

ESSAY ON STATE OF THE NATION TODAY

IS THIS THE DEMOCRACY WE FOUGHT FOR? SDP SAYS NO!!!

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The question: if this is democracy, is it the democracy we struggled for?

The Kenyan politics of populism, lies, intrigues, false expectations corruption, tribalism and all manner of platitudes about democracy and regular elections have never stopped since the previous national elections. And now preparations and campaigns for the next general elections that will be held in August 2017 - 55 years since independence from British colonialism, 25 years since the return of multiparty democracy and about 7 years since the inauguration of the current Constitution of Kenya, are under way and are everyday news, and with a crescendo! We are told that this is democracy.

But as all this continues we stop to ask the rhetorical question: if this is democracy, is it the democracy we struggled for or desire?

SDP says NO! What we have now for democracy in Kenya is not the democracy we fought for. Neither is it the democracy we desire nor aspire for. And in this essay by *we* I mean the masses of Kenya for the Social Democratic Party of Kenya (SDP) being a socialist party is the true voice of the majority of Kenyans. It is not *our* democracy but the democracy of the ruling classes of Kenya whether in the 'opposition' or in the executive arm of government. It is the democracy of maintaining the status quo of capitalism and imperialism, the system of exploitation and oppression of person by person, of the betrayal of the majority of Kenyans by the few Kenyan elites that control state power and the politics and economics of greed and corruption of unbridled neocolonial capitalism.

The history of multiparty democracy in Kenya

Multipartism in Kenya came about after long, hard and concerted struggle during which many patriots, democracy and human rights advocates and activists were arrested, tortured, imprisoned, detained without trial, forced into exile, expelled from educational institutions, denied employment and persecuted in all ways. Many were assassinated or murdered during the mass demonstrations and actions of demanding the end of the then Kenya African National Union's (KANU) one party dictatorship that was notorious for the violation of citizens' and human rights. The one party dictatorship that was against civic and political liberties also embodied the politics and culture of tribalism, nepotism, cronyism, sycophantism, greed, corruption and unbridled capitalism that continue to ravage the country today.

That is why the triumph of multipartism in 1992 was seen by the masses of Kenya to be akin to political revolution as it started the liberation of the society from the regime that was one of the most notorious and brutal dictatorships in Africa. Freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of press, civil and political liberties, recognition of the right of political parties to exist and operate and the growth and strengthening of the civil society were some of the concrete democratic gains that Kenyans achieved after the return of multipartism. However, it took ten years before 'opposition' parties were able to remove the infamous KANU - the notorious political party that had misruled the country since independence -

from power. The defeat of KANU then also meant the defeat of the most reactionary regime, led by the then dictator President Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, the regime that was certainly a stumbling block to the entrenchment and development of the culture of freedom, multiparty democracy and human rights in the country. That is why many Kenyans also likened the defeat of Moi and KANU in the 2002 elections as the second liberation.

As soon as multipartism started becoming a reality in the country, Kenyans realised that it was also necessary to change the national constitution that was partly inherited from British colonialism and that until hitherto had been used to govern the country since independence in 1963, to reflect and conserve the new system of democratic governance. But just like it did to multipartism, the then Moi - KANU barbaric regime resisted constitutional reforms vehemently. Once again it mobilised the fascist like security forces against Kenyan patriots and citizens who came out to demand progressive change: many Kenyans were arrested, tortured, imprisoned, detained without trial and killed before the reactionary government acceded to people's popular demand for a new constitution. Like freedom from colonialism and the winning of multiparty democracy, the present constitution of Kenya is the collective achievement of popular people's struggles for democracy and human rights from below.

Moism - KANUISM remains

However, Moi - KANU was defeated but Moism - KANUISM has not yet been defeated and it is clear today that the system and its leaders whether in government or opposition have laughed their way to political and economic power to remain the rulers of the ruling class and to conserve the status quo of tribalism, corruption, primitive accumulation, backward ideas and exploitation and oppression of the majority of Kenyans. Who says that JUBILEE and CORD are not in fact Moism - KANUISM if not in form but in content!? In fact, the leaders of JUBILEE and CORD are historically sons and daughters of Moism - KANUISM. Their political carriers, ideology, greed, manners and the wealth they control originate from Moism - KANUISM that perfected the system of rewarding relatives, tribal 'chiefs', cronies, opportunists and sycophants of all sorts.

That is why today we are forced to ask the rhetorical question: fifty five years since independence from British colonialism, twenty five years since the return of multi - party democracy in the country and seven years since the promulgation of the current national constitution, is this the democracy we struggled for? Is it the democracy we deserve and desire? And we begin by answering NO in big letters! This is why.

The ruling class is collaborating to kill multipartism

To begin with, Kenyans fought for multiparty democracy but not the democracy of few political parties. There are now sixty two registered political parties in the country. This is good for the country because this manifests the hunger of Kenyans to actively participate in building the culture of freedom and democracy in the country which is necessary for carrying forward the class struggle. But, unfortunately, the parties of the ruling classes of the JUBILEE coalition led by TNA and URP and the CORD coalition led by ODM and its allies both of who form the government are united in their narrow, selfish and parochial conspiracy to kill other political parties in Kenya in order to remain the only political parties so that together they can dominate and manipulate the politics of the country to fit their common ideology of capitalism/neoliberalism. They have started this process by conspiring to grab and share only among themselves the millions of shillings meant to fund political parties so as to entrench and nurture the culture of multipartism in the country. Today the leaders of these coalitions popularized by the Kenyan press are spreading lies that only few political parties will remove tribalism in the country. They do this

while in fact it is they that everyday are perpetuating tribalism so as to maintain the status quo of exploitation and primitive accumulation. In this they also count on the support of imperialists and pro - capitalism NGOs operating in the country and that purport to support and teach Kenyans about democracy and human rights.

Few political parties capitalist democracy imported from the UK and USA

The three political parties, TNA, URP and ODM and their allies all worship bourgeoisie democracy as it is practiced in the West, particularly the USA and United Kingdom. They see it as the *Alfa* and *Omega* of democracy. In the United States that pretends to be the most democratic country in the world, many political parties are suppressed and the citizens are forced to choose to be governed by either the Republican or Democratic parties, both of which are capitalist and imperialist in ideology and in practice. Similarly, in the UK all political parties are suppressed and the citizens have to choose from the Labour Party, Conservative Party or Liberal Democrats - all of which represent capitalism and imperialism. The idea is to use the political parties to conserve the democracy of the ruling capitalist classes and to use it to dilute class struggles within the countries by creating illusions of political changes through regular national elections that ensure the capitalist and imperialist system remains intact. This is the democracy that JUBILEE and CORD and their allies are importing for Kenya. It is not the democracy that the Kenyan masses wish and aspire for as the constitution of Kenya clearly stipulate. On the contrary, it is the democracy of the exploitation and oppression of the majority of Kenyans by the few rich Kenyans. It is reactionary democracy that is perpetuated by cheap populism, corruption, tribalism and the vicious propaganda of the Kenyan mass media owned and controlled by local and foreign capitalists.

JUBILEE or CORD - two faces of the same coin

The JUBILEE and CORD political coalition present themselves as antagonistic, one in charge of the executive arm of government and the other in the opposition. Yet their antagonism is in form and not in content. It is a political gimmick meant to hoodwink voters and supporters who propel them to power through corruption, tribalism, media propaganda and sheer stupidity. The truth is that the two coalitions are both committed to imposing the democracy of capitalism, neocolonialism, greed, primitive accumulation, tribalism, cronyism and exploitation of person by person in the country. Yet just as Kenyans are made to believe that there is no alternative to bourgeoisie democracy they are also made to think that Kenyan politics will always be determined by either JUBILEE (it is changing to JAP or we do not know what!) or CORD and the similar capitalist ideology they stand for. CORD is not in fact an opposition coalition as Kenyans are made to think for it is not opposed to the ideology of JUBILEE - the two coalitions are both defenders of capitalism, imperialism and Zionism. They are both darlings of neocolonialism and neoliberalism. SDP is sure that the democracy of JUBILEE and CORD is not what *we* (the majority of Kenyans) struggled for or desire for the present and future of our country. The truth is that as long as Kenyans remain in the box of either JUBILEE or CORD they will not achieve liberation from the current political, economic and social problems. In fact, to struggle for social and national liberation is to struggle against the domination of the politics of Kenya by the two political coalitions.

But what is this democracy that is not good for the majority of the people of Kenya that is imposed upon Kenyans by JUBILEE and CORD and the institutions that are allied to them in one way or the other, including various religions, media and pro-capitalist NGOs operating in Kenya? The answer follows below.

Democracy controlled by the reactionary Kenyan pro - capitalist mass media

The mass media embodied in the present democracy is neither the media we struggled for nor desire. This is despite the often conflicts between the government and the media as a consequence of the never stopping attempts of the government to control and reduce the freedom of press enshrined in the constitution of Kenya and that was struggled for by the popular masses and patriots.

Apart from Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and its related electronic and print media that is also geared towards conserving the present status quo of capitalism, all other TV and radio stations as well as newspapers are owned and controlled by rich local and foreign individuals or groups of individuals who also control political and economic power in the country. In short, the news and dissemination of information in the country is dominated and controlled by the ruling capitalist class of Kenya and their imperialist masters. Kenyan journalists and media practitioners are in the service of the capitalist and pro - imperialist ruling elite. All the talk about journalist ethics and self - regulation that is often claimed and demanded by Kenyan journalists is a gimmick since it is who pays the piper that determines the tune.

It is for this reason that the Kenyan media despite all its pretenses is about conserving and perpetuating the system of capitalism in the country that has failed to solve the myriad of economic and social problems bedeviling our country. The journalists have to expound the capitalist ideology of their masters. And since it is all about money, journalism in Kenya is part and parcel of the culture of platitudes, parochial populist politics and corruption that exists in the country. To have a voice in the Kenyan print and electronic media you have to have money to bribe journalists or sing the ideological tune of the owners of capital and the media. That is why alternative views to bourgeoisie democracy, especially as it is practiced in Kenya, and to the capitalist social and economic system is hardly publicized or tolerated by the press. The true wishes and aspirations of the majority of Kenyans that are poor and exploited are only paid lip service by Kenyan corrupt and pro - capitalist mass media.

The Kenyan print and electronic media, for example, hardly report the meetings of SDP and other 'small' political parties that do not have money to bribe them. In this way, Kenyan political news are dominated by JUBILEE and CORD on a daily basis. Meetings and activities of our party are ignored by the media that makes it seem that Kenyan political history is only made by the right wing political parties led by millionaires and billionaires and the mafia who control the economy and state of Kenya today. As a matter of fact, the media is part and parcel of the conspiracy to kill multiparty democracy in the country in favor of few neoliberal political parties. Their mission is to ensure that Kenyans do not think out of the box of the capitalist and imperialist system by deliberately calculated misinformation and platitudes that are repeated so much that they are regarded as truth by the public they drive into ignorance.

However, this is not surprising because the main objective of the Kenyan private (and even public - media - remember KBC!) like all capitalist and imperialist media, is not to inform, educate and entertain Kenyans about freedom, culture and social progress but to mint money and conserve the reactionary status quo. The present mass media system is best suited for the capitalists and imperialists to make money through investment in newspapers, radio and television. Bourgeoisie democracy is full of praise for the growth of the private mass media precisely because it serves the business interests of local and foreign capitalist's interests in Kenya and the region.

But is this the mass media we struggled for and aspire for? No, this is not our mass media. It does not serve our class interests. It is not for human values, it instead works to dehumanize individuals in society. It does not fight for our freedom and liberation but is ultimately geared to enslave us through the

hegemony of the ruling elite with their unbridled capitalist system and ideology. Kenyan media does not lead us to the democracy we fought for and desire for it also believes that bourgeoisie democracy is the Alfa and Omega of democracy. Yet bourgeoisie democracy is for the rich who political and economic power, it is democracy of exploiting and oppressing the class of the majority.

We must therefore search and struggle for alternative mass media based on the principle of participation of the masses in accessing, discussing and disseminating information and knowledge. The alternative progressive mass media must reflect, analyze and advocate the class struggles in Kenya. It must point out the evils of capitalism and imperialism. It must fight the inhuman morals of greed, corruption, discrimination, oppression and exploitation of person by person. The progressive alternative press must be teaching the oppressed and exploited about the need to struggle to overthrow the capitalist and imperialist system. It must educate Kenyans about human values, socialism: scientific ideas, about class and gender equality, national values and principles of governance. Some progressive social media - that unfortunately is hardly accessible to the Kenyan masses - is beginning to be the alternative progressive media.

We repeat, the mass media that we desire is that which is part and parcel of the struggle against capitalism and imperialism and that is for socialism. The Kenyan masses need mass media that promotes the ideals and values of social justice, truth and human solidarity that are in fact the national values and principles of governance outlined in article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya.

Socialist values and principles embodied in the Constitution of Kenya

The democracy that the majority of Kenyan people struggled for and desire is summarized in article 10 of the constitution of Kenya and is defined as nation values and principles of governance. These are (a) patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people; (b) human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non - discrimination, and protection of the marginalized; (c) good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability and (d) sustainable development. These are noble values indeed that were they to be realized they would transform Kenya into a socialist country in line with the ideology of SDP which is the true path of freedom and development not only for Kenya but for humanity as well.

Unfortunately, these values that summarize the wishes and aspirations of the majority of Kenyans are realized more in the breach than in the observance. In fact, it cannot be otherwise under the present capitalist system that is based on the values of exploitation and oppression of person by person. All the talk about that by changing the executive government from JUBILEE to CORD there will be progressive change towards the implementation of the national values is lies, pure propaganda that is calculated by the ruling class and their foreign partners to create false hope among the masses in order to perpetuate the capitalist and imperialist system in the country. Yet imperialist funded NGOs and CSOs' including religious organizations disseminate these lies everyday that the national values can be realized under the neocolonial and capitalist system. This is not unexpected though as the NGOs, 'CSOs' and religious organizations are led by the same elites that are part and parcel of the capitalist and imperialist system.

Democracy that plants the seeds of greed and corruption

Despite the Constitution of Kenya that embodies the said national values and one of the best bill of rights in the world, corruption in Kenya is endemic and has in fact increased many times fold since the constitution was inaugurated. Corruption practiced by the national government has been devolved to the

county governments that are making a mockery of Kenyan peoples' wishes and aspiration for devolution as stipulated in article seven of their constitution. Corruption is practiced by leaders of the government, private sector and non-governmental organizations, including religious organizations, with impunity. And since the ideas of the ruling class are imposed to the rest of society, the rote of corruption has permeated the whole of Kenyan society and is consuming it as ants consume trees. It has become a negative culture that is even embraced by ordinary citizens at the grassroots in spite of its wasteful, destructive and poisonous effects to freedom, democracy, justice, human rights and sustainable development. All state organs including parliament, the executive and judiciary have all been infected by corruption. Political leaders and civil servants amass billions worth of wealth through corruption with impunity. Through corruption thieves, robbers, cone men and women, murderers, illicit drug barons and mafia are now in the highest offices of the Kenyan state, often after having been elected by citizens who accept to participate corruptly in the corrupt elections supervised by corrupt officers of the Independent Boundaries and Electoral Commission (IBEC). So entrenched is corruption in the country that the ritual of national elections that is repeated every five years increases corruption and the number of corrupt individuals in power instead of reducing them. Institutions charged with the task of fighting corruption, including the Ethics and Anti - Corruption Commission, County and National Parliaments, Police, Kenya Revenue Authority, various constitutional commissions and state appointed bodies, etc., are themselves infested so much by corruption and corrupt officers that they have failed to protect Kenyans from corruption.

It is the majority of Kenyans who are poor and exploited who suffer most from corruption. For example, despite the populist propaganda that is now a platitude about free primary and subsidized secondary school education, education is today so expensive that the majority of the children of the poor can hardly afford the school fees and thousands of them are forced to be out of school. The school fees charged by Kenyan public schools are among the most expensive in the world. Corruption is so rife in the country that the head teachers of schools form curtails to charge the huge school fees that they do not even account for. They misappropriate public funds in the schools while ignoring the school structures set by the Ministry of Education that is unable to enforce its pronouncements that translate to empty talks of hoodwinking the public.

The Ministry of Education is unable to govern the schools and the head teachers, leaving parents and students at the mercy of the tyranny of the merciless educational professionals who violate all professional ethics in order to mint easy money that hurt parents and the future of children. And then after finishing secondary schools, thousands of the children of the poor are unable to continue to colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education. The unfortunate incidences of the burning of schools by students that has happened in many parts of the country this year, is a protest of children against corruption and hopelessness in Kenya in general and Kenyan schools in particular.

Public universities have been privatized even while the standard of education they offer has been compromised due to insistence of the administrators of using the institutions to mint money at any cost. Kenyan universities are so rotten with corruption that the university administrations and councils connive with gangs of students called student leaders to steal millions of money contributed by students for students' welfare. To protect and perpetuate the corruption, the university administrations and councils ensure academic freedom is eliminated and the universities are governed through authoritarianism. Independent student organizations are suppressed and progressive student leaders and students are persecuted, frustrated and expelled arbitrarily. The lecturers of the institutions of higher learning are so oppressed that they have given in to the corrupt and reactionary system; they are no longer intellectuals who pursue and disseminate knowledge and freedom but individuals who are slaves of the mundane

aspirations of money, greed, sycophantism and opportunism. Instead of being trusted and creative persons many lecturers have allowed themselves to be turned by the system into pretenders of knowledge and disseminators of platitudes and reactionary ideas.

The health sector is no better. The majority of Kenyans who cannot afford to pay for private health services suffer and die of curable diseases as public health facilities that are ravaged by corruption are not able to provide the required services. The problem is escalated by the corruption in county governments that mismanage the devolved health sector. Doctors and other medical practitioners employed in public health facilities spend more time working for private health facilities than in public health services while receiving salaries from them every month. At the same time medicine, equipment and other provisions are stolen from public hospitals and sold in private hospitals, chemists and stores.

The basis of corruption in the country is the capitalist system. Capitalism is the system of greed and the worship of money and private property, accumulation and competition over wealth and money. No wonder the Kenyan education system is used to disseminate and perpetuate capitalist ideas and values in Kenyan society.

In this 'democracy' everything is privatized or being privatized

In the process of implementing neoliberal economic and social policies the government and the ruling class which politically is led by JUBILEE and CORD has been in a hurry to privatize the economy and social services. Privatization means transferring public property - or what belongs to all Kenyans to local and foreign individuals, families or groups. In the process of privatization the public is cheated that state parastatals and other public property are being privatized in the interest of the public; that it is because they are not making profit that is why they are being privatized. In this way most lucrative parastatals have now been privatized or targeted for privatization and sold corruptly to the rich local and foreign capitalists either in government or connected to the corrupt Kenyan leadership. This has escalated unemployment and poverty in the society while widening the gap between the few rich and the majority poor. Today Kenya is one of the leading countries in the world in corruption and inequality.

In Kenya the best quality services are provided by the private sector. It is therefore only the rich people who can afford good quality health, education, water, transport, housing and communication services. All that is good including the commons such as land, beaches, rivers, lakes, water, wildlife and recreational facilities have also either been privatized or targeted for privatization. There is hardly any investment in cultural activities such as theatres, libraries, museums, sports, art, music, etc. Thus Kenyans are denied of their humanity and made to live like animals, only surviving with primitive, religious and backward ideas.

Kenyan economy has no place for the welfare of the majority of citizens that are forced to endure the life of the cycle of poverty, want and suffering. It is an economy that is planned to serve the interest of the few rich and their foreign imperialist masters at the expense of the vast majority of Kenyans that are trapped in the created poverty and backwardness while creating wealth for the few and foreign exploiters. Under the neoliberal economy Kenya's wealth and economy is controlled by few millionaires and billionaires who collaborate with imperialism to enslave the majority and deny them their freedom and liberation. It is this class of business curtails, bureaucratic capitalists, conmen and con - women, land and property speculators, financial oligarchies and mafia of all sorts that also through the democracy provided by the Constitution of Kenya control the politics of the country.

Summary and conclusion

Kenyans will repeat the ritual of electing the President, Senators, Governors, Members of Parliament, Women Members of Parliament and Members of County Assemblies in August 2017 according to the constitution. Despite all the talks and efforts of replacing the present commissioners of IBEC purportedly to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections, the elections will not change the fact that this is not the democracy Kenyans struggled for, deserve or desire. Neither is it the democracy that will change the lives of the majority of Kenyans for the better.

For successive past elections have hardly improved the lives of the majority citizens. As a matter of fact, bourgeoisie elections however democratic they may be will not in themselves improve the wellbeing of the masses because they are not geared to remove the capitalist system of exploitation of person by person but to legitimize and perpetuate it. That is why the coming elections that are dominated by JUBILEE and CORD coalitions will hardly change the lives of the working class and poor Kenyans for the better even when they are supervised by reformed IBEC. It doesn't matter which coalition emerges as a winner, as long as they are committed to maintaining the status quo of capitalism and imperialism, neither JUBILEE nor CORD will liberate Kenyans from poverty and underdevelopment. Again, the elections dominated by JUBILEE and CORD political parties will not implement the Constitution of Kenya as they benefit from the politics of corruption, tribalism, intrigues, lies and exploitation and oppression of person by person. So the quarrelling we are made to see and hear too often by the Kenyan press between the leaders and politicians of JUBILEE and CORD coalitions have very little to do with the interests of us - the majority Kenyans. Just like it is in the US between the Democratic and Republican political parties it is also in Kenya about which capitalist political coalition will be in power to perpetuate the capitalist system, JUBILEE or CORD?

Social Democratic Party of Kenya - SDP (Website: sdpkenya.org) is the only registered progressive alternative political party in Kenya, hitherto. It is committed towards interpreting and implementing the Constitution of Kenya to liberate Kenya from the capitalist system and to move it towards the socialist system. Read through the eyes of the SDP the democracy the Kenyan people struggled for and that they desire and aspire for as stipulated in the Constitution of Kenya is socialist democracy. We repeat, Kenyan national values and principles of governance defined in article ten of the Constitution of Kenya are: "(a) patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people; (b) human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non - discrimination, and protection of the marginalized; (c) good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability and (d) sustainable development". All these cannot be realized under the democracy of the capitalist system that the JUBILEE and CORD political alliances stand. They will be realized under the democracy of the socialist system that the SDP is inviting and mobilizing Kenyans to struggle for.

So will the SDP participate in the coming national elections and if so for what reason? Yes, the SDP will participate in the coming national elections precisely in order to use the elections to keep on reminding Kenyans of the truth expressed in this essay.

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