FOUNTAIN OF IDEAS

chemchemi

MWALIMU NYERERE PROFESSORIAL CHAIR IN PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES

Editorial Board & Credits

Editors Say 1

Articles

The First Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festival Weeek, 13th April to 17th 2009 3
Gacheke Gachihi

Introducing the Praise-Singer: Professor Kofi Anyidoho, Nkrumah Centenary Lecturer 4
Mshai Mwangola

Beyond his Place, Beyond his Time:Nkrumah's Heritage in the New Millennium 7
Kofi Anyidoho

Global Financial Crisis: An Opportunity to Revisit the Neo-Liberal Model of Socio-Economic Development 14
Humphrey P.B. Moshi

Was Nyerere such a dictator?
A debate in Wanazuoni
Chambi Chachage 21

Dual Citizenship for Development? 25
Opportuna Kweka

Staging Harakati za Ukombozi in a 'Capitalist' Tanzania 30
Vicensia Shule

How Free, How Responsible?
The Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom: 20 years After 34
Saida Yahya-Othman

The Second Awakening of the Global South . . 39
Samir Amin

From the Archives

Revolutionary Hot Air 42
Georgios Hadjivayanis

Remembering Mwalimu: Anecdotes

Mwalimu Nyerere: An Oral History Safari . . . 46
Okello Oculi

To Publish or not to Publish:
The Silent Class Struggle 49
Walter Bgoya

Book Reviews

The Courage for Change? 50
Chris Maina Peter

Memorable Quotes

Mwalimu on 'Africa: The Third Liberation' . . 55

Kwame Nkrumah on 'Continental Government for Africa' 55

Poems

Between the lines 56
Demere Kitunga

Insane 56
Diana Kamara

And We are Hope 56
Agostinho Neto

APRIL 2010 | ISSUE NO. 3 | ISSN 1821-7036

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITORIAL BOARD
Issa Shivji (Chief Editor)
Adolf Mkenda
Opportuna Kweka

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Jacqueline Mgumia

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Walter Rodney Luanda

Vicensia Shule
P. O. Box 35594
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania
www.vicensiashule.com

Vicensia Shule
2010

MWALIMU NYERERE PROFESSORIAL CHAIR IN PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES
University of Dar es Salaam
P. O. Box 35091
Dar es Salaam

TEL: 255-(0) 22 – 2410763
EMAIL: mwalimunyererechair@udsm.ac.tz
WEBSITE: www.nyererechair.ac.tz

THIS BULLETIN IS PUBLISHED BY:
Mkuki na Nyota for Mwalimu Nyerere Chair

COPY EDITOR: Saida Yahya-Othman

DESIGN: Spearhead LTD

We Thank You ...

This is the 3rd issue of *Chemchemi*. The inaugural issue was launched during the First Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festival Week, April 13-17th, 2009. The second issue, which was in Kiswahili, was published in October 2009, on the tenth commemoration of Mwalimu Nyerere's passing on in 1999.

The raison d'être for the Bulletin is to provide a debating forum for the intellectual community. We cannot honestly claim that the Bulletin has solicited sufficient contributions from the UDSM faculty. In fact, it has aroused greater interest outside. *Pambazuka News*, which has a subscription of over 50 thousand in Africa, published a selection of the articles from the first issue. It was well received. But we, the editors, have to persevere. It will be some time before we emerge from the non-intellectual, consultancy syndrome that was imposed on us by the neo-liberal era.

Meanwhile, once again, we are greatly indebted to CODESRIA-its new Executive Secretary, Dr. Ebrima Sall, and its new president, Professor Sam Moyo, - for their consistent and unflinching support. For the last four decades, CODESRIA has managed to keep alive the tradition of critical pan-African thinking. Through thick and thin, it has supported the building of a pan-African intellectual community. Bravo CODESRIA.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rwekaza Mukandala, who has been consistent in his support for the Chair and its activities. Next year the University of Dar es Salaam will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. This will be a great occasion for the Dar intellectual community to take stock of its social role and responsibility and refurbish the image of their institution as a leading African university rooted in a pan-African intellectual ethos. The Vice-Chancellor takes the view that in its 50 years, the University of Dar es Salaam has been at the centre of African liberation. His vision for the next fifty years is that 'The Hill' should position itself as a champion of African unity and pan-Africanism. Pleasantly, this coincides with what Mwalimu said at the 40th anniversary of Ghana's independence : The first generation of African nationalists set themselves two tasks: African liberation and African unity. It succeeded in the first but not in the second. It should now be the task of the new generation of African nationalists to accomplish African unity. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5391/is_200602/ai_n21408880/print)

We wish Professor Mukandala well in the tasks ahead.

We are grateful to the new Director of Research, Professor Joseph Tesha, and his office, for support and encouragement. This year he has gone out of his way to contribute towards the Festival budget.

Anyone involved with publishing a journal knows the critical role that a publisher plays in bringing out a quality periodical. Mkuki na Nyota, our publishers, have continued to play that role. In this, we would once again like to thank Walter Bgoya and Fraternus Lyimo for being so supportive and encouraging.

Our copy editor, Saida Yahya-Othman, has gladly suffered the chief editor's constant cajoling to complete the task *before* deadlines even when the editors submit manuscripts way *after* deadlines. We thank her and pray that for future volumes her suffering be a thing of the past.

Staging *Harakati za Ukombozi* in a 'Capitalist' Tanzania

Vicensia Shule
vicensiashule@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

In 1978 the ruling political party in Tanzania, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), celebrated one year of its existence. As part of the celebrations, the CCM Youth League commissioned the University of Dar es Salaam thespians to produce a play. Using their skills in the field of theatre, Amandina Lihamba, Ndyanao Balisidya and Penina Mhando produced an improvised performance known as Harakati za Ukombozi (Liberation Struggles) which was later published as a 'play' in 1982. The play is based on Tanzanian 'historical facts' told as 'historical fiction' (Lihamba, Balisidya, & Mhando 1982, pp. iii-iv).

THE STORY OF THE 'LIBERATION STRUGGLES'

Harakati za Ukombozi is narrated using a combination of art forms, namely, ngoma (traditional dances), heroic recitations, storytelling and music. Interestingly, the whole story is narrated in front of an elderly man, Mzee, who interrupts the narrative several times with 'sarcastic' questions to the youth, Vijana. The story begins with Mzee's concerns about the morals of the youth and their ability to bring about changes. Mzee voices his reservations with clear indignation "And today you boast of yourselves: 'We'll stage a revolution, we'll stage a revolution'. Revolution is not an easy job" (Lihamba, Balisidya & Mhando 1982, p. 6).[1] On the stage, we see a transition from slavery to colonialism. The colonialist characterised as Bwana Mzuri replaces the slave trader Mwarabu under the pretext of bringing humanitarian aid to the people. To our great disappointment, colonialism becomes worse than slavery. Mzee comments: "You have seen. Is that revolution? We thought by chasing out Mwarabu we were free, but better Mwarabu because he came with his true skin. But this one [Bwana Mzuri] who came with a sheep's skin and pretends to be a friend, is the worst" (ibid, p. 9).

The birth of TANU and ASP (as characters) in 1954 and 1957, respectively, is seen as another test in the liberation struggle. Using heroic recitation, both TANU and ASP promise a better life than slavery and colonialism by bringing independence. Mzee, however, complains that independence means nothing as those who seized power from the colonialists became worse than the colonial masters (ibid, p. 11). Madhambi ya Uhuru, another character in the play, is among those who seized power from Bwana Mzuri. Boasting on how the ruling class is enjoying the fruits of independence, he recites:

> I'm the tip of an arrow,
> I cannot be knocked on the head.
> .....
> I urge you to celebrate "freedom and unity" as a fake name which would benefit all.
> But the fruits of independence are mine alone
> To be eaten on your behalf.
> This is the freedom, for those who placed their luck on witch-craft
> (ibid, p. 12, translation mine)

Then enters Kiongozi1 with a revolutionary greeting "Citizens, freedom!", to which they respond, "It's TANU's responsibility." Kiongozi1 narrates how tough the struggle for independence had been. As a leader, he is happy that all resources are now under 'state' control. By such remarks, he urges all citizens to defend their independence. Later, the same leader is seen inspecting his private projects, from a poultry farm and houses to buses and bars, but still pretending to work for "the party and the government" (ibid, p. 15). Mzee's scepticism about the benefits of revolution, as shown at the beginning of the play, has turned out to be justified. Trying their luck, Vijana come to the stage singing and praising the Arusha Declaration (Azimio la Arusha): "The Declaration is a thunderstorm. It breaks rocks and mountains" (ibid, p. 15).

In a public gathering, Kiongozi2 takes time to explain to the audience the essence of Azimio la Arusha. But surprisingly, Meneja and Mkurugenzi, who are public servants, are discussing how to keep their property from state confiscation. After making the speech, Kiongozi2 now wants a favour to send his goods abroad illegally. Although Meneja wants to help, he is suspicious of the new cleaner whom the state has sent to his office; he thinks he is a spy. Kiongozi2 assures him that "nothing can happen as all [spies] belong to the party" (ibid, p. 21).

Seeing the mess that has been created, Mzee comments that "they sat to prepare the Declaration, but they are now betraying it" (op cit, p. 21). Vijana, representing CCM, states: "we have inaugurated CCM to fight against those few who are

[1] All quotes from Lihamba, Balisidya & Mhando, 1982 are my translation from the original Kiswahili version of the play.

against revolution, those who use dubious means to accumulate wealth and sabotage our economy" (op cit, p. 21). Vijana further claims that CCM is there to fight imperialism and provide real independence, economically, politically, and culturally. Vijana pleads that if they, members of CCM, are given a chance they will eradicate corruption and work hard to bring development to the people's doorstep. Mzee, on the other hand, is not swayed by these flowery and fancy words. His scepticism intact, he concludes:

> The stumps are not yet uprooted
> And the buyer of the uprooting tools is the same person.
> The new generation is pointed towards the same direction
> The new generation sings the same songs
> And the applauders are in the same condition.
> (op cit, p. 23))

The above quote indicates that Tanzania, like other African countries, underwent postcolonial disillusionment. The sentiments expressed in the quotation can be linked to the despair expressed in Ayi Kwei Armah's (2003) The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born in which Armah shows that African leaders were mere replicas of their colonial masters. This historical fiction provided by Harakati za Ukombozi, illuminates the historical fact which came to pass after the initial production of the play in 1978.

THE TRIUMPH OF NEOLIBERALISM

According to Shivji (2009, p. 2), "neo-liberalism/globalisation was not simply a matter of certain economic policies giving free rein to capitalist vultures and financial speculators, but, much more, an ideological offensive against nationalism and socialism". This implies that although neoliberalism is seen in its wider sense as an economic strategy, it had a political aim of obliterating political strands which challenged capitalism. Four decades after the Arusha Declaration and three decades after the birth of Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), it is obviously Mzee was right and his premonitions came to be true. Though neoliberalism seems to suggest that things have changed for the better, in reality the situation is similar to colonialism and slavery.

The performance Harakati za Ukombozi was based on the 'famous' Arusha Declaration clause that stated:

> *We have been oppressed a great deal, we have been exploited a great deal and we have been disregarded a great deal. It is our weakness that has led to our being oppressed, exploited and disregarded. Now we want a revolution – a revolution which brings to an end our weakness, so that we are never again exploited, oppressed or humiliated (quoted in Lihamba, 1985, p. 58).*

This clause not only summarises the theme of the play but also shows the vigour with which the new generation (depicted as Vijana in the play) sought to bring about change. Soon after Tanzania's independence (uhuru) in 1961, there was an assumption that life would return to the 'sweet' rhythm associated with the historical past. Nationalism was the motto and it was geared towards regaining national status and an African identity, which had been shattered by colonialism (Nyerere 1966, p. 187). But with uhuru, these dreams did not materialise. The 'fruits' of uhuru were not reaped as the country was again swept by neo-colonialism and imperialism. Nsekela (1984, p. 54) states the following:

> *Equally, because the end of colonialism was a goal which transcended domestic class and other group interests, the national liberation coalitions included some whose interests were not of national development and self reliance but of becoming the successors to the colonial masters, and these became the 'new settler' elite still dependent on the metropolis (Nsekela 1984, p. 54).*

Nsekela's point connects to what Ngugi (1997, pp. 7-8) refers to as a process of replacing the colonial state with African independent states and what Kwame Nkrumah (in Offiong 1980, p. 122) calls 'clientele sovereignty'. Those who took power after independence were either part of the elite –'black Europeans' (Nyerere 1966, p. 186) whom the colonialists could control or part of the 'white Africans' who could work from within in a similar fashion as the colonial masters (Offiong 1980, p. 75). The consequence was that the long-awaited independence turned out to be a pseudo-independence or fake independence, as Kwame Nkrumah points out (in Offiong 1980, p. 122).

To reclaim the lost uhuru, the Arusha Declaration was formulated in 1967, as depicted in the play Harakati za Ukombozi. The Declaration was dedicated to socialism (ujamaa), education and rural development for self-reliance. Apart from fighting against neo-colonialism and advocating for a democratic state, the Arusha Declaration also provided guidelines for human rights, liberation and African unity (Lihamba 1985, pp. 59-60). On

arts and culture, it has been noted in realtion to the Declaration that a "serious re-examination of the colonial legacy brought forth a more progressive conception of theatre ..... the realisation that theatre was not all Shakespeare" (Mollel, 1985, p. 23).All these initiatives to institutionalise the Arusha Declaration were geared towards building egalitarianism, statism and nationalism.

In the play, we see Vijana being enthusiastic about overthrowing neo-colonialism using the Arusha Declaration. However, Mzee warns that "The stumps are not yet uprooted and the buyer of the uprooting tools is the same person." This suggests that it is impossible for the new generation to succeed in its revolutionary ambitions. Although the whole play ends with the 'glorification' of the Arusha Declaration, it is obvious that if the play were to be performed today, the whole play could have been just 'Scene I,' depicting the time when Julius Nyerere was president.

Perhaps extension of the play into 'Scene II' would have started with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. SAPs were aimed at liberalising the social and economic systems.

> *This was in a context of a world that was working hard to irresponsibise the state by removing the notion of the public and public interests, submitting people to the belief of the values of the economy—the "return of individualism" (self-help, self employment, cost-sharing, etc) and the destruction of all philosophical foundations of welfarism and collective responsibility towards poverty, misery, sickness, misfortunes, education, etc (Chachage & Chachage 2003, p. 7).*

This implies that the conditions under SAPs were not established to ease the situation but rather to make it more complicated. SAPs were projected as 'secular gods' and the only means by which Africa could be developed (Ali 2003, p. 193). According to Mwase and Ndulu (quoted in Fosu 2008, p. 145), "the period of soft controls began in 1986, marked by government withdrawal from direct involvement in production, processing and marketing activities, retaining only its role in setting policies". The ultimate outcome of restructuring the state machinery is what Wallengren (1997) refers to as 'rampant corruption', which directly resulted in high levels of inflation and social crime. Moreover, Joel in (Askew 2002, p. 238) explains that "Tanzania's spell under socialism proved to be the longest road to capitalism [...]. All the political and economic pillars which plunged the country to where it is have finally crumbled".

It is obvious that even after his retirement, Nyerere kept on 'pulling the reigns'. But it was also during his retirement that he openly criticised his party, CCM. According to Chachage and Chachage (2003, p. 7),

> *Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who had stepped down from the presidency in 1985, with the intention to revitalize the party, had become disillusioned by the one-party system by 1987. In this year, he told Kenneth Kaunda [the then Zambian president] that what Africa needed was a multiparty system, as a means to challenge the party in power, since in the one party system the tendency for those in power is to be complacent. By 1990, he started insisting on the introduction of competitive politics and challenged Chama Cha Mapinduzi's (CCM) legitimacy, and declared that it was no longer a sin to discuss a multiparty system. Donors were also putting pressure for the country to join the multiparty bandwagon as one of the conditions for getting aid (Chachage & Chachage, 2003, p. 7).*

Harakati za Ukombozi today is more relevant than it was thirty years ago. Tanzania is full of 'black Europeans' and 'white Africans'. The play's prediction of dubious party politics is being witnessed today. Ujamaa policies have been replaced with capitalist policies through the Zanzibar Declaration (Azimio la Zanzibar) of 1991. The aim of the Azimio la Zanzibar was to synchronise social, political and economic aspects with liberali sation and other IMF/World Bank conditions. This was during the time of President Ali Hassan Mwinyi who came to power under the slogan of 'our comrade, one of us' (ndugu yetu, mwenzetu). According to Chachage (2004, p. 20), the Zanzibar Declaration was a direct challenge to the Arusha Declaration of 1967. It was the process whereby CCM "began to contemplate multipartyism and the dismantling of the policies that had been implemented to bolster one-party rule and enhance statism". The evidence shows that by challenging the Arusha Declaration, the Zanzibar Declaration was forced to go against socialism in favour of capitalism, and liberalism in favour of nationalism. The declaration also aimed at "abandon[ing] the Leadership Code (Mwongozo) of the Arusha Declaration which constrained capitalist tendencies among the leaders" (Chachage & Chachage 2003, p. 6). As a simple explanation, the Zanzibar

Declaration was a deliberate move to modernise and impose universalism in Tanzania. The door was left open for foreign investors and foreign aid to flow into Tanzania, as it was felt that that was the only way for poor states like Tanzania to develop.

The Zanzibar Declaration was also regarded as the affirmation of the 'privatisation' and 'marketisation' of the arts. As was the case with other social services, the arts were left to compete in the market with other commodities as the state could no longer offer them its support. "The transition from socialism to liberal market economy in the late 1980s entailed social stratification of a type of scale unknown earlier in the country's history" (Lange 2002, p. 202). Furthermore, Fosu (2008, p. 1146) argues "the 1986-1994 period could thus be viewed as a transition from hard controls to a market-based economy, a transition that required substantial machinations". This implementation of the SAP conditions brought about socio-political and economic shifts which marked the beginning of the neoliberal policies victory.

Benjamin William Mkapa who came into power in 1995 brought with him the truth and transparency (ukweli na uwazi) slogan. The Mkapa era ushered in not only trade liberalisation but also the brutal privatisation of public institutions. On the other hand, Mkapa was seen as an economic reformist after the Ali Hassan Mwinyi era of rampant corruption. Mkapa had to prove to the 'world' that ujamaa had collapsed, so as to attract capitalists in what was considered a process of deny being a 'socialist sheep' and presenting himself as a 'capitalist lion' (Wallengren, 1997). Regardless of his 'elitist' approach to an economy-based presidency and the praises from the IMF and World Bank, Mkapa has left a 'bad taste' in the mouths of many Tanzanians (worldfocusgroup.com, 2009). The praises went hand in hand with the rampant corruption, power abuse and human rights abuse practised by members of the ruling party, many of whom were well placed in the state's leadership structure as members of parliament and government ministers (Legal and Human Rights Centre 2009, pp. 164-166).

As the fourth phase government under Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete began in 2005 and moved onwards, the 'performance' continues in the same 'scene'. Kikwete, like the others, came up with his slogan of 'new zeal, new vigour and new speed' (ari mpya, nguvu mpya na kasi mpya). Seemingly, he had similar ambitions as Vijana in the Harakati za Ukombozi, and perhaps he was a member of the 1978 TANU Youth League. During his presidency, the challenges have been similar to and perhaps worse than those in the Mwinyi and Mkapa eras, as the 'stump' is still 'pulling the reigns'. Generally the historical facts described above (from Nyerere to Kikwete presidency) show clearly why the continuation of the 'liberation struggle' becomes more important today than in the past three decades.

CONCLUSION

Amandina Lihamba (2009) notes that the process of making Harakati za Ukombozi was a remarkable achievement for her as an artist. As she puts it, "it was a great experience" (Lihamba 2009). The initial production of Harakati za Ukombozi was done during the time when CCM was said to hold the reins of power (chama kimeshika hatamu). The state was said to be 'over' controlling and even imposed censorship on various artistic works. After days of rehearsals, with full support from an ensemble of more than 50 artists, CCM disowned the play, arguing that the idea of producing the play was to celebrate the achievements of the party a year after its founding, and not to document the problems. Regardless of that setback, the producers of Harakati za Ukombozi carried on with the preparations and performed the play, both in Dar es Salaam (at the University of Dar es Salaam) and in Zanzibar during a youth festival which Julius Nyerere attended as a 'guest of honour'. "Comparing the performance and the published play, the performance was more than the published text", Lihamba (2009) concludes.

Looking at the published play, it is obvious that the producers of the play Harakati za Ukombozi managed to transform historical facts into historical fiction. The central message was well delivered. The choice to use Mzee who sits watching the whole performance and commenting as need arises, signifies the need for Tanzanians to take up history as a starting point for self-criticism so as to confront the challenging future with new zeal.

REFERENCES

Ali, A. A. (2003). Structural Adjustment Programmes and Poverty in Sub Saharan Africa: 1985-1995. In T. Mkandawire, & C. C. Soludo (eds.). Our Continent, Our Future: African Voices on Structural Adjustment (pp. 189-228). Trenton: Africa World Pres, Inc.

Armah, A. K. (2003). The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born. Oxford: Heinemann.

Askew, K. M. (2002). Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chachage, C. S. (2004). Modernity, Trasnationalism and South African Foreign Direct Investments in Tanzania: The Example of Shoprite. BA Thesis: University of Cape Town.

Chachage, C. S., & Chachage, C. S. (2003). Nyerere: Nationalism and Post-Colonial Developmentalism. Retrieved January 20, 2009, from www.codesria.org: http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/papers/Chachage_Seithy_L_Chachage.pdf.

Fosu, A. K. (2008). Anti-Growth Syndromes in Africa: A Synthesis of Case Studies. In B. J. Ndulu, S. A. O'Connell, R. H. Bates, P. Collier, & Chukwuma C. Soludo (eds.), Political Economy of Economic Growth in Africa (pp. 137-172). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lange, S. (2002). Managing Modernity: Gender, State and Nation in the Popular Drama of Dar es Salaam. PhD Thesis: University of Bergen.

Legal and Human Rights Centre. (2009). Tanzania Human Rights Report 2008. Dar es Salaam: Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC).

Lihamba, A. (1985). Politics and Theatre after the Arusha Declaration, 1967-1984. PhD Thesis: University of Leeds.

---------- (2009, May). The Story of Paukwa Theatre Association. (V. Shule, Interviewer)

---------, Ndyanao Balisidya, & Penina Mhando (1982). Harakati za Ukombozi. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House.

Mollel, T. M. (1985). African Theatre and the Colonial Legacy: Review of the East African Scene. Utafiti Vol. 7 (1) (pp. 20-29).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. (1997). Writers in Politics: A Re-engagement with Issues of Literature and Society. Oxford: James Currey.

Nsekela, A. J. (1984). Time to Act. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.

Nyerere, J. (1966). Freedom and Unity/ Uhuru na Umoja. Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press.

Offiong, D. A. (1980). Imperialism and Dependency. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Shivji, I. (2009). Mwalimu's Non-Alignment and Pan-Africanism in Relation to the Tasks of the Post-Neo-Liberal Generation. Dar es Salaam: Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation.

Wallengren, M. (1997). From Socialist Sheep to Capitalist Lion? Retrieved September 10, 2009, from African Business: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5327/is_n217/ai_n28686706/

worldfocusgroup.com. (2009). IMF Full of Praise for Tanzanian Poverty Recovery Programme. Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.worldfocusgroup.com/reports/tanzania2/main.htm.

How Free, How Responsible? The Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom: 20 years After

Saida Yahya-Othman
bibie@haroubothman.org

THE BACKGROUND

"We are living in momentous times, ridden with crises but full of hope." These are the opening words of the ground-breaking Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics. Ironically, these words are no less apt today as they were 20 years ago. The crises expounded in the second paragraph of the preamble to the Declaration are eating deeper into our society, while the socio-economic divide yawns wider each day. Does that mean nothing has changed? Far from it. What it means is that the Dar es Salaam Declaration is as relevant and valuable today as it was then, maybe more so.

In the last two years, there has been a flurry of recruitment of young aspiring scholars into our universities and other institutions of higher learning as tutorial assistants and assistant lecturers. Many of these are fresh from University, and would therefore be in their mid or late twenties. They are thus only a few years older than the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility (henceforth the DD) and some of them may not even be aware of its existence. This is thus an opportune time to bring this historic document to their attention. Interestingly, when I was searching for a soft copy for referencing for this article, I found it in unexpected quarters – on the website of the University of Minnesota. Is it available on our own University website? Take a guess.