs taking charge of most territories and ports including in the capital, an illumination of the economic, political and humanitarian crisis that is a hallmark of the neo-colonial states - both home and abroad.

Haiti's struggle for reparations is at the centre of her struggle for decolonization, just as the African struggle for reparations is at the heart of the struggle for decolonization in the 21st Century. We affirm Haiti's demand for reparations, which includes France repaying erroneous reparations paid to it by Haiti.

In 1945, the 5th Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester, England. This Congress is significant in that it was able to identify the enemy of our people – the colonial state and the system behind it. It was also able to identify the oppressed - the masses of our people – and

situate the anti-colonial struggle in their midst through mass-based parties as instruments for national liberation. In 1958, with only two African countries independent, the liberation movements gathered in Accra, Ghana for the All-African People's Conference to again strategise and chart a common path forward. Roughly 5 years later, In 1963, the heads of 33 independent African states met in Addis Ababa to form the Organisation of African Unity(OAU). This feat was only possible because of the courage and clarity around what had to be done in that era.

We have interrogated the gestation, ascendancy and decline of the left in Africa. The assault on the African left, especially from the 1960's, and its subsequent decline, is of special significance to us for it is marked by the historical repression of the left by forces both internal and external to Africa. Drawing learnings from this, we affirm the left as the only political location capable of enabling us to imagine a better and dignified society. We commit to reversing the deliberate cutting of intergenerational links and connections, and take delight in the resurgence of worlds as the new vanguard and their formations figure their way out of the abyss that birthed their struggles.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: THE QUESTION OF NORTH AFRICA.

“Unity will not make us rich, but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated.” - Julius Nyerere

We affirm the Northern part of Africa as African, whilst recognizing and celebrating the multiple identities and beings that occupy that territory of Africa. We also note the influence of the Pan-Arabist movement in efforts to deliberately segment and exclude North Africa from the Pan-African movement, and how the white supremacist movement has supported those efforts through various means - including geopolitics and religious sectarianism.

Some of the governments in North Africa have in recent decades mobilised portions of their population based on segmented identities - effectively demobilising our collective African struggles for justice and dignity. By using mobilisation as a tool for demobilisation, some of these countries have officially or unofficially instituted a hierarchy based on different shades of skin colour and language. Indigenous languages like the Tamazight are suppressed or not recognised in several territories in North Africa, while slave markets exist to date in multiple locations including in the south of Algeria.

France, meanwhile, is trying to restore colonial power relations and some of the regimes in the northern part of Africa seem eager to march alongside the French hegemony – as evidenced by past applications by some African countries to join the European Union.

We take pride in emergent identities of Pan-Africanism that arise from an intersectional analysis of our struggles across countries and an understanding of the forces and systems that cause those struggles. We further affirm our unity as a people, guided only by our love for our people and commitment to our shared struggles against oppression, domination and subjugation.

GENDERING AND QUEERING THE AGENDA:

"To those who oppose us, we say, 'Strike the woman, and you strike the rock'!" - Winnie Madikizela Mandela.

How do we locate the role of women in the Pan-African struggle? What is their historical role? Why the constant and sustained erasure of their being and contribution to our collective struggle as African people?

Women have been at the heart of African struggles across generations, despite all the odds stacked against them both historically and in the present. The African woman has historically had to fight on three fronts - against systems and structures of race, class and gender. Today, she still fights on all the three fronts. She is wisdom, she is a fighter, she is an enduring legacy of our rich history of struggle.

Pan-Africanism has been, and still is, a political project that aims to guide struggles for our rights and dignity in the African context. While it aims to address various issues that affect the African continent - such as structural poverty, inequality, and political self-determination - its political programme has however often failed to address the needs of marginalised communities such as women and the LGBTQIA+ community.

To fully address the needs of these communities, our Pan-African agenda must include a focus on women's rights and LGBTQIA+ rights. These rights are interconnected because misogyny is not only the hatred of women but also the hatred of femininity. This means that those who do not conform to traditional gender norms, such as queer people and gender non-conforming individuals, are also subjected to misogyny. Therefore, fighting for women's rights and LGBTQIA+ rights go hand in hand.

We recognise patriarchy as being deeply tied to capitalism, including in today's prevalent family structure that subjugates women and condemns them to unpaid care work and reproductive labour around the home and society— especially in set-ups where women work the rural farms and other related sites of production all day. We additionally note the lower wages, oppression, violence and misogyny that working class and poor women endure at the workplace and their homes.

We recognise that patriarchy existed in several African societies prior to the colonial era. It is however important to note that today's prevailing patriarchal and heteronormative systems in Africa were strengthened by colonialism and that this system has been enforced through various means including laws, religion, and education - and that this system is interconnected with the imperialist system. As a result, many traditional African values and practices have been eroded, and the patriarchal system has become more entrenched than ever.

Queering and gendering the Pan-African agenda means we should take into consideration this historical context and work towards dismantling the patriarchal and heteronormative systems that have been imposed on African people. This can only be achieved by centering the experiences and needs of marginalised communities, including women and LGBTQIA+ people. By empowering marginalised communities to lead their own struggles for justice and equality, we will create a future where all Africans live with dignity, respect and equality.

It is crucial to note that this fight for rights should not be guided by NGOs and funding organisations. While external support can be beneficial, the ultimate goal should be to empower African communities to lead their own struggles for justice and equality. This means creating spaces where marginalised communities can come together to share their experiences, amplify their voices, and develop their own strategies and solutions to the issues they face.

THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION: TODAY AND TOMORROW

"We have a beautiful history, but we will create one that will astonish the world." – Marcus Garvey

We have examined the historical trajectory of the movements and organisations in our various countries and beyond. We today recognize that after national independence in most African countries, some of those individuals and organisations who used political Pan-Africanism as a vehicle for national liberation soon after replicated the models of the coloniser – helping inaugurate the neo-colonial state and again throwing our people into an endless abyss of tyranny, repression and humiliation.

Out of a recognition of the fact that most of the issues we are agitating and organising against need political solutions, we must politicise the mass based dimensions of our organising, and orient them toward achieving political power across the neo-colonial states. In the course of that process, our organisations and movements must remain vigilant and ensure that national mobilisation does not become a tool for demobilisation of the Pan-African struggle.

We must neither be adventurist, nor must we capitulate. We must not resort to isolationism, or buy into illusions of freedom. More importantly, we must never allow our struggles to be used by

the anti-people system to legitimise itself. Our struggles must be guided by concrete analysis of the concrete conditions.

Our struggle today is a struggle for self-determination and identity. It is a struggle against structural racism. It is a struggle against coloniality of power and the coloniality of being. Most fundamentally, it is a struggle against the capitalist mode of production, exchange and consumption. A struggle to end the exploitative labour relations, extraction of natural resources and over-consumption that threatens mother Earth and our ecology.

We must imagine new worlds. Worlds of freedom, joy, rest, love, laughter, food and ecological sovereignty. We must work and struggle towards these not-so-distant lands.

We must struggle toward economic democracy anchored in solidarity economies. We must establish cooperatives, and especially encourage the formation of worker-owned cooperatives that meaningfully benefit those involved in the process of production and their communities.

We recognize the importance and validity of our work and struggles for better societies, in the multiplicities of our being - from Cape to Cairo. Recognising the people as the motive force of history, we will work with the people of Africa to decolonize our minds, cultural systems, economies and politics. We however also are cognizant that in this process of decolonization, we should be careful not to impose any singular vision of African identity – for this can only be arrived at through organic interaction and existence.

Lastly, as we move into this phase of the unfinished African liberation struggle, we recognise the climate crisis that threatens our collective existence as being of significant importance to our generation, a historical responsibility. We commit ourselves and our movements to intersectional analysis and concrete work aimed at environmental conservation and reclaiming the ecological sovereignty of our lands.

MOVEMENT FOR AFRICAN UNITY(MAU):

“There is no time to waste. We must either unite now or perish.” - Kwame Nkrumah

Pan-Africanism has very clear political, economic, cultural and intellectual goals. But why are the conditions our people living in getting even worse despite there being an increased number of movements across the continent? Our month-long deliberations have arrived at a conclusion that many newer organisations are replicating mistakes of the past either because their ideology is dogmatic, or because some of them have no ideology to start with. To resolve this contradiction, we must simultaneously be ideologically clear and fluid.

After a detailed interrogation of historical facts, we recognize that the reason Pan-Africanism was viciously fought and sabotaged (especially in the 20th Century) was because it provided a workable framework for the emancipation of African people from the shackles that are a marker of the neo-colonial state.

Thus, after a further interrogation of Pan-African movements and movements that are Pan-Africanist, we have arrived at a conclusion that we face the historical responsibility of gestating a renewal of the Pan-African struggle that sought to emancipate our people from the squalor and wretchedness of neo-colonialism.

At the end of this Activist-in-Residency programme, we resolved to form the Movement for African Unity (MAU) which will assume the characteristics of a mass-based movement, a united front, and a vanguard party for African unity. In this endeavour, we will start small, build an ideological base and expand gradually.

MAU is a network of Pan-African organisations working to end imperialist aggression and neo-colonialism. It will struggle against the capitalist system that undermines our economic and ecological sovereignty.

Through MAU, we will build a Pan-Africanist leadership that will unite and connect social movements in Africa and beyond through building capacity and networking. We will ground amongst ourselves and conduct political education to reclaim and reshape Pan-Africanism as a formidable political project.

During this building process, we will set the terms of our struggle. We will study the success and failures of those who came before us - for our Pan-Africanism is based on a rigorous critique of what we want, what strides have previously been taken, and the highs and lows reached by those who came before us

The 2023 Activists in Residence.



Alieu Bah

Alieu Bah is a writer and organiser at Mwamko, a Pan-African popular pedagogy collective.



Elaf Alnayer

Elaf is a data enthusiast with a vital interest in the application of the interdisciplinary nature and intersectionality of technology, public policy, African studies, and gender studies via the utilisation of data research to fetch significant insights. She's the founder of the School Feminist Society [SFS] and co-founder of The Pan African Forum-Sudan, alongside her activism in Khartoum within the Sudanese Resistance Committees.



David Musiri

David Musiri is an organiser from Uganda. He is also a student leader and the head of institutions at the National Unity Platform(NUP)



Judah Bouguila

Judah Bouguila is a transgender woman, feminist, LGBTQAI++ activist and trans advocate, a public law student, counsellor and a trainer specialist in reproductive and sexual rights and health. Judah sees her life's work as engaging in the collective struggle for Queer and Trans

liberation, rights, and overall social transformation. Judah's work and leadership within Damj, The Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality, and the Observatory for the Defense of the Right to be Different includes legal assistance, documentation and communications. She anchors the development of the African trans network and the North African Queer Coalition - and is also a leader in Talayan and Saqfe collective which is a Trans-led feminist group that is tackling an array of issues facing sex workers and LGBTQI++ folks based in Morocco.



Ruth Mumbi

Ruth Mumbi is a community organizer and a social justice activist who has been involved in handling pertinent issues around class and economic oppression within her community in the low income areas in Kenya with a track record in defending vulnerable women and youth. She has been a leading voice in the discourses on the oppression of marginalised groups living in low income areas - and is especially vocal on issues around conflict, sexuality, gender rights and reproductive justice.



Sacajawea Hall

Sacajawea "Saki" Hall is a Black feminist, activist, mother, birth-worker, educator and journalist. Saki sees her life's work as engaging in the collective struggle for African liberation, human rights and overall social transformation. She is a native Lower East Side New Yorker and has migrated to Jackson, Mississippi where she is a founding member of Cooperation Jackson. Saki's leadership within Cooperation Jackson includes strategic planning, cooperative development and financial planning, fundraising, communications and she anchors the development of the Fannie Lou Hamer Community Land Trust.



Sungu Oyoo

Sungu Oyoo is a writer and organiser at Mwamko, a Pan-African popular pedagogy collective. He is also the national spokesperson of Kongamano la Mapinduzi (KLM).



Nassim Yettou

Nassim Yettou is an Algerian human rights activist committed to promoting social justice, human rights, and Pan-African activism in Algeria. As founder of an Amnesty International antenna in Oran, he raised awareness about human rights abuses in the country, earning recognition as a respected figure in the human rights community. He now serves as the Secretary General of Amnesty International Algeria and Executive Director of the Mahabba Collective, working to combat gender-based violence. Nassim's dedication to Pan-African and

Gender-based Violence activism drives his efforts to advocate for human rights and social justice in Algeria.



Phethani Madzivhandila

Phethani Madzivhandila is a Pan-Africanist historian and activist based in Azania (South Africa). If not reading historical literature or thinking about the Revolution, he spends most of his time missing Walter Rodney and imagining a world without Capitalism. His research interests draw from the historical and current development of racial capitalism in Africa and how it influences the social relations of agrarian

change in rural areas.



Phil Wilmot

Phil Wilmot (any pronouns) is an anarchy-feminist organiser, movement theorist, and cultural worker from Pennsylvania living in East Africa. Phil is a member of Solidarity Uganda, Beautiful Trouble, Wii Otem Centre for Resistance and Alternatives, Insurrectionist, Shagika, Troublemakers the podcast, and the Training Centre for Development Cooperation.