

# Sub-Saharan Africa: GDP, the bourgeoisie and inequality all growing

Saturday 15 June 2013, by [NANGA Jean](#) (Date first published: 1 April 2013).

**In the current context of international crisis of capitalism, sub-Saharan Africa is presented as a zone of the world economy which is doing well. In 2012, none of the states in the region was considered as in recession: 0.8% growth in GDP in Swaziland, 8.7 % (after 13.7% in 2011) in Ghana, or 7% in Congo-Brazzaville, 2.7% in South Africa and 4% in Mauritius [1]. The average growth of the sub-region is 5.8%, well above the world average of around 3%.**

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This is a very different situation from that of the 1980s and 1990s, during which sub-Saharan Africa — outside South Africa — was presented as a burden, to such a point that the ideologues of Capital spoke of it as external to the world economy, with the task of the international economic bureaucracy being to integrate it therein. It then displayed an external public indebtedness, both bilateral and multilateral, which was considered as critical.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the level of general indebtedness of the sub region stretches from more than 100% to an average of 40% of GDP, but with great disparities: from an external public debt of 4.7 % for Equatorial Guinea to 150% for Zimbabwe, via 58% for the Comoros and 71% for Cape Verde. Thus, it is still in sub-Saharan Africa that we find the greatest number of “heavily indebted poor countries”. Countries that have benefited from or are awaiting a supposed relief on their external debt are among those showing the best growth rates, from 4% to 7%, like Congo-Brazzaville and the Ivory Coast.

Overall, the sub region is supposed to do better in 2013-2014, according to the projections of the UN, IMF and consorts [2]. And the future will be radiant by 2050, according to the initiates in the cult of growth [3]. Some analysts evoke Africa as a future locomotive of the world capitalist economy after having spent some centuries mainly as a supplier of labour power and raw materials. Predictions which enthuse Afro centrists and Afro-optimists, forgetting that these analysts are the same as thus who did not foresee the crisis and whose supposed solutions to it have proved unviable.

## **Economic ideology and metamorphosis of domination**

This enthusiasm for sub regional economic growth over the last ten years as well as the optimism for the future which accompanies tells us much about the ideology of those who reproduce it. For these “performances” prove the persistent domination of central capitalism over these economies rather than any kind of “auto dynamic and self centred development” of the type advocated up to the 1980s, for example in the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa 1980-2000 [4].

The specific African road to growth advocated by neoliberalism does not take account of the persistence of the specialization inherited from colonial exploitation. The said growth is still essentially impelled by oil and mining operations, by transnationals originating from the dominant or imperialist traditional capitalist economies which export production towards their processing industries. It is as usual those who are the main beneficiaries of the so-called African growth.

The main change in relation to this tradition is the very prominent participation in recent years of the new capitalist economic powers of the so called “emergent countries” like China, Brazil or India, in collaboration and in competition with the traditional powers from Europe and the US. This breakthrough, while consolidating the grip of capitalism on the continent, brings about changes in the imperialist game [5].

Numerous African states are no longer today in the same relation to certain neoliberal dogmas as in the 1980s and 1990s, or indeed the early years of the present century. The background to this is the influence of the economic performance of China — impossible without the existence of an entrepreneur state framing private capital — which has concretely breached the dogma of economic disengagement of the state as the condition sine qua non of economic progress [6].

The economies dependent on extraction have seen their incomes fall, following the diktat of the international financial institutions as recognised by the UN Economic Commission for Africa: “From an economic viewpoint, the reforms of the 1980s and 90s have opened up many African countries to private mining investment. Yet this shift has not always been beneficial, as governments are forced to make major concessions to attract mining capital into their economies due to strong global competition for such capital” (<http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/publications/aficanreviewreport-on-miningsummary.pdf> )]].

Thus for some years there have been (contrary to the letter of the Washington Consensus) reforms in the other direction: the mining and oil codes have been reviewed with a view to bringing more into the national public treasuries, through either higher taxation or state participation in the extractive enterprises (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Zambia, Zimbabwe) which can pose problems.

On the one hand in relation to the transnationals who do not favour any initiative liable to reduce their profits or anybody else biting into their lion’s share. As reaffirmed by some mining companies at their 2013 international “Mining Indaba” conference in South Africa. These companies appear concerned by the Chinese policy of construction of public infrastructures in the partner countries, in the context of contracts for exploitation of national resources. A practice which attracts African governments, given that the traditional transnationals are not thus inclined, with the risk for the latter that in the short term Chinese capital will be as present in the mining sector as in the oil sector. Sub-Saharan Africa is thus carved up between the traditional hegemony of western European and US capital and the expansion of the capital of the emergent capitalist powers, Chinese in particular, which are together the main actors in African growth. Without forgetting the exploited and super-exploited work force whose cost has been reduced by the labour code reforms of the

1980s and 1990s as well as monetary devaluations, to attract investors. But their fate does not concern the so called reforming government.

On the other hand, there is a problem for some governments, like that of the Ivory Coast. There have been disagreements between the energy minister, Adama Toungara, and the finance minister Charles Koffi Diby on one side and the head of state, Alassane Ouattara, on the other. According to "Africa Mining Intelligence": "The new arrangement specifies that after having recovered the investment linked to operations, each company should pay a share of 50% to the Ivorian state for any production of a value between \$1- 100 million. This share will develop gradually (...) It was also specified that the state holding in each mining company be raised to a level of 25 %, against 10% today. Result: Ouattara has entrusted the drawing up of a new arrangement to the services of Philippe Serey Eiffel, the omnipresent coordinator of the body of advisers to the presidency. Whatever happens, operating licenses will in future be attributed by presidential decree". [7].

Two nuances in the conception of the role of the state in the Ivorian neoliberal economy: a greater financial autonomy within dependency against a conservatism concerning the domination of transnationals. As the latter are openly hostile to these new revisions, Ouattara, a former deputy director general of the IMF, will justify his orientation by the desire not to deter investors, who will find more attractive legislative arrangements elsewhere in the sub-region. In spite of the mobilisation of certain sectors of civil society for the harmonisation of oil and mining codes, the majority of states do not yet respect the undertakings made in the context of the Mineral Resources Development Policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Despite the effectiveness of such a harmonisation: "It is imperative that the mining companies can find the same standards throughout the community area. If they try to respect the standards concerning human rights and the environment, the states will have less fear of losing an investor" [8]. Meanwhile despite the "vibrant affirmations on the unity of the continent" in Fanon's words, it is the spirit of competition, of who can best please the transnationals — traditional or BRIC — which reigns between the states of the sub-region.

The cult of growth thus seems incompatible with a sensible sub-regional solidarity, fifty years after the creation of the Organisation of African Unity. As shown by the tensions around the exploitation of natural resources located in problematic frontier zones such as the recent threat of war between Malawi and Tanzania for the oil discovered in Lake Nyasa.

### **“Sub-imperialism” and the new comprador bourgeoisie**

Another change is the participation demanded by African capitalism in the neoliberal exploitation of the sub-region. South Africa, the economic leader of sub-Saharan Africa, a traditional investor handicapped for decades by apartheid [9], a holder not only of capital but also undeniable expertise in the exploitation, export and processing of raw materials, occupies first place in this new race for the natural resources of the sub region, including arable lands. This leads to the accusation of sub-imperialism. Following in its footsteps there is Angola, one of the world champions of growth in the last ten years, which, profiting from the significance of oil and diamond income and the dynamics of its national fuel company, Sonangol, has involved itself in direct foreign investment.

Angolan capital, already considered as neo-colonial in Cabinda, an enclave agitated by secessionism, is for example involved in mining production and bauxite exploitation in Guinea-Bissau. There have been accusations of vassalisation with a 10% share only for Guinea Bissauans in a joint-venture for bauxite exploitation, accompanied by the project of construction of a port infrastructure (at Buba). There was also the presence of a military mission — including the training of the local police — in

the context of the CPLP (Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries) and the African Union Peace and Security Council (then chaired by Angola) for the restoration of stability in a country affected by repeated coups. The supposed Angolan influence, with the support of Portugal, was seen by some members of ECOWAS, like Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Senegal as interference by a southern African state in the affairs of the West African community despite the shared Portuguese heritage of Angola and Guinea-Bissau.

It seems that leadership of Lusophone Africa — only five states — is not enough for Angola. Some observers see it competing with South Africa for the political leadership of southern Africa [10] Another current characteristic of Angolan capital, public and private is its overseas expansion: Sonangol controls Portugal's main private bank and is present in Portuguese hydrocarbons (Galp Energia) and in ZON Multimedia. Sonangol has also invested elsewhere, in the Angolan oil sector for example. It is to be feared that the strong growth of these economies, involving cross border expansion of capital rather than local investment in the social field, produces more sub imperialist ambitions in the sub-region.

Africa's local dominant classes are still in general content with their status as comprador bourgeoisies in the hierarchical structure of the world capitalist economy. This is what the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), adopted by the African Union in 2001, had clearly expressed by its dependence on foreign capital, thus turning its back on the spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action.

However, this is no longer the comprador bourgeoisie of the first years or indeed the first two decades of "independence". There is no longer anywhere in Africa any sector — from mining to oil to air, via food or banking — where you will not find African capitalists whose primitive accumulation is nearly always linked to income from situations in the state apparatus, to the corrupt management of the latter and to other illicit acts — including involvement in south American narco trafficking cartels, from Mozambique to Mali, via Ghana — benefiting from impunity. Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in post apartheid South Africa has also considerably increased the circle of African capitalists, who constitute the biggest share of the 4.84 % of the African "rich" drawn up by the African Development Bank (ADB). Thus, although it is not their activities which have mainly boosted African growth, we can no longer say that the African bourgeoisie is "not oriented towards production" (Fanon) or that it does not include financiers. Certainly, the presence of these African capitalists is still inversely proportional in such sectors in relation to others: it is for example very weak in the mining and oil sectors — where the status of significant shareholder is more usual. It is also rarely in a hegemonic or leadership position in relation to capital originating from the centres of capitalism and invested in the same sector.

### **“Accumulate, accumulate!”**

This African capitalism is also constituted by murderous violence. Economic growth increases the conflictual relationship between the different political fractions in competition for the neoliberal management of neo-colonial states, a traditional source of primitive accumulation of capital or its reproduction. Ethnic, regional, confessional and other identities are instrumentalised for popular mobilisation, going as far as armed violence — for those who have the financial capacity for it as well as the support of external capitalist and political networks — so as to access control of redistribution of the fruits of growth and other illicit or legalized privileges.

The long Ivorian conflict between the governing faction of Laurent Gbagbo and that of Alassane

Dramane Ouattara and Henri Konan Bédié (believing themselves unjustly excluded from control of the fruits of growth) is a good illustration of this [11]. The solution of the “international community” was military action by the UN and the French army to dislodge Laurent Gbagbo and replace him with the former IMF deputy director general. Since then human rights violations have continued, with criminal warlords presented as democrats; war booty has been transformed into capital and profitable situations acquired, with big markets granted to friendly foreign investors. In short the reproduction of neo-colonial capital is going well and the Ivorian people should be happy to be saved from a supposed worst fate.

In Mozambique, an oil and carboniferous El Dorado with an average growth rate of 7% over the last ten years, Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the former anti-Communist rebel army, RENAMO, which has become the second biggest political party in the country, has called for the remobilisation of his old troops [12]. This new threat [13] of resumption of civil war is in fact a reaction to the ongoing consolidation of the oligarchic monopoly of the leaders of the ruling party since independence, FRELIMO. The main civilian and military leaders of this party, formerly classed in the socialist camp, have proved themselves corrupt — with the dynastic instincts of the bourgeoisie — and cynical, indifferent to the poverty in which the great majority of their people live.

For 20 years the Rwandan regime has been constantly accused by UN commissions of being the main support for the recurrent armed rebellions in the north east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rwandan capitalists are pillagers and exporters of Congolese natural resources (coltan, cassiterite and so on), for the industries of Europe and Asia [14], thus contributing to the growth of their country. As if the memory of the millions of victims of the genocide and massacres of 1994, for the defence of the privileges of the oligarchy then in power could be used to legitimate an operation of primitive accumulation and reproduction of capital by predatory means, at the price of millions of lives, rapes, and other acts of violence in the DRC. Victims not taken into account by “Doing Business” and other classifiers of Rwanda’s economic performance.

From the transformation of Africa into “a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins” [15] during the first centuries of capital to the mining and oil pillage of the current era there has always been the self interested complicity of some indigenous Africans. The latter are much more numerous than before and are fairly visible in this neoliberal phase: the new comprador bourgeoisie is the main local beneficiary of the fruits of a socially and ecologically damaging growth. These political or administrative leaders are adept at pillaging public goods, mining and oil profits (the oil kleptocracies of the Gulf of Guinea, for example), corrupted by foreign investors adept in over-billing and work projects which are sometimes uncompleted but often well paid, in tax fraud and other illegal privileges. All this immorality with serious social consequences is forgotten by the apologists for African growth and the dynamism of the African private sector.

### **A middle class boom?**

With the development of African capitalism growth has supposedly led to an “emergence” of the “middle classes”. A World Bank study evokes their tripling from 1980 to 2010, while the regional population has only doubled in the same period [16]. After the “slimming down” of the civil service, the liquidation of state enterprises and so on in the 1980s and 1990s, which seriously affected the middle classes also, there is now a kind of dynamic return. In a context of development of the culture of ostentation, of the consumerist spectacle, of proliferation of gadgets supposed to symbolise social success, they have much higher visibility in a good number of African societies. Without forgetting the clientelist networks of the political and administrative leaders as well as the agents of the international institutions, including those of certain international NGOs. There is a higher visibility

of young people — MBA graduates and the like — whose professional attitudes and modes of life represent local versions of the yuppies produced by Reaganism.

However the real situation is out of synch with the statistics. The criteria of classification are not rigorous, indeed they are fantastical. Such as the hundreds of dollars which would distinguish belonging to the category of the poor — less than \$2 a day or rather \$1.25 per day — from that of the middle classes — starting from \$2 a day [17]. In fact a significant so called floating part of the middle classes lives in poverty. The 20.88 % of the “floating class” should be divided between the 60.85 % of poor (“1<sup>st</sup> poverty line” and “2<sup>nd</sup> poverty line”) and the 13.44 % of the real middle classes (“lower middle” and “upper middle”). Also it is not certain that this new wave of middle classes or petty bourgeoisie will in the medium term escape the stagnation of job creation for the “middle classes”, and the progressive decline which characterizes them in a good number of developed capitalist societies for around twenty years. One positive thing in this campaign of propaganda around the middle classes is the acknowledgement of the existence of social classes, of rich and poor. It is also a way of acknowledging that African growth is not for the latter.

### **Growth, poverty and unemployment**

While the economic performance of sub-Saharan Africa might reduce the slowing of the world capitalist economy, it has not brought about an effective reduction of poverty. The last report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 2013 affirms that one person in four living in extreme poverty in the world is a sub-Saharan African. The “millennium development objectives” for the elimination of “extreme poverty” and hunger have not been met in Africa or the rest of the world. Nearly all African countries are characterized by the coexistence of high rates of growth of GDP with a high rate of poverty. The ADB has noted the growth of the poor in sub-Saharan Africa [18].

If in Angola, one of the world champions of growth during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the oligarchy can acquire majority shares and some big banks and other enterprises in Portugal, it remains in a catastrophic situation as regards the indices of human development: around 60 % of the population is classed as poor and just over a quarter of the active population is unemployed. This cannot be explained solely by the long war between the MPLA government and UNITA (1975-2002).

The indicators, except for the lower rate of growth of GDP, are almost the same in Nigeria, the biggest oil producer in the sub-region, which certain analysts, like the US National Intelligence Council, present as the next emergent power. Here — as in Uganda, Zambia, or Ethiopia (10% GDP growth) — poverty affects around 80 % of young people. A poverty which is sharpest in the rural areas, feeding the rural exodus, today being increased by the grabbing of land. Emergent powers like China and Brazil illustrate this: China is among the grabber countries while Brazilian capital has already, in the context of the agro-business project ProSavana (shared with Japanese capital) grabbed 10 million hectares in Mozambique, or more than half the local potential, expelling the small peasants.

Land grabbing is a phenomenon which produces a super exploited agricultural proletariat as well as being a factor in the proliferation of shanty towns where proletariat and lumpen proletariat coexist. For sub-Saharan Africa remains a sub-region where so-called vulnerable jobs proliferate, above all for women [19]. This poverty is explained not only by the place of the informal sector, but also by the permanent violation of employee rights, when they are not already reduced to virtually zero by neoliberal legislation — the so called reforms of the 1980s and 1990s.

The future promises a growth of this type of employment, with respect to the free trade zones that

many governments declare in a programme of cooperation with foreign investors. The monetary devaluations of the 1980s and 1990s and the existence of significant reserve armies in nearly all African countries favour low cost of labour power made up mainly of youth, many of them graduates, something generally not taken into account by employers. In a so called “success story” like Mauritius, one young person in five is unemployed, while in Swaziland 52% of young people are out of work.

The said growth is almost everywhere accompanied by the aggravation of inequality and social injustice. South Africa and Angola are among the worst cases in the world, but other countries like Zambia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Kenya, Mozambique, Ghana, Uganda, the Ivory Coast and Senegal are pacesetters in the growth of inequality.

More Africans appear in the magazine “Forbes” and those who are not rich enough to appear there still form part of the 4.84 % holding nearly 20 % of incomes in 2009 (Africa then had 8 billionaires, as against 20 in 2012). This concerns only declared incomes: “Forbes” does not take account of the longstanding kleptocrats of the Gulf of Guinea and other extraction-based economies of the sub-region.

On the other hand, at the bottom of the social ladder, there is the growth of begging for those who are not sure of having the equivalent of \$1.5 a day; massive dropout rates of young girls whose families are incapable of paying their school fees; children who die from non fatal diseases in rural dispensaries deprived of nearly everything, or of recurrent epidemics, for example of cholera, due to the insalubrious nature of towns managed by kleptocrats; masses of young unemployed in the shanty towns where the neo-colonial political factions arrive to recruit the victims of the rural exodus as militias for civil wars motivated by accumulation, but clothed in ethnic, regional or religious identity. There are workers on poverty wages, sometimes trying informal petty trade at the same time in the hope of making ends meet.

### **Popular resistance and political impasse**

Faced with this situation of economic growth accompanied by the development of social injustice, the exploited African people have collectively expressed their rage in recent years in several countries, at the call of trade unions or by “spontaneist” self-organisation.

Protests against the cost of living have taken place in countries such as Niger, Madagascar, Gabon, Kenya and South Africa. There were long popular mobilisations (involving unemployed youths and miners, or judges and fishers — against the pollution caused by mining ) from February to June 2011 in Burkina Faso, as well as the recent tragic mobilisations of miners and the rural proletariat in South Africa or the union struggles in the Mauritian sugar industry, the general strike organized by the Nigerian Labour Congress against higher fuel prices, the public sector strikes in a Botswana thought to be prosperous and peaceful. There have been mobilisations against land grabbing in Senegal with demonstrations against the violence suffered by people and women in particular in the eastern DRC subjected to the pillage of raw materials, and the struggles of certain indigenous and other peoples guilty of living near or on profitable deposits. Sometimes small victories have been won, despite the habitual deployment of the repressive machine by the regimes.

These mobilisations for social and environmental justice, while showing a certain capacity for reaction and popular self-organisation, reveal the flagrant absence of an alternative political dynamic.

The social democratic left organisations who have come to power in recent years such as the

Rassemblement du peuple in Guinea and Nigeria's Party for Democracy and Socialism are no different from those which had preceded them — the Parti socialiste in Senegal and other African members of the Socialist International — as state managers. Theirs social policies stem from World Bank humanism, and a neo-colonial form of social liberalism. It is difficult to distinguish them from the parties of the African Liberal Network, like the Parti démocratique sénégalais of Abdoulaye Wade or the Rassemblement des Républicains of Alassane Ouattara.

The most representative case of this social liberalism is the policy followed by the ANC which governs South Africa in tripartite alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). A popular organization, among the most dynamic, above all during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and benefiting from a great international solidarity, its government post-apartheid not only remains prisoner of the conditions of its access to power, but appears seduced by neoliberalism. It came to power on the basis of a compromise with the realist fraction of white capital which had understood the economic and social impasse the constitutional apartheid regime had reached.

Since 1994 the ANC has dropped the minimum programme represented by the historic "Freedom Charter" of 1955, replaced by the Reconstruction and Development Programme, including the BEE [20]. The BEE was the political project of constitution of a powerful black capitalism, and the exponential growth of inequality inside the black population. Black identity being politically exploited by the black bourgeoisie for the conservation of power and the pursuit of the accumulation of capital and its reproduction, mainly by the black petty bourgeois elements in the leadership of the anti-apartheid movement. Such as the union leaders Mosimo "Tokyo" Sexwale or Cyril Ramaphosa, who became true capitalists.

By an irony of history, Cyril Ramaphosa, a former COSATU leader who had participated in the negotiations leading to the compromise between the ANC and the ruling white bourgeoisie, is one of the main director-shareholders of the mining company Lonmin which the police had protected by firing on striking miners at Marikana, leading to thirty deaths [21].

Ramaphosa also recently became vice-president of the ANC and candidate (with the support of Nelson Mandela) to succeed Jacob Zuma. Such classic criminality cannot be atoned for by the gesture of another beneficiary of the BEE, Patrice Motsepe, a generous billionaire donor to the ANC who has put half his fortune into a philanthropic foundation. Nelson Mandela expected from the BEE the constitution of a black "patriotic bourgeoisie", but workers and other victims of rainbow capitalism have encountered a plutocracy/oligarchy employing African cultural nationalism, with Jacob Zuma defending "African values" in general and Zulu ones in particular [22]. Meanwhile it reproduces the conditions of xenophobia with respect to African economic immigrants from other countries who have come to work as quasi-slaves in the mines of apartheid capitalism. So it goes, with bourgeois pan-Africanism.

This rightward drift of the ANC is reflected in COSATU, despite the combativeness of certain branches and by the SACP, whose reference to communism now seems no more than formal, despite its long and rich history ("Stalinist" certainly, but anti-apartheid) and the existence, fairly unusual in sub-Saharan Africa, of a highly organised proletariat.

This accompaniment of neoliberalism is the same for other African organisations of the left not identifying with social democracy, even considering themselves to its left, but who by electoralism serve as forces of support to the main neo-colonial factions fighting for alternation in power - drawing with them the trade union bureaucracies [23]. With some evocations of the specific situation of the poor in general, the struggle against corruption, and electoralist demagoguery that the classic neo-colonial parties heading up the electoralist fronts constituted have no trouble in



integrating. The main point of disagreement concerns the inequitable sharing of profits, markets and other privileges that could be strengthened by a nepotistic succession. In Senegal in 2012, one comprador bourgeois faction replaced another one, thus consolidating locally the ideology of capitalism as the inescapable horizon of our epoch, which “good governance” would render equitable.

### **An alternative project to the capitalist order**

Sub Saharan Africa has since “democratization” been faced with a flagrant deficit in terms of an alternative project to the capitalist order. The latter has succeeded in reducing the social and political perspectives to a democracy escaping any serious critique (apart from the culturalist nationalist farce of “democracy African style”). If elsewhere an anti-neoliberalism has developed, resembling in practice a neo-Keynesianism, this is hardly audible in sub-Saharan Africa. The current growth gives a kind of credibility to neoliberalism, supposedly offering opportunities as shown by the visibility of the new middle classes and new capitalists. The negative social effects which affect the majority of people are rather seen as malfunctions that “good governance” can settle, with the existence of a dynamic “civil society” whose components are supposed, in defiance of logic and history, to have the same interests.

The organisations of the anti-capitalist left, which still exist in some African countries, but which are generally characterised by a great numerical weakness, appearing almost absent on the terrain of the class struggle in theory. There have been many desertions and very little inter-generational transmission. There is also the influence of pragmatism, empiricism, expressed in terms of a priority accorded to concrete actions with the masses, who are supposedly not interested in theory.

Thus, the anti-capitalist organisations and activists of sub-Saharan Africa have the task of recreating a dynamic whose radicalism can only be attached to the dialectic of theory and practice. This refoundation would avoid a conception of the struggle which is limited, in the name of some backwardness of Africa in the area of development, to the improvement of the purchasing power of the masses or an alternative which would only evoke the classic appropriation of the means of production. Which comes down to putting off until much later the consideration of the ecological question, the appropriation of the critical balance sheet of the economy identified with the cult of growth, of technical progress and consumerism whose harmful consequences are no longer considered. That would be a kind of stageism concerning ecology.

For example, it is not only about asking for transparency on the money paid by the mining and oil companies (who should not be alone in being subjected to this transparency), reforming codes so as to increase the tax on profits and state holdings, or to insert some clause of internalisation of pollution. It is about reflecting, like Ecuador, on the policy of national and pan-African management of these resources according to the climatic requirements drawn up by the IPCC, of non extraction of 75 % to 80 % of reserves, so as to avoid a planetary warming above 2° C. The eastern coast of Africa — also rich in oil and gas — is already affected by a rise in waters caused by global warming. The worst is before us, if nothing is done to avert it.

Thus one of the challenges for the African anti-capitalist left, necessarily ecologist, is to reflect on how to erect the bases of an economy or a development which allows the full satisfaction of different needs — alimentary, cultural... — of each human being. But also to reduce to the extent that it is humanly possible, the harmful impact of the satisfaction of these needs on the environment. In other words to take a different direction from that of the developed capitalist economies, as adopted also by the emergent capitalist powers (Brazil, China, India, South Africa), of the pseudo-solutions of

green capitalism, proposing in fact the relocation of the harmful effects, the postponement of the catastrophe to future generations .

As a trades unionist from a South Africa which is in the vanguard of ecocidal growth and consumerism on the continent puts it: "Dealing with the problem of greenhouse gas emissions is not only a technical or technological problem. It requires a radical transformation of the economy and of society so as to modify the current modes of production and consumption" [24].

In other words it is about engaging with greater lucidity and enthusiasm, as Ernst Bloch would say, in the construction of another dynamic which would establish in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere the solid bases for the passage of humanity to a socialist and ecological civilisation.

## Jean Nanga

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### P.S.

\* Translation International Viewpoint. <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/>

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### Footnotes

[1] The figures here are derived from various reports published by UN institutions as well as the World Bank, African Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and so on

[2] "Africa's economy rebounding despite global downturn"  
[http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp\\_current/2013wesp\\_pr\\_africa\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2013wesp_pr_africa_en.pdf)

[3] See McKinsey Global Institute, "Lions on the move: The progress and potential of African economies" (June 2010)

[4] Adopted in April 1980 in Lagos by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

[5] See Jean Nanga, "After fifty years of independence"  
<http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article1909>

[6] The UN Economic Commission for Africa called their 2011 economic report: "Governing development in Africa: the role of the state in economic transformation"

[7] "Africa Mining Intelligence", April 25, 2012

[8] Aliou Diongue (interview conducted by), "Hélène Cissé : "S'il y a le même code partout, l'investisseur s'y pliera", "Les Afriques"  
[http://www.lesafriques.com/index2.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=6412&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=308](http://www.lesafriques.com/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6412&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=308)

[9] South African capital was already present in several African countries, in the mining sector and in southern Africa above all, during the colonial period. See for example Kwame Nkrumah, "Neo-colonialism, highest stage of imperialism", London, 1965

[10] See Alex Vines & Markus Weimer, “Angola: Thirty Years of Dos Santos”, “Review of African Political Economy” number 120, pp. 287-294.

[11] See Jean Nanga, “Two Oligarchic Factions Tear The Country Apart”, <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2036>

[12] Staff Reporter, “Dhlakama’s war talk tests Mozambique’s leadership”, October 20, 2012, <http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/world/13842-renamo-leader-dhlakama-sets-up-mozambique-bush-camp.html>

[13] See, for example, the confidential cable by the US ambassador to Maputo: “Mozambique — Renamo officers threaten to “return to the bush” over military retirements”, 05MAPUTO1137, dated 01-09-2005, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/09/05MAPUTO1137.html>

[14] See the UN “Report of panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Form of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, S/2001/357, 12 April 2001

[15] Karl Marx, ‘Capital’, Volume One, Chapter 31, “Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist”, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch31.htm>

[16] Mthuli Ncube, Charles Leyeka Lufumpa, Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, “Market Brief-The Middle of the Pyramid: Dynamics of the Middle Class », Market Brief, 06/05/2011, <http://www.afdb.org/en/documents/publications/market-briefs/>

[17] See Maxim Pinkovskiy (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Xavier Sala-i-Martin (Columbia University, “African Poverty is Falling... Much Faster than You Think!” January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, [http://www.columbia.edu/~xs23/papers/pdfs/Africa\\_Paper\\_VX3.2.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~xs23/papers/pdfs/Africa_Paper_VX3.2.pdf) and their critics, like Martin Ravallion, “Is African poverty falling?”, 2010-03-05, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/is-african-poverty-falling>

[18] African Development Bank Group, Briefing Notes for AfDB’s Long Term Strategy, Briefing Note 5, “Income Inequality in Africa” <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/FINAL%20Briefing%20Note%205%20Income%20Inequality%20in%20Africa.pdf>

The figures which follow are from “African Economic Outlook 2012” available at <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/outlook/>

[19] See the International Labour Organisation report, “Global Employment Trends 2013. Recovering from a second jobs dip”, Geneva, 2013

[20] See the interview with Brian Ashley in “Against the Current”, number 160, September-October 2012

[21] Faranaaz Parker, “ANC Youth League and friends call for Ramaphosa’s arrest”, “Mail & Guardian “, October 24, 2012, <http://mg.co.za/print/2012-10-24-anc-youth-league-and-friends-call-for-ramaphosas-arrest> . The appeal of the ANCYL reflects superficial divergences between certain factions of the ANC leadership and its youth branch. Julius Malema, a leader of the latter, is himself a businessman, see, for example, Tina Sizovuka and Lucien Van der Walt, “Get Rich or Lie Trying: Why ANC Millionaire Julius Malema posed as a Radical, why he lost, and what this tells us about the Post-Apartheid ANC”, “Zabalaza”, number 13, February 2013, p. 28-35

[22] "Zuma's African Way", "The APDUSAN", Vol. 18, number 3, December 2012, p. 3

[23] For example the Nigeria Labour Congress expects to contribute to the formation of a workers' party in Nigeria, see Segun Sango, "NLC's mission to re-claim labour party", December 10, 2012, <http://www.socialistnigeria.org/print.php?print=2081>

[24] Woodrajh Aroun, "Le changement climatique et la production manufacturière en Afrique du Sud", "Journal international de recherche syndicale", vol. 4, number 2, 2012, (p. 261-282)