

## JEREMY CORBYN: FACILITATING A VICTORY ALL OF US CAN WIN!



By Kofi Mawuli Klu,  
Chief Executive Commissioner,  
**PANAFRIINDABA**



**The Grassroots Pan-Afrikan Community Advocacy, Research and Think Tank;**

London, United Kingdom; and Accra, Ghana.

21<sup>st</sup> July 2015.

The 18<sup>th</sup> July 2015 endorsement by Tokunbo Oke of the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 comment by Kobina Mark on my original Facebook post of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 regarding our victorious gains from the standing of Jeremy Corbyn in the forthcoming leadership elections of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom has impressed upon me the need to write this article for the purpose of clarifications. My initial reaction had been a temptation to ignore Kobina's comment. I erroneously first thought the comment deserved to be ignored contemptuously because it did appear to me then as having been deliberately made to be a malicious vexation. I therefore took it as a ridiculous attempt by Kobina Mark to sound like the "cleverest-know-it-all" revolutionary, merely blowing his own trumpet of vaingloriousness with notes only full of platitudinous banalities. Even Tokunbo's endorsement had appeared to me at first glance merely as an approval of what seemed like half-truth platitudes. It was upon my second thoughts, after more careful reflection, that I felt Kobina could be quite genuine in his misunderstanding of my original post and deserved a considerable response with appropriate clarifications. Hence my own self-educationally refreshing exercise in attempting to provide such clarifications by way of this article.

May I take this opportunity to seriously point out that questions for clarifications can legitimately be raised on points one thinks are not very clear in how anything is read. Nevertheless, it is not at all clever, as some "know-it-alls" try doing quite often, to deliberately contrive and attempt to take out of its context, with prat-like mischievous dishonesty, a phrase which, read holistically as it is meant to be together within the entire piece of writing, makes the very same point you are trying to present as if it is your own exclusive discovery of genius! My emphasis in the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015 Facebook post, which is my piece of writing in question, can be seen to be clearly upon the role of Jeremy Corbyn, not as a messianic saviour of anybody, let alone of Afrikan people and Black Humankind, but rather as a facilitator of a victory all of us can work harmoniously together, in the strength of our principled Unity in diversity, in order to overwhelmingly win. Most of us who have come to know Jeremy quite well as an ardent supporter of the independent self-education, self-organisation and self-empowerment of our own communities in and beyond the United Kingdom, fully comprehend the tremendous boost his winning of the leadership of the Labour Party will give to our ongoing battles in defence of our human, peoples' and Mother

Earth rights at home and abroad. This is the context within which his giving victory to us must be grasped as one of the important catalysts direly needed now to galvanize our own efforts to progress the battles for the very survival of our Austerity-disintegrating communities to victory, against the society-wrecking reactionary forces of neoliberal Capitalism and Imperialism. It is in this sense that Jeremy's successful registration as a bona fide candidate for the Labour Party leadership is itself something that has already started giving us some victories. By this I mean victories that have long been worked for self-determinedly by progressive forces of true socialist orientation, including some of us Pan-Afrikan Freedomfighters and other Peoples' Liberation campaigners from the Global South, compelled by their work at home in defence of human, peoples' and Mother Earth rights, to flee seeking relatively safer haven in the United Kingdom. This is the sense in which we are all contributing to giving each other such victories!

### **Lifting Each Other As We Climb Together: Towards Our Rendezvous of Victory**

It is not only Jeremy Corbyn, or any other one individual or group that is giving such kinds of victories to any one of us; it is all of us working painstakingly hard, striving from the different locations of what Amilcar Cabral called our various "Combat Posts" in and outside Britain, throughout the Global North as well as the Global South, to link up for better concerted and mutually supportive endeavours of Struggle all over the World, who are giving each other such victories. We the underprivileged Freedomfighting peoples of the World, the 'Wretched of the Earth', our Communities of Resistance (CoRs), are the actual makers, givers and receivers of such victories; and it is the total sum of such victories which, altogether, shall enable us to take ourselves hand-in-hand, "lifting each other as we climb" together, daring to scale the greatest heights of Struggle and facing all the challenges perseveringly, in order to eventually make it successfully under the banners of genuine Proletarian Internationalism; the banners of Internationalist Solidarity hoisted and uplifted by the original Freedomfighting Labour and its allied progressive forces of all oppressed, exploited and impoverished masses of peoples everywhere in the World, forward ever to our cherished grand Rendezvous of Victory!

Jeremy Corbyn has never presented, and certainly will never present, himself alone as the messianic giver of victory to anybody. The Jeremy some of us know is too enlightened as a genuine champion of true Socialist Labour virtues to even think of pretentiously doing anything foolish like that. For this reason, his leadership style has always been similar to the one we call in our Pan-Afrikan Community Grassroots Scholar-Activist circles as "People's Servant-Leadership": the style that leads in ways and manners of grassroots creativity, with the authentic participatory democratic, or more precisely "communocratic", exercise of human, peoples' and Mother Earth rights by each and every one; so as to enable the self-conscientization, self-determination and self-empowerment of people to effect their own holistic personal and community development – ploughing the ground for Socialism through Pedagogy of the Oppressed Action Learning for the eventual building of the kind of

society that will enable the free development of each to become the condition for the free development of all!

### **The Question of the Labour Party and Imperialism**

As to the point about the Labour Party and Imperialism: it is, alas, one on which those claiming most pompously to be “know-it-alls” on the “Left” display pathetic ignorance, sometimes to such heights of absurd denial of even basic facts of History, as to sound so stupid in ways one can only deem most hilariously sophistic! Yes, a cursory glance may give the impression that the Labour Party of the United Kingdom has long been made to stray away from its lofty founding socialist ideals of the rebellious workingclass driving of the emancipation of all Humanity; strayed away so far as to become, particularly in its Blairite era, almost a merely deceptive ramshackle vehicle for the rapacious capitalist globalizational manoeuvring of a predatory selfish few; indeed, a tiny minority wickedly conniving to help corporate vampires and their depraved ilk to bloodily impose the barbarism of Euro-Amerikkkan Imperialism upon the World. Nevertheless, a more careful scrutiny will show that this is only a half-truth, only one side of the Labour Party coin! For, the fact is that millions of defenders of the values of true Socialism for many generations have selflessly fought, and are still relentlessly fighting, within and outside the Labour Party, in strong opposition to the revision of its ideals, against its organisational degeneration and for upholding and erasing the dirty capitalist and imperialist stains that have soiled its sacred working people’s Freedomfighting banners.

It was my good friend Peter Fryer, the brilliant author of *“Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain”* (1984), who enhanced my enlightenment about the fact that there are two Britains: not only a nation of enslavers but also a nation of Abolitionist Freedomfighters for the emancipation of all oppressed, exploited and suffering Humanity! The Afrikan Abolitionist Freedomfighters Attobah Kwodjo Enu (aka Quobnah Ottobah Cuguanu), hailing originally from Ajumako in present-day Ghana, my own country of birth, and his Anti-Slavery brother-at-arms, Olaudah Equiano, knew that from their Labour Freedomfighting comrades such as Thomas and Lydia Hardy of the London Corresponding Society, the “strongest of Britain’s radical workingclass organizations in the 1790s”. Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah and his colleagues of the Pan-African Federation (PAF), who organised the historic epoch-making Fifth Pan-African Congress (5<sup>th</sup> PAC) from 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> October 1945 in Manchester, England, preceded by the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1945 All-Colonial Peoples’ Conference (ACPC), convened by the Provisional Committee of United Colonial Peoples’ Federation (PCUCPF) in London, knew that from their supporting friends like Betty Dorman, Sylvia Pankhurst and John McNair. The likes of June Milne and Douglas Rogers proved this to the Osagyefo with their unflinching loyalty, withstanding constant harassment by the British police and other state security, secret services and intelligence officials in this country, after the 24th February 1966 overthrow of his government in Ghana. The existence of these two Britains has been confirmed to me by my own personal experience of life in the United Kingdom, including my cordial friendship not only with Peter Fryer but also with

Jeremy Corbyn and a good host of other very dear ones within and outside the Labour movement I prefer not to name here right now!

So it is that there are various tendencies within the Labour Party, including its pro-imperialist as well as anti-imperialist tendencies. Indeed, in spite of his controversial early views on emigration and immigration concerning Scotland, even Keir Hardie must be counted among those co-founders of the Labour Party who contributed to developing its Anti-Imperialist Tendency, having campaigned not only in support of Self-Rule for India but also against Apartheid in Afrika, maintaining close working relationships with anti-imperialist firebrand Communists such as Sylvia Pankhurst as well as Indian Anti-Colonial Freedomfighters Bipin Chandra Pal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Lord Fenner Brockway similarly campaigned against the genocidal domination of European Imperialism in Afrika and Asia, exposing, denouncing and challenging the atrocities of British colonial misrule such as the violent repression of the Muhimu Kenya Land and Freedom Army (Muhimu-KLFA aka Mau Mau) Resistance in Kenya; and going further not only to participate in the League Against Imperialism (LAI) but also, even as the Labour MP for Eton and Slough, to co-found and actively participate in both the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism (COPAI) and the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF), the latter now known as Liberation with Jeremy Corbyn as its present-day Chair. The roles of the likes of Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Ken Livingstone, George Galloway and John McDonnell in developing the Anti-Imperialist Tendency within the Labour Party are too vivid and more widely known for us to dwell upon here.

Of great noteworthiness is the role of Afrikan Heritage Community Activists in Britain in developing the Anti-Imperialist Tendency within the Labour Party and the wider Labour movement. A historically significant contribution to this was made by the likes of Henry Sylvester-Williams, whose parents were from Barbados but lived in Trinidad, from where he went to study in the USA, coming into Britain to found the African Association in 1898 and utilising it to help in convening the First Pan-African Congress (1<sup>st</sup> PAC) in London in 1900, out of which emerged the Pan-African Association (PAA). Building links with the Workers' Union and the Fabian Society, Henry won a seat in 1906 as a Progressive on the Council of the London Borough of Marylebone. The spectacular role of John Richard Archer, the first British-born Afrikan and Black Councillor is outlined in Peter Fryer's above-mentioned book. As a Colleague of Henry Sylvester-Williams and an Executive Committee member of the PAA, John Archer also co-founded and became President of the African Progress Union (APU), formed to reinvigorate Pan-Afrikan Community self-organisation in Britain from London in 1918. John got elected not only as the Latchmere Ward Councillor to the Council of Battersea in 1906, then "London's most radical borough", but also in 1913 as the Mayor of Battersea, becoming the Deputy Labour Leader of the Council in 1931. John Archer contributed hugely to the development of the Anti-Imperialist Tendency within the Labour Party, identifying with the Anti-Colonial Resistance of the peoples of Afrika, Asia and other parts of the World, and chaired the session on Colonial Freedom at the Second Pan-African Congress (2nd PAC) held in London in 1921. It was John Archer who mainly facilitated the historic election of Shapurji Saklatvala, a Parsee originally from India, and "a member of

both the Communist Party and the Labour Party in those days when dual membership was still possible” , enabling him to seat as a Labour MP in 1922-1923 in the Commons of the British Houses of Parliament. It was John who introduced Saklatvala to make an Anti-Colonial Declaration of Internationalist Solidarity with the “Coloured World”, on behalf of the Indian Resistance, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> PAC. Such representations of anti-imperialist Labour and its actions of solidarity with the Pan-African Congresses have been followed by the address given to the 5<sup>th</sup> PAC in Manchester, England, in October 1945 by John McNair, the General Secretary of the Independent Labour Party (ILP); as well as by the representation of the Anti-Imperialist Tendency of the Labour Party by a delegation including the MPs Bernie Grant and Jeremy Corbyn at the 7<sup>th</sup> PAC in Kampala, Uganda, in 1994. John Richard Archer is best remembered within the Afrikan Heritage Communities as one of those who boldly raised the demand, similar to PARCOE’s clarion of “Pan-Afrikan Reparations for Global Justice”, into the open in Britain in his Presidential address to the inaugural meeting of the APU in London in 1918. Ras T. Makonnen, the Manchester-based General Secretary of the PAF, who played one of the key roles in organising the 5<sup>th</sup> PAC in 1945, and served the government of Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah as the Director of the African Affairs Centre (AAC) in Accra, Ghana, was a member of the Labour Party who brought the support of his friends in its Anti-Imperialist Tendency to the assistance of his Pan-Afrikan Freedomfighting colleagues. Labour Councillors such as Lester Lewis and Linda Bellos have followed suit and, like Bernie Grant, made their sterling contributions in support of total Pan-Afrikan Liberation, including Reparatory Justice, to enrich the Anti-Imperialist Tendency within the Labour Party in Britain and the wider Labour movement globally. It was as one of the ministerial officials of the Home Office that Fiona MacTaggart, a Labour MP, spoke about the need, not to shy away from, but rather to publicly debate and critically examine the demand for Afrikan Reparations at our Rendezvous of Victory (ROV) and Anti-Slavery International joint events of 21<sup>st</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2004 in London, marking the Bicentenary of the victory of the Haitian Anti-Slavery Revolution, with the celebration of 2004 as “the United Nations International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition”.

It is true that the Anti-Imperialist Tendency has never been a predominant force within the Labour Party. It may not gain preponderance inside Labour even if Jeremy Corbyn wins the party leadership; because, as I have learnt from working together with him in various organisations, networks and campaigns, he is not the kind of person who will arbitrarily impose his own politico-ideological convictions upon any formation he leads, more so against the democratic wishes of the majority of its membership. Nevertheless, having a principled Socialist like Jeremy bringing his anti-imperialist orientation into the choices in decision-making he proposes to his colleagues at all levels of the collective leadership of the Labour Party will, certainly, democratically increase the strength, influence and possibilities of the eventual triumph of the Anti-Imperialist Tendency for the Decolonizational good of Britain, Europe and the World, and better harmonise Global North and Global South efforts towards winning Global Justice for all.

Many of us have fled from neocolonialist state terrorism, persecution and deprivation in our original home countries to find that, in spite of all its challenges, the Labour Party remains the biggest political force in mainstream politics in the United Kingdom with the greatest potential not only to give us some relief from our woes but also to create an enabling environment in this country for us to keep faith with our Freedomfighting colleagues, communities and peoples and carry on battling for similar emancipatory socialist and/or related egalitarian ideals. It is in the course of such battles that, since coming into political exile in Britain in the 1990s, I earned the privilege of associating with the highly impressive likes of not only outstanding members of the British Houses of Parliament like Jeremy Corbyn, Bernie Grant, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Fiona MacTaggart, John McDonnell and George Galloway but also countless ordinary socialist footsoldiers of Proletarian Internationalism too many to individually name.

### **Jeremy Corbyn and Our Black Experiences and Expectations of Labour**

Even though I have personally never been a registered member of the Labour Party, shared ideals of Socialism and joint battling together with such Labour stalwarts on racism, intersectionality, asylum, migrants, community regeneration, international development, environmental and other issues on our Pan-African Community Grassroots Agenda, covering a wide range of human, peoples' and Mother Earth rights matters, encouraged me at one time to sign up for membership of its affiliated organisations such as the Black Socialist Society (BSS) and the Unite Trade Union. I dropped out of the BSS when it proved incapable of creating the necessary space for autonomously standing up and facilitating the kind of Battle of Ideas that would enable authentic Black radical perspectives of Decolonizational Cognitive Justice to enrich discourses and work for Socialism in and beyond the Labour movement. My indirect links with Labour as a political party virtually got disconnected with the intensification of the Blairite swing to the Right, to the extent that even my Trade Union membership lapsed without me bothering much about it.

It has taken Jeremy Corbyn standing for the leadership to arouse my interest in again taking serious notice of happenings in the Labour Party to the point of even recently officially registering as one of its supporters. I did so with the immense hope that, win or lose the Labour Party leadership race, Jeremy will become one of the most significant catalysts for progressive forces of all community and other social backgrounds to rally together in the principled Unity of their rich diversity to more vigorously build an integrated social movement against the Austerity hoodwink of Neoliberal Capitalism in and beyond the United Kingdom; a social movement that will include an autonomous network of anti-imperialist forces for the complete Decolonization of both the Global South and the Global North.

I am glad that such a social movement building task has started getting off the ground and is more likely to gain momentum. It is our hope that such social movement building shall, as

work-in-progress, develop groundup to make the genuinely anti-imperialist and pro-socialist forces in and beyond Britain its bedrock of radical Changemaking Struggle at home and broad; so that its vision and work go beyond simply restoring the capitalist Welfare State as it used to be in Britain at the colonial and neocolonial superexploitative expense more of the 'Wretched of the Earth' in the peripheral domains of Euro-Amerikkkan Imperialism; and rather strive, together with all Communities of Resistance of both the Global South and the Global North, for the inclusive, egalitarian and truly participatory democratic transformation of our planet Earth as a whole ("Mother Earth Reparations by way of Planetary Repairs"), in order to actually realise the increasing possibility of all Peoples of Conscience, all the progressive forces of Humanity, working harmoniously together in creating a better new World of Global Justice for all! The vital necessity for this Global Justice Internationalist approach to fighting Austerity in the countries of Europe and other parts of the World is an indispensable lesson taught again and again by many examples, the latest being the current lesson from Greece.

### **Being Our Own Liberators**

Among such progressive forces are those of us organising from the grassroots, under the aegis of the Global Afrikan People's Parliament in United Kingdom (GAPP-UK), in order to build out of our various communities of people from different parts of the continent and diaspora of Afrika now living in Britain, a one distinct, unified and autonomous Afrikan Heritage Community for National Self-Determination (AHC-NSD). This is an example of Afrikan Community Activists not just indulging in revolutionary slogan-mongering and wishful thinking about organisational alternatives and merely paying lip-service to Afrikan Liberation, but making real effort to do something for themselves, taking into due account all foreseeable circumstances. As the GAPP-UK innovative Positive Action Plan of a 3-pronged New Pathfinding Approach to Electoral Politics shows, the work towards such independent organisational initiatives does not depend upon, nor exclude other political formations in and beyond mainstream politics and critical engagement with even Establishment institutions, agencies and processes, as well as other topdown and groundup endeavours by any relevant forces in and beyond the United Kingdom.

Indeed, with the backing of the Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE) and its other allied organisations, networks and campaigns, the GAPP-UK is not simply talking but striving to walk the talk of Afrikan people being their own liberators; nevertheless, walking the talk in such ways and manners that will enable others in and beyond communities of Afrikan people, in and outside Britain, to walk their own self-determination talks in harmony with all, in terms of advancing our diverse and similar battles for self-emancipation under the common banners of Reparatory Justice towards holistic Global Justice for all! That is why some of us are working to back up the GAPP-UK by involving ourselves in the efforts being made by PARCOE in accordance with its maxim of "Pan-Afrikan Reparations for Global Justice"; that is, Freedomfighting for Afrikan Reparations in such way and manner of true Pan-Afrikan Internationalism so as to enlighten, challenge and compel

other progressive forces to wage their own Self-Repair battles in order to move together all of Humanity forward towards our common Rendezvous of Global Justice Victory for all. This is a topmost matter of priority for those of us involved in and beyond the United Kingdom in the glocal building of grassroots community-based formations such as the Pan-Afrikan Fora International Support Coordinating Council (PAFISCC), including the Trade Unions and the Pan-Afrikan Community Link (TUPACOL), and also the Global Justice Forum (GJF). There is also the Inter-Community Forum (ICF), a London-based offshoot of the 12<sup>th</sup> October Platform, which some of us see as the emergent structure upon which to hopefully rebuild something like the erstwhile Provisional Committee of United Colonial Peoples' Federation (PCUCPF) and likewise convene present-day versions of its All-Peoples' Conferences, focusing them against Neocolonialism, for Complete Anti-Imperialist Decolonization and Global Justice for all. Through the GJF, we are developing our links with like-minded Activists based in Communities of Resistance (CoRs) in the Global South, as for example those involved in the Peoples' International Community Campaign for the Dignity of Labour (PICCDOL), the Peoples' Internationalist Solidarity Connexions of the Global South (PISCOGS), the Grassroots Women's Internationalist Solidarity Network (GWISAN) and the Grassroots South-North Internationalist Forum (GRASSNIF). These are formations of CoR-based Activists devoted to living, learning from and working amongst our "Poorest of the poor", the real "Wretched of the Earth"; and, in spite of the fact that most of them lack even the basic Information Communications Technological (ICT) facilities and other modern campaigning resources which many in the Global North, and their dependent NGO apparatchiks in the Global South, sometimes quite arrogantly take for granted, they are now striving with their own amazing innovative skills of grassroots creativity, indeed "By Any Means Necessary" as they say, to follow the Jeremy Corbyn for Labour Leadership Campaign! That is why Jeremy Corbyn is to some of us a key element in galvanizing this stepping out to advance in building a more powerful integrated social movement to strengthen our principled Unity in diversity, and facilitating our movement of all of ourselves, the grassroots-to-grassroots coalition of the willing, more harmoniously forward together, under the genuine Labour Freedomfighting socialist banners of Proletarian Internationalism, towards winning Global Justice in and beyond Britain. Together we can give Jeremy victory in order for him to play his conscientious role in facilitating and giving us back more victorious opportunities for battling to get better at being our own liberators!