THE RISE OF A GENERATION INSPIRED
BY PAN-AFRICANISM IN FRANCOPHONE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Black people around the world joined their forces to combat the systemic exploitation and the racialized system of oppression they were facing. In their attempt at unification, they created organizations that advocated for the fair treatment of their race and their self-determination. In different places, local, regional, and continental movements were established to carry on this struggle. The most prominent of those movements was the Pan-African movement that put an essential point to free Africa. However, decades after the independence of many countries in Africa, the masses have not seen the promise of a better life. To address the daily issues they are dealing with on the continent, a new generation of African civil society, grassroots movements, and activists is on the rise. This new trend can be seen in Francophone countries in West and Central Africa. This thesis looks into these movements and their recent achievements. It also discusses the sources of inspiration of these movements, which are grounded in the long history of black internationalism. The renewal of a continental liberation spirit, which is not embodied by an institution like the African Union or political parties, is carried on by young people. Youth movements like Urgences Panafrikanistes, Y en a Marre and Le Balai Citoyen are now taking the lead and are becoming day after day the voices of this new Pan-Africanism and the struggle against imperialism and bad governance.
INTRODUCTION

Today, to put an end to all the scourges that undermine their daily life, young Africans, especially in Francophone countries and France, are standing like a rampart to reaffirm the ideals and values of African unity using social media, hip-hop, and reggae music to bring change to their countries as well as the continent. This work examines the rise of youth social movements and organizations drawing on the long past of black liberation struggle and their mutual influence. The persistent absence of democracy, widespread poverty and Africa's economic dependence on Western countries among other issues led to the rise of new voices on the continent and outside for real independence and liberation. With an unprecedented determination, a new Pan-African dynamic is in motion, and it is carried by men and women of media and singers. Recently, youth movements like Urgences Panafrikanistes, Yen a Marre, Le Balai Citoyen, to name a few, are examples of this new dynamic. I argue that there is a rebirth of Pan-Africanism in Francophone countries with young people who are challenging their governments for more democracy, transparency in the management of public funds, and the end of inequalities.

These youth organizations draw their inspiration not only from musical genres that originated from Jamaica and the United States but also from prominent figures in the black internationalism whom within the bigger picture of the liberation struggle against racism, imperialism, and colonization, found common ground to join their voices. Africans and people of African descent, especially African Americans and Caribbeans, came together to combat the ills that plagued the continent and people of African descent through a political, cultural, and
transnational movement called Pan-Africanism.\(^1\) Throughout its long history, Pan-Africanism took different shapes. From 1919 to 1945, five Pan-African congresses were organized under the leadership of William E. B. Du Bois. A final phase began from 1945 with the Manchester Congress to the creation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. It was the time of the continental Pan-Africanism advocated by Kwame Nkrumah.

Additionally, during the 1960s and 1970s, with the collapse of black assimilation and integration in America, a new impulse was given to black internationalism in the United States. A growing feeling of Pan-Africanism arose and became more oriented toward new, less national and more identity-based perspectives; a movement spread over two continents where the solidarity between black people had to deal with different realities. Nowadays, in Africa, young people are looking at these predecessors to pursue their own goals on the continent.

Chapter One deals with the reasons that gave birth to Pan-Africanism. The focus is on the various conferences and congresses held in Europe, the United States, and Africa that contributed to the formation of the Organization of African Unity. Thus, this chapter is organized according to a chronological framework that allows us to follow the historical trajectory of Pan-Africanism, and to demonstrate that, over time, the movement has taken different forms. This chapter considers

Pan-Africanism in a perspective that is circumscribed to the classical frameworks of analysis that is a political movement that aims to unify Africa or to foster a sense of solidarity among Africans and its diaspora. The historical study of Pan-Africanism is organized around different phases marked by continuities and breaks. Regarding history, Pan-Africanism varies between a philosophical concept, a socio-political movement developed by Afro-descendants, and a political doctrine formulated by African nationalists in the context of decolonization.

Chapter Two analyzes the relationship between Africans and African Americans within the Pan-African movement, especially in the 1960s. The 1960s were a pivotal period for both Africans and African Americans as that period saw many African countries gain independence and coincided with the era of the civil rights movement in the U.S. Moreover, this chapter covers the influence of African decolonization movement on some prominent African-American figures and organizations. On both sides of the Atlantic, they established strong links to overcome all the barriers of injustice. It also discusses the rise of the Black Power movement and its political, cultural, and intellectual impact on the black communities in America. The leaders of black internationalism of that time grafted their fight to that of Africans and oppressed people in the world. Africa then appeared as a land of claims and an appropriation for political and strategic purposes for the Black Power movement.²

The third and last chapter focuses on the rebirth of the Pan-African idea among the youth in Africa but also in Europe, mainly those from Francophone countries in the 2010s. With a transnational approach, these movements are reshaping the political discourse in many countries. These activists stand out from the institutional Pan-Africanism embodied by the African Union.

The contemporary Pan-Africanism studied in this third and final chapter does not refer to the movement of congresses, nor the movement of continental integration, even less that of Black Power, but rather a set of associative, cultural and intellectual movements which, over the years, have evolved, within the African youth, the artists and civil society.

Finally, to understand this new Pan-Africanism, we should also take into consideration the political, cultural and intellectual dimensions of the years that followed the creation of the Organization of African Unity and its failures. Thus, this new Pan-Africanism designates a plethora of recent movements that integrate the Pan-Africanist ideology elaborated since the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the movements studied address different social issues with local claims, in many cases, they all reflect the evolution of this struggle against prejudices, societal inequalities, and imperialism initiated since the London Conference of 1900.
CHAPTER 1
THE COMMON BOND

Pan-Africanism promotes and encourages the practice of solidarity among Africans wherever they are in the world. It is at the same time a social, economic, cultural, and political vision of African emancipation and a movement that aims to unite Africans from the continent and the African diaspora into a global African community. The core of its principles is “the belief that African peoples, both on the African continent and in the Diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny,” and that their social, economic and political progress is linked to their unity. In the beginning, the African continent was both seen as nostalgia and hope. Gradually, Africa passed from the imaginary to a concrete political entity. The articulation and promotion of Pan-Africanism took place mainly in Europe and the United States of America during a series of conferences and congresses organized in London, Paris, Brussels, New York, and Manchester before shifting to Africa.

The movement has meant a lot to different people throughout time. Despite the different interpretations that it might have taken through its long and complicated history, it was first and foremost, a “political and cultural phenomenon that regards Africa, Africans, and African descendants abroad as a unit.” This oneness transcended linguistic barriers, borders, religions, and even culture.

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First Pan-African Conference

In 1900, Henry Sylvester Williams⁵ and some of his friends were preparing a conference that could bring together black people from around the world to discuss the black issue, particularly in the British Empire. A lawyer himself, Williams envisioned a movement that could speak for Africans and address the questions of racism, colonization, and exploitation. This first gathering of its kind would bring “many cultured gentlemen of African descent from various parts of America, Africa, and the British Empire,”⁶ for three days. The people who gathered in Westminster Town Hall, London for the first time in July 23rd did something unprecedented in the history of people of color.

This conference “marked a new era for the colored race throughout the world”⁷ in search of justice, freedom, self-determination, and self-esteem. The delegates understood that the destiny of the black race and its liberation would be possible only if black people left aside their “nationalities” and engaged in a struggle that goes beyond geographical limitations since they were all experiencing the same problems regardless of the places where they were living.

The London conference was also that of making contact and structuring, as well as launching the Pan-African movement. One of the main objectives was “to bring into closer touch

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⁷ Ibid., 223.
with each other the peoples of African descent throughout the world.”

African-Americans and Caribbeans dominated the conference. Thus, a movement was born to symbolize and carry the voice and the fight of black people. They planned to create a permanent Pan-African Association in London with representations around the world to address issues concerning black people and advocate for their well-being. One of the most important decisions was the plan to meet every two years in different countries starting with the United States in 1902 and the Republic of Haiti in 1904.

The choice of holding the next two conferences in the United States probably stemmed from the injustice African-Americans were experiencing living “among a people whose laws, traditions and prejudices had been against them for centuries.” Thus, it would have been a strong message, not only for the U.S. government to legislate in favor of African-Americans, but also for African-Americans to understand that their case was not isolated.

However, the plan of holding a conference in Haiti would have been more powerful and meaningful than any other location in the world because of the critical role the Haitian Revolution had played in world history, especially in the empowerment of black people. This revolution showed the rest of the world that blacks, contrary to the white supremacist perception of African people as a “bunch of savages,” were capable of such initiatives in modern history.

The Haitian Revolution was the fruit of a mixture of different types of traditional, intellectual, military, strategic and religious knowledge. It also resulted from the ignorance, scorn, or racist ideology of white thinkers and masters who believed that the blacks were lacking the ability to carry out this kind of initiatives. The victory of the slaves of San Domingo over

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8 Esedebe, 41.
9 Hamedoe, 223.
Napoleon’s army constituted an epistemological break, a collapse of a dominant system of thought that had prevailed in the Western world for centuries. The Haitian Revolution stood as a beacon of light for black peoples around the world, in the Caribbean, in America, and particularly in Africa, that no master, no system, no power was strong enough to bow to the demand for freedom of the enslaved, the colonized, the segregated or any human being deprived of their fundamental rights. It represented an excellent example of solidarity between Africans of different backgrounds and origins.10

In London, the delegates highlighted some of their primary goals. Among others, they aimed:

- to secure civil and political rights for Africans and their descendants throughout the world;
- to encourage friendly relations between the Caucasian and African races;
- to encourage African people everywhere in educational, industrial and commercial enterprise;
- to approach Governments and influence legislation in the interests of the black races; and to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed negro in all parts of the world.11

The objectives formulated by the association were a concise statement of the living conditions of black people but also their aspirations for a better world in an institutional framework

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that would guarantee them all the rights due to the human person. It was also an appeal to
entrepreneurship because any freedom granted or conquered by any means would not be sufficient,
even less plausible if it was not accompanied by economic independence.

The conference also differed from a racist or separatist ideology. In its approach, it did not
exclude any fruitful collaboration with white people. This “friendly” collaboration with
Caucasians that the movement envisaged, implied that the ideals of which the Westerners were so
proud would only be achieved when they fully recognized black people as being equal to them.
Western countries would show pride in those beautiful ideas of democracy, freedom, and equality
among men without any distinction.

The British capital was also the place par excellence for such a meeting because of the
prominence of the British Empire and its expansionism. However, the idea that the scale and
importance of the movement, according to Bishop Walters, would not have been possible without
the contribution of white people once again diluted the efforts of blacks in their emancipation
struggle and deprived them of any agency.\(^\text{12}\) This idea carried this paternalistic view of the white
savior without whom black people could do nothing. The London Conference was also the perfect
place to listen to the testimonies of the blacks of the world, their daily difficulties in their
homelands, and their uniqueness in the face of the pain related to the color of their skin, whether
they were in Rhodesia, the West Indies or South Africa. From these three days of the London
conference and the objectives formulated by the delegates and their desire to meet every other
year, a movement was born for the liberation of black people. This initiative indicated a growing
political awareness of black subjects against the capitalist system that reduced them to beasts of

\(^\text{12}\) Hamedoe, 227.
burden. They realized that their future was in their own hands and that no force, but their efforts could release them from any subordination.\textsuperscript{13} The newly founded association would be acting like an \textit{African lobby} to influence policies wherever black people were facing prejudices. From this first conference,\textsuperscript{14} a series of congresses would follow under the initiative of W.E.B. Du Bois.

\textbf{Pan-African Congresses Movement}

\textbf{First Pan-African Congress, London, 1919}

About two decades after the first Pan-African Conference in London, black people met again in Paris for a congress, which opened a series of meetings to be held in Europe and America. Neither the U.S. nor the Haiti meetings took place as formulated in London in 1900 because of financial reasons. If W.E.B. Du Bois took part in the first conference as a guest; the Paris Congress would unite under his initiative. The Paris Congress saw the participation of several delegates from the U.S., the Caribbean, and the British and French colonies. Of the fifty-seven delegates that attended the congress, only nine were from continental Africa. They advocated for changes in lands, capital, labor, education, and state building in the colonies of Africa.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 223.
\textsuperscript{14} Esedebe, in \textit{Pan-Africanism: the Idea and the Movement}, considers The Chicago Congress on Africa in 1893 as the first international grouping of blacks to address the prejudices they were facing. The London Conference was the one that people remember for many reasons because it had been publicized much more than that of Chicago. However, if Pan-Africanism meant solidarity of any kind among black people from diverse origins in the face of adversity and any capitalist machinations, then it would also be visible in the slave revolt on the boats, on the plantations, and the most eloquent example is that of the Haitian revolution. Thus, I will not fall into this dating issue. I will instead consider the 1900 London Conference as the “official” starting point. Under the leadership of Du Bois, the meetings would be called “Congress” instead of “Conference.” This is why the 2\textsuperscript{nd} meeting is referred to as the First Pan-African Congress.
The French government was hesitant to let such a meeting take place on its soil.\textsuperscript{16} However, thanks to the intervention of Blaise Diagne,\textsuperscript{17} Du Bois and his guests were able to make it happen. Du Bois wanted to take advantage of the changing international relations to advance his Pan-African agenda after the end of World War I. He was confident in the role that black soldiers, in the American and European armies, had played in the war. He believed that because of their courage and commitment, they could be granted certain rights along with their communities. The meeting itself had also “aroused considerable interest among the international delegations to the Peace Conference at Versailles, especially those with interests in Africa.”\textsuperscript{18}

The Versailles Peace Conference was a venue and the beginning of a new international order from which Pan-Africanism could have benefited a lot, drawing on the main resolutions adopted during the session. Various proposals aiming to protect and guarantee some rights under a legal and international framework had been made, but according to Nkrumah, “nothing much came of them,”\textsuperscript{19} since there was no real proposal asking for the complete liberation and decolonization of Africa. The demands of this conference had a “moderate” tone.\textsuperscript{20} However, in a memorandum sent to Blaise Diagne, even if Du Bois did not talk about immediate liberation and independence, he did think of it as something that should be done progressively. He was concerned

\textsuperscript{16} The Wilson administration expressed its concern to the French government because it feared that the delegates addressed the African-American issue in Paris.
\textsuperscript{17} Diagne was the first black elected to the French National Assembly. One of his most “remarkable” achievements was the recruitment of soldiers, the famous \textit{Tirailleurs} to combat for France. For more on his life, see Hopquin, Benoît. \textit{Ces Noirs Qui Ont Fait La France}. [Paris]: Calmann-Lévy, 2009; Dieng, Amady Aly. \textit{Blaise Diagne, député noir de l’Afrique (Afrique contemporaine)}, Paris: Editions Chaka, 1990.
\textsuperscript{18} Padmore, George. \textit{Pan-Africanism or Communism?: The Coming Struggle for Africa}. London: D. Dobson, 1956, 123.
\textsuperscript{19} Nkrumah, 133.
\textsuperscript{20} Esedebe, 67.
about a “development of autonomous government along lines of native custom, with the object of inaugurating gradually an Africa for the Africans.”


Unlike the London Conference and the Paris Congress, the Second Pan-African Congress of 1921 met successively in three different cities, London, Brussels, and Paris. Pan-Africanism returned, twenty-one years later, on the land where it formally started with the goal of establishing “local self-government for backward groups, deliberately rising as experience and knowledge grew to complete self-government under the limitation of a self-governed world.” The black “thinking intelligentsia” in its final declaration at the London Congress listed eight main points among which, “the recognition of civilized men as civilized, despite their race or color”, and “the establishment of an international section of the Labour Bureau of the League of the Nations, charged with the protection of native labour.” The opportunity was thus given to West African representatives from Lagos and Sierra Leone, to express their views on the conditions of the local natives who saw the Pan-African Congress as a boon and a platform for their grievances.

The publicity of the movement raised controversies in many European countries with possessions in Africa. They started to become more “suspicious of native movements of any

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22 Legum, 29.
23 Padmore, 131-132.
sort.”²⁴ Belgian newspapers, for instance, strongly expressed their opposition against an African lobby holding such a meeting in Brussels. The Pan-African Congress was seen as an entity that could in the end not only jeopardize Western interests in Africa but especially those of Belgium, which drew most of its resources from the Congo.²⁵ Despite the hostilities manifested on the local news, the Congress took place before moving to its third and final session in Paris. The resolutions of Paris addressed to the world, were a program to instill a lasting peace as the cornerstone to all human development and cohesion.

Around the same time, Marcus Garvey²⁶ raised to international prominence. Garvey’s teachings, methods, and strategies for the liberation of black people were somehow in contradiction with those of Du Bois.²⁷ The Garvey question imposed itself at this second Congress. The delegates at these different sessions, undoubtedly influenced by Du Bois’s prominence and his

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²⁵ Ibid., 18.


²⁷ Their approaches to unite African peoples were far more different. Du Bois campaigned for integration of blacks within the country they belong to while Garvey was advocating for a separate society and a return to Africa known as the “Back to Africa” movement. Though opposed, they were complementary. If Garvey was good at mobilizing black masses, Du Bois was the champion of black elites. For more on their ideological feud, see Conyers, James L. Reevaluating the Pan-Africanism of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey: Escapist Fantasy or Relevant Reality. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005; Moses, Wilson Jeremiah. Creative Conflict in African American Thought: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004; IJERE, Martin O. "W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey as Pan-Africanists: A Study in Contrast." Présence Africaine, vol. 89, no. 89, 1974, pp. 188-206.
antipathy to Garvey, unanimously "condemned Garvey and his slogan 'Africa for the Africans.'"28 By adopting this anti-Garvey rhetoric, the Congress positioned itself as the only legitimate organ and united voice of the African diaspora, capable of appreciating and discussing the problems of the black community and propose intelligent solutions far from the ‘populist’ discourses of Garvey and his movement.

A leader for some, a demagogue for others, Garvey succeeded in mobilizing black masses in the early 1920s, particularly in New York City. He had a significant influence on African Americans in general, and he renewed the sense of struggle in particular by selling them his project of “Back to Africa” for all blacks as a radical solution to end their misfortunes. He also believed that economic independence, a community-based and owned business by African-Americans was one of the answers to stop the insecurity in which the capitalist system had plunged them. Garvey's thoughts and ready-made solutions, named Garveyism, had been in the long history of the diaspora struggle movement, dissociated from Pan-Africanism by authors like George Padmore.

With his organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and strategies that George Padmore called Black Zionism, Garvey advocated for racial separation because he thought black and white people are different and non-assimilable. The “Provisional President of Africa” and his project appeared, at first glance, as a utopian project in the sense that it wanted to take the opposite direction of the slave trade that brought millions of blacks to the Americas and the Caribbean. By using populist rhetoric to galvanize black masses, which opposed Du Bois’s elitism, Garvey’s teachings had overshadowed, at a certain point, the voices of any other organization advocating for the liberation of black people.

28 Geiss, 246.

The Third Pan-African Congress, “without proper notice or preparation, met in London and Lisbon”\(^{29}\) in November 1923. Few people attended the London session due to the lack of early and meaningful arrangements.\(^{30}\) However, the Lisbon session “was more successful,”\(^{31}\) than that of London. The delegates at Lisbon made the following demands:

1. A voice in their own government
2. The right of access to the land and its resources
3. Trial by juries of their peers under established forms of law
4. Free elementary education for all; broad training in modern industrial technique; and higher training of selected talent
5. The development of Africa for the benefit of Africans, and not merely for the profit of Europeans.
6. The abolition of the slave trade and of the liquor traffic.
7. World disarmament and the abolition of war; but failing this, and as long as white folk bear arms against black folk, the right of blacks to bear arms in their own defence.
8. The organization of commerce and industry so as to make the main objects of capital and labour the welfare of the many rather than the enriching of the few…\(^{32}\)

In Lisbon, the third Congress was arranged by the “Liga Africana,”\(^{33}\) an African association advocating for the causes of blacks in the Portuguese colonies. W.E.B. Du Bois and the delegates reinforced the resolutions of the second congress by maintaining their demands for the equality of human races. The Congress reiterated the denunciation of colonialism in Africa. That time they put a particular focus on South Africa and their system of racial separation that would later be

\(^{31}\) Abrahams and Padmore, 22.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 22-23.
called Apartheid. By the end of the third Congress, the structure of the movement, and even the idea “was still American rather than African.”34 The movement was still that of African-descended elite, which was born and educated in America, the Caribbean, and Europe and had never been to Africa after three consecutive meetings. Du Bois who had been active in the movement since the beginning was planning to walk on the African soil for the first time just after the Congress. He was going to represent President Coolidge as “Special Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary”35 in Liberia.

**Fourth Pan-African Congress, New York, 1927**

Originally, Du Bois planned this fourth Pan-African Congress in the West Indies in 1925 with the idea of sailing down “the Caribbean, stopping for meetings in Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, and the French islands.”36 His plan for this great adventure that would have taken him and the delegates to meet the African diaspora of the western hemisphere did not happen due to the lack of financial means.37 For that reason, the choice of New York imposed itself. The meeting was organized “under the auspices of the Circle of Peace and Foreign Relations, an organization of New York women.”38 Only four African countries (the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Nigeria) were represented in New York where only Chief Amoah III of the Gold Coast had the privilege to address the audience. Six main points came out from this session reiterating the main points of

34 Abrahams and Padmore, 23.
35 Ibid., 23.
36 Ibid.
37 The French Line asked for $50 000 for the trip; Du Bois believed that the colonial powers were behind this scheme to jeopardize his plan by pushing the shipping line to ask for this amount of money that would have been impossible for them to put together.
previous congresses. The resolutions like those of Lisbon demanded that African children had access to a modern and quality education, that the resources of Africa benefits primarily Africans and not the colonists. The latter was against the exploitation of African raw materials that contributed to developing not only European industry but also generated capitals for their economies, all on the back of Africans. They also asked for “the reorganization of commerce and industry to make the main object of capital and labor the welfare of the many rather than the enriching of the few.”  

Du Bois admitted later on that the meeting was held to keep the idea alive in the memory of black people. Often, the Pan-African Congresses was accused of being a succession of meetings with no real actions to better the lives of millions of blacks. It had the reputation of being an “elitist movement” made up of petit bourgeois. In 1927, the idea of a global black organization was still in preparation and was lacking real substance “apart from the rejection of racial discrimination and a general vague resentment against the ruling White minority.” Most of the debates for years had been over methods and strategies to end the prejudices black people were facing around the world. Pan-Africanism as many other black organizations were lacking, beyond the racial aspect, any “common denominator on which to unite the political interests” of the African diaspora from the West Indies to South America, from Harlem to the different colonies and the Free States in Africa. The New York Congress was “the last in the series of congresses

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39 Abrahams and Padmore, 24.  
41 Geiss, 258.  
42 Ibid., 258.
directly led by Du Bois” before the Congress of Manchester that changed the face of the movement and saw the rise of a new African leadership following the end of World War II.

**Fifth Pan-African Congress, Manchester, 1945**

The Manchester Congress, which aimed at discussing “Negro problems in the United States, Africa, and the British Empire,” was a turning point in the history of the movement at different levels. First, it was the first congress that saw large participation of Africans from the continent. Secondly, the delegates were also demanding changes that are more radical and asking for independence. Political parties, trade unions, and student organizations were also represented at this Congress for the first time. This new direction taken by the Congress was “a radical departure from the benign petitions of the past that appealed to the reasonableness of the colonialists instead of proffering a direct political challenge.” As for most of the congresses, anglophone countries were predominantly represented in Manchester, with delegates coming from West Africa, the most notable being Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria) and Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana). Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya) along with Peter Abrahams (South Africa) were some of the delegates from Eastern and Southern Africa who attended the Congress.

By opening the attendance to trade unions and student organizations, the Congress envisioned enlarging its audience and broke with the cliché of being an elitist movement. Nkrumah, Padmore, and the vast majority of the participants believed that the goal they were

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43 Legum, 30.
seeking would not be reached unless the masses were involved. The new shape the movement was taking in Manchester was the one that called on, in Nkrumah’s words, “the workers and farmers of the colonies to organise effectively.”  

The delegates were not directly addressing the colonial powers to end their exploitation, but they were asking Africans, the very people for whom the movement had been shaped, to take actions and relieve their pain. For that to happen, there was “only one road to effective action-the organization of the masses.”

Over forty years, after the Pan-African Conference at London, no real changes had happened on the continent. The debates and resolutions that came out from the previous congresses were merely idealistic words and a long list of complaints. But the 1945 Manchester Congress, sometimes seen as “the zenith of the Pan-African movement and the most significant of all the Pan-African congresses,” positioned itself as an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist force that would no longer use empty rhetoric for the years to come. Thus, according to Nkrumah, the movement that was once led by people who “were idealists rather than men of action,” became in Manchester “an expression of African nationalism.” The latter would give way to subsequent congresses on the African soil and would become the political movement that would try to unite Africans based on a real political agenda with clear demands and goals and not only an expression of black internationalism.

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46 Abdul-Raheem, 5.
47 Ibid.
49 Nkrumah, 133.
50 Ibid.
Coming Home

Independence Days and the Creation of the Organization of African Unity

Since the Manchester Congress, the new vanguard of Pan-Africanism hoped to gain independence first and then build the African unity necessarily to end white hegemony on the African continent and systemic exploitation of resources. The path leading to that unity, instead of insisting on the past, according to W.E.B Du Bois, “must be a matter of planning and upbuilding”\(^51\) The Manchester Congress saw the passing of the Pan-African torch from Caribbean and African-Americans to Africans. This new dynamic centered on the fight against colonization in Africa and immediate independence.\(^52\)

As early as the Fifth Congress in Manchester, Pan-African ideas were spreading in Africa in a fast and efficient way with the goal of gaining the independence of all African countries first, and then the union. Kwame Nkrumah in his book *Africa Must Unite* posed the conceptual basis for this vision of a united Africa within a single state-federation. Nkrumah was not the only African leader who was a fervent pan-Africanist, there were others such as Modibo Keita (Mali), Sékou Touré (Guinea-Conakry), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya) and especially Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) in Southern and Eastern Africa.\(^53\) These leaders were all part of an anti-colonialist movement in their country, and their common goal was the vision of a union as soon as independence was achieved.

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as the solution to problems of Africa. The battle for the end of colonialism was entering its final stage in the period 1945-57, following the end of World War II.

On March 8, 1957, Ghana celebrated its independence and became the first free and independent colony of West Africa. This independence was a symbol for all of Africa, because, after long years of struggle against colonialism, the long-awaited freedom, emancipation, and self-determination came. The independence of Ghana was undoubtedly the fruit of decades of efforts of pan-Africanist leaders. Soon after, in 1958, Nkrumah organized the All-African People’s Conference in Accra stating “Pan-Africanism had moved to the African continent where it really belonged.” The movement came home that year to meet the peoples for whom it had been drafted, in the first place.

In 1960, the long-awaited moment of decolonization and independence for a vast majority of African countries arrived. This independence proclaimed the official end of a long road to freedom but unofficially announced the division of the countries of the new Africa on what that freedom meant. The Lagos Conference of 1962 laid the foundations for continental cooperation, but always under the sacrosanct law of respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of each country. The birth of the Organization of African Unity stemmed from the aspiration towards the ideal of unity on the continent. The ideals of Pan-Africanism inspired the founding fathers and mothers. From 22 to 25 May 1963, thirty African countries participated in the Ethiopian capital at

\[\text{55 Nkrumah, 136.}\]
\[\text{56 Two conceptions of Africa unity namely national sovereignty and federalism fiercely opposed amid disagreement on international or continental issues.}\]
the constituent conference of the Organization of African Unity, which marked the advent of the first Pan-African institution.57

The Pan-African movement, in the beginning, sought to unite Africans in Africa and members of the African diaspora into a global African community. It called for Africa's political unity by defying colonization and racism. But the movement showed its limits during the post-independence period, which was marked by conflicts, coups, dictatorial regimes, and civil wars.58

58 For more insight into this period, see Meredith, Martin. *The Fate of Africa: From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005. The road was still long for the peoples of Africa. Despite several attempts at unification in the aftermath of independence, the OAU was becoming obsolete and in many ways failed in its primary mission of uniting all Africans. It was to reaffirm these ideals that new impetus was brought to the organization. Thus, on May 26, 2001, the African Union was born in Addis Ababa. This new Pan-African organization was designed on the model of the European Union (EU) with an executive, a central bank, a monetary fund, a parliament, and a court. The Organization of African Unity, after thirty-nine years of existence, had a mixed assessment. If the organization had pushed a lot of demands to end the Apartheid system in South Africa and played successful mediation in the Comoros Islands, it was “absent” during the Rwandan genocide, the conflicts in the Congo, and failed to bring peace to many countries. Besides, the OAU carried the image of the “club of dictators” of Africa. This reform would consist in dusting the organization, providing it with new statutes and new means. This plan was set for an African renaissance. However, the obstacles facing this immense ambition are numerous. Unlike Europe, which has grown over several decades, the African Union is made up of 54 countries with different cultures, political regimes, and economies. Poverty and diseases of all kinds ravage Africa. The continent is still devastated by conflicts exploited by outside powers. The African Union aimed to change the image of the black continent in the new years to come.
CHAPTER 2

THE AFRICAN INFLUENCE ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE RISE OF BLACK POWER

The relationship between Africa and its diaspora has long been that of mutual interests. More than any other peoples of African descent, African Americans played a significant role in these interactions. Their commitments to Africa were religious, political, cultural, and philanthropic. As Godfrey Mwakikagile corroborates:

Africa has always been in the consciousness of black Americans as their ancestral homeland even if some of them have not positively identified with it. And there are those who still don’t. But even when they became Americans after they ended up in the United States in chains, they never ceased to be Africans whether some of them like it or not...Black people in the United States have ties to Africa that can never be broke even those ties are just historical and psychological because of the physical separation from their motherland.\(^59\)

Despite the physical distance between Africa and the United States, African-Americans remained connected to continental Africa through cultural and religious practices. However, Africa held ambivalent meanings for African-Americans over time. For some, Africa was not always a place of pride. For this group that subscribed to the western representation of Africa as “a land full of savages”; Africa needed uplift and redemption through humanitarian missions and Christianization.\(^60\) For others, hundreds of years of separation through the Transatlantic slave


\(^{60}\) African-Americans would organize several “salvation missions” to redeem their “lost brothers” on the continent. For more on the missionary adventures of black Americans to Africa, see Jacobs, Sylvia M. *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982; Williams, Walter L. *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa, 1877-1900*. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.
trade meant that they had no ties with the continent. Consequently, Africa was nothing more than a land from where their ancestors were forcefully taken. For some others, Africa is an ancestral homeland. Hence, Africa, whether geographical or imagined is a source of pride, their motherland and also, fatherland.

Under the Pan-African movement, African-Americans led by W.E.B Du Bois brought their expertise to Africa and reinforced their relationship with the continent beyond the only ancestral links for the liberation struggles of black people. If their earliest "reconnection" with continental Africa took the shape of a veiled form of intellectual superiority, the first half of the twentieth century was different. African-Americans looked to Africa for inspiration on its anticolonial struggle. Africa, then became a political project for the African diaspora since the emancipation of the continent from colonialism implied universal Black freedom. Put differently, ending imperialism in Africa could inspire the end of racism in the U.S. As James H. Meriwether confines, the changing attitudes of African Americans towards Africa in the mid-twentieth century, occurred due to changing episodes in contemporary African history and its impacts on African American liberation struggles from 1935 to 1961.

Some of the historical events in Africa that shaped the African-American civil rights movement include the nonviolent resistance and the Defiance Campaign in South Africa in 1952, which “initiated a new chapter in black’s engagement with African resistance to white supremacy.” Other notable events like the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya from 1952 to 1960 and

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61 Meriwether, 91.
the independence of Ghana in 1957 “became powerful symbols that pushed African Americans to reconstruct their images of contemporary Africa and the terms of their relationship with it.”

While limited academic literature engages the collaboration between African and African-American liberation movements, existing literature makes the following suggestions. Firstly, the 1960s marked the independence of several African nations on the one hand and the rise of civil rights and Black movement in the U.S. on the other hand. Secondly, African students in the United States were in fact collaborators who urged African-American students to challenge racism, push for more demands from the government like African liberation leaders did. Thirdly, the African anti-colonialist leaders were role models for black American students who “were envious of the African independence movement and vaguely moved by it.”

In fact, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) members took a trip to Africa in 1964 in search of “ideological insights” and were fascinated by the newly independent African countries and their achievements. Fourthly having seen, black lawyers, pilots, and bankers in Africa, this trip would profoundly change the way the delegates, conceived Africa and their struggle in America. They reconsidered their problem beyond the geographical boundaries of the United States and viewed it as an internationalist. Thus, a historical reference to Africa, the motherland and also a contemporary in liberation struggle served as a framework for combatting injustice in the U.S. Like the delegates of SNCC, many African-Americans in search of real meaning for their lives traveled frequently to Africa in an attempt to reconnect their roots.

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62 Meriwether, 150.
64 Ibid., 134.
Nonetheless, some reclaimed their African roots by creating their version of Africa in the Americas through cultural practices that related to their struggles. For those who could not make a trip to Africa like the delegates of the SNCC, they reconnected the continent through cultural practices adaptable to their daily struggles. This was done through the wearing and bearing of African signs from clothing to names; the invention of a substitute African identity; and finally a psychic and cultural return to Africa. Moreover, the substitute return to Africa was orchestrated, on an individual and communal level.

In many cases, African-Americans developed a memory construction and a vision of the land of their ancestors. This vision implied a desire of “repatriation” as well as an identity that results in sharing and a consciousness of solidarity and transnational connections and advocacies on different issues.65 The institution of slavery that transformed Africans into “new people” demanded that they forget their names, clans, and ancestral lands. However, individually and collectively, they resisted by various means to keep their “Africanity” alive.

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The life of Kwame Ture⁶⁶ best exemplifies the impact of Africa on returnee SNCC delegates. When he spoke about Black Power in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1966, he encapsulated the frustrations of inner city blacks eager to see real changes within their communities. To break with the “passivity” associated with the civil rights movement, Kwame Ture encouraged the communities to fight for their rights. One of the main objectives of the Black Power movement was to push African-Americans to be proud of themselves by advocating the embrace of their roots, history, and culture as Africans. As Kwame Ture posits, “We are Africans; there can be no question about that. We came from Africa, our race is African. The things that always distinguish us from white people, Europeans, are all African things.”⁶⁷ Thus, once they were proud, of who they were and succeeded to overcome the lasting psychological trauma of slavery and forced assimilation, then they could define their goals and lead their organizations. Kwame Ture also advocated the need for Black institutions and businesses in black-majority cities and neighborhoods due to threatening economic and political pressures.

Black Power leaders also placed the struggle in an international context. Not only did they seek social justice in the U.S, but they also tried to end all forms of colonization and imperialism. Thus, as oppressed people in the United States, Black Power’s advocates included African-Americans as part of the family of the global oppressed like South Americans, Asians, and Africans; or as it is called the “Third World.” By identifying their struggle with Africans and the rest of the world under the yoke of imperialism, African-Americans redefined their meaning of

⁶⁶ Also known as Stokely Carmichael, he was one of the leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).
blackness too. In this internationalist framework, being black is not defined only by the color of the skin, but by the prejudices suffered by the oppressed across the world. The Black Power movement like other advocates of black internationalism advanced the existence of a bipolar and an even global racial, economic, and political order of one comprising of predominantly white people, capitalist, and imperialist nations and the other a world of people of color, oppressed and disenfranchised nations. This is why Vijay Prashad argues in his book, *The Darker Nations: A People’s history of the Third World*, “unity for the people of the Third World came from a political position against colonialism and imperialism, not from any intrinsic cultural or racial commonalities.” As a result, African-Americans identified themselves doubly with Africans through ancestral links and their shared struggles against oppression.

Complementing the international approach of Kwame Ture is another Black liberation leader of the 1960s, Malcolm X. On returning to the United States after traveling throughout Africa, Malcolm X desired a radical path to Black liberation that was international. For Malcolm:

> You cannot understand what is going on in Mississippi if you don’t understand what is going on in the Congo, and you cannot really be interested in what’s going on in Mississippi if you are not also interested in what’s going on in the Congo. They’re both the same. The same interests are at stake. The same ideas are drawn up. The same schemes are at work in the Congo that are at work in Mississippi. The same stake-no difference whatsoever.

He believed in the shared racial, political, and economic struggles of Africans and African-Americans. African-Americans would not gain full recognition of their humanity if they did not associate their struggle with that of their “mother” continent. For that purpose, he would travel to

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69 Quoted in Carmichael, 178.
Africa to solicit the support of newly independent African countries to make a charge of genocide against the United States at the United Nations based on the UN Genocide Convention. However, he did not succeed at this since none of these countries wanted to confront America in fear of retaliation. Many were receiving funds from the United States vital for their economic upkeep. Hence confronting the U.S was an illogical option. Furthermore, at independence, many African leaders knew they would be facing many internal and external hindrances.

As new nations, African leaders were confronted with numerous political and economic challenges. These included a fragile political system that was confronted by ethnic diversity and difference; illiteracy, healthcare challenges, poverty, inadequate infrastructural facilities, the legacies of racial colonialism and also ethnic tensions. To confront these problems, a joint union of African nations that could challenge neo-colonialism and imperialism, but also Western economic hegemony was imminent. To face all of these problems, only a common bloc, and a powerful union could stop this desire of imperialist forces to continue to rob Africa and exploit black peoples.

The role played by women in these movements had been overshadowed by the “leadership” of prominent male figures. By engaging in the struggle for liberation, African-American and African women made an indelible mark on the memory of black militancy.

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70 For an insightful analysis of the UN Genocide Convention, see treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf.
Throughout the years of struggle, they assumed pioneering roles, constantly engaging in major events and demonstrations to break the chains of individual and institutional racism. This situation of black women in a male-dominated arena did not prevent some female voices like Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, Claudia Jones, Ella Baker, and Maida Springer among others to rise and stand-alone without any “godfathers” backing up their struggle. In dismissing the women and putting them in second-class members’ position, rather than expressing a form of sexism, the leaders of the movement were afraid that black women would steal the show and “emasculate” them.

This influence of Africans on African Americans radicalization was not a properly vision of the leadership but the demands of the black masses, mainly the rural masses, including the students that would be echoed by the Black Power leaders who understood their needs and their

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74 Assata Shakur was without any doubt the epitome of standing alone women within the Black Power movement. To learn more about her life, see Shakur, Assata. *Assata: An Autobiography*. Westport, Conn.: L. Hill, 1987; Mealy, Rosemari. *’Affirming the Right to be Revolutionary’: Assata: An Interview*. New York UP, 1994.


Claudia Jones struggled to give a correct idea of the place that black women occupy and the injustice they suffered. Jones’ ability to formulate goals of autonomous struggles and convergence is reflected in her positions on the self-determination of people of African descent. She supported the idea that blacks constitute an oppressed nation, victims of colonization. She was an exciting activist at the crossroads of stories, spaces, and consciences. For more on her, see Boyce Davies, Carole. *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*. Duke University Press, Durham, 2008; Jones, Claudia, 1915-1964. *An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman*. National Women's Commission, C.P.U.S.A, New York, 1949.

expectations. Malcolm’s thinking to relate to the “Third World,” which according to Vijay Prashad has never been a place but a project for self-determination. African-Americans identified their struggle to the independence movement in Africa. This juxtaposition of Africa-Americans and Africans struggle under the banner of oppression and race has broken the spatial distance that separated America from Africa. Thus, the union of African people, inside and outside the continent, would be the only bulwark against their common enemies that were neo-colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism.

For Kwame Ture, Malcolm X, and the leaders of the Black Power Movement and African leaders, the diversity of the African diaspora should not be an obstacle to their union. However, reaching a common strategy for achieving this goal was problematic and would harm the liberation struggle of black peoples. Moreover, the failure of many of these movements in America and the newly independent African countries is attributable to the relegation of women to subordinate and often than not, traditional roles. Although they formed the majority of the militants, they had to face the sexism and the patriarchy of the leaders. The male leaders, consciously or unconsciously, masked their visibility. The new generation of activists in Francophone Africa picked up these leaders as role models to carry on their struggle. Like the delegates of the SNCC and African-Americans activists who looked to Africa for inspiration, young Africans are drawing their inspiration from black internationalism and pop culture.
CHAPTER 3

THE TROUBLEMAKING GENERATION IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

In the 1960s, when many African states gained their independence after half a century of European colonization, there was hope for rapid progress and the end of social injustice that had been enforced by the colonists. Most of the newly independent countries had everything they needed to start anew: a young population, less populated areas, arable lands, and more importantly, mineral and natural resources. But they all lacked the political integrity and vision to make the most of those assets.

Following independence, the African elite that took control of their countries made the national unity one of their major preoccupations to prevent the dismantling of their newly independent states. In the name of this national unity, they restricted the creation of political parties and established a single-party system that led to the restriction of some fundamental rights, especially those related to freedom of speech and any politically oriented associations. The post-colonial regimes confiscated democracy, and therefore the sovereignty of the people, yet promised independence. Years later, it happened that they never fought to change the system, but to “overthrow” the white people within it to benefit from the same privileges. The so-called “liberators” took advantage of the system of exploitation and profit making. Decolonization, which

should have meant turning the colonial system upside down, did not bring anything new besides empty words, more sufferings, political assassinations, civil wars, and extreme poverty.

The objectives formulated during the struggle for independence were not only a concise statement of the living conditions of the people under the yoke of Europeans but also their aspirations for a better world. The masses wrongly believed that once they gained political independence, they would benefit from the resources of their lands. They forgot that any freedom “granted” or “conquered” by any means would not be sufficient, even plausible if it was not accompanied by economic independence. In many African countries, water, electricity, communication, public infrastructures, ports, railways, and oil and mining companies, are still run by European companies, which make most of their profits in Africa. We would also be naive to think that the misfortunes of postcolonial societies are only due to the West meddling with local elections to get their mentees elected to loot their countries or assassinate embarrassing leaders. The real problem is also within Africa and its political leaders who are the puppets of big companies.

The persistent absence of democracy in many African countries, widespread poverty, and Africa's economic and cultural dependence on Europe and America led to the rising of new voices on the continent for “true independence and liberation.” With an unprecedented determination, a new Pan-Africanism dynamic, in Francophone countries, is in motion. It is carried by the voices of young people, civil society, and grassroots movements. They are mostly men and women of media and entertainers. These young people are tackling issues of democracy in Africa and the ills that plague the continent. They are not only rebuilding the anti-imperialist discourse but also are challenging their local governments.
Urgences Panafricanistes

"Ce que les élites africaines ne font pas pour le peuple, le peuple le fera par lui-même."

Kémi Séba

Translation: “What the African elite does not do for the people, the people will do it by themselves.”

Urgences Panafricanistes is a grassroots movement, which beyond the African identity claim, which is one of the central points of its struggle, carries out social actions and tries, through awareness-raising campaigns, to educate the African masses on the impact of political and economic policies on their lives. In its fight against imperialism and neo-colonialism, the organization articulates its struggle around seven points, including the "resistance to French neo-colonialism" and more particularly its economic hold through the CFA franc. In fact, for many of these movements, the situation in Francophone Africa has a lot to do with France's interference in the internal affairs of these nations. As they like to remind us at all times, France, a former colonial power, still plays a major role in the political and economic life of its former colonies. By denouncing what they call France's control over French-speaking countries, they also do not forget to attack African leaders whom they consider to be the "puppets" and the "representatives" of France in Africa. In their second point, the association says it refuses “toute ingérence exogène et [met] un point d'honneur à faire de ce début de XXIème siècle, la fin du cycle d’asservissement [du] peuple. Refus de l’ingérence politique en rejetant toute immixtion internationale dans [les]
affaires. Refus de l’ingérence monétaire par la suppression du franc CFA et plus généralement de la financiarisation [des] économies profitant aux lobbies étrangers et leurs suppléts locaux.”

In several African countries, Urgences Panafricanistes is trying to establish local branches to be as close as possible to the people for whom it is campaigning. By positioning itself as “le continuateur naturel des luttes intemporelles africaines et diasporiques,” it considers itself as a non-elitist movement. Urgences Panafricanistes also castigates the African intelligentsia, which does not seem to do enough for the African cause besides conferences and regular meetings, which, in the end, have not brought anything new for years. What is needed for these heirs of the Pan-African struggle are actions and awareness on the part of the lower classes, who too often fail to understand the speeches and litanies of their respective representatives.

Created in 2010 by Kémi Séba, Urgences Panafricanistes is campaigning against neocolonialism in Africa. In their diasporic approach, the liberation of the African continent is a struggle that goes far beyond the African context as a geographical space. It transcends the continent's borders and must be carried out everywhere and heard by all, especially the Afro-descendants. This is why the movement is also leading this struggle in Europe, starting with France, but also in the West Indies with chapters in French Guiana and Guadeloupe.

This movement has a heavy task on a continental scale, and although it has a well-defined agenda, it would like to rid "Africa of all its ills." It is a bit pretentious on the part of an organization

76 Urgences Panafricanistes. Notre Programme Politique en 7 Points, 2017, urpanaf.com/notre-charte. Accessed 30 Nov. 2018. Translation: “We reject as such any exogenous interference and make a point of honor to make this early twenty-first century, the end of the cycle of enslavement of our people. Refusal of political interference by rejecting any international intervention in our affairs. Rejection of monetary interference by the abolition of the CFA franc and more generally the financialization of our economies benefiting foreign lobbies and their local counterparts.”

77 Ibid. Translation: “…the natural continuation of timeless African and diasporic struggles.”
led by young people to eradicate, on a continental scale, the woes that do not date from today, and which roots have ramifications that go from one continent to another, and Western powers that use machinations to maintain these regimes against the will of the people. Kémi Séba\(^78\) and the members of his movement are a generation that has not experienced European colonization because they were all born after the independence of many African countries. They do not have this “direct contact” with the colonizer as the very first pan-Africanists did. Above all, they have a network of sympathizers composed of young people from all walks of life and origins.

In 2017, during a demonstration against the CFA franc, which they consider to be a "colonial currency", Kémi Séba publicly “burnt a 5000 CFA note in Senegal and was arrested and charged with destroying property belonging to the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO)"\(^79\) in front of an audience of journalists and demonstrators. This act, which he describes as symbolic to awaken African consciences, made the headlines in many countries. The liberation of the African people, in particular, that of the ironically called France-Africa, inevitably requires monetary and financial independence, economic decolonization after the political and administrative decolonization achieved in the 1960s. This financial independence would be the beginning of the materialization of a real “Second Independence” for these countries. Kémi Séba and the members of Urgences Panafricanistes are targeting the CFA franc that is a currency used in fourteen countries\(^80\) in West and Central Africa, and French treasury backs it. According to the

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\(^78\) Né Stellio Gilles Robert Capo Chichi in 1981, in Strasbourg, France, Kémi Séba holds a dual citizenship from France and Benin.


members of the movement, the currency is preventing development in those countries because France still holds a *de facto* veto on the boards of the two central banks within the CFA franc zone.

Moreover, in 2017, Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission President, said “I don’t see a real desire of Africans to leave this zone which gives a certain degree of visibility to Africa. Something that I am not particularly keen about is to give young African people the impression that Europe or France is imposing its currency in Africa.”81 For him and many French officials including the then president Francois Hollande and current president Emmanuel Macron, African civil society should stop blaming others for their misfortunes and woes. In Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso, Macron talking about the polemic around the currency said, “On this subject, don’t have a simply post-colonial or anti-imperialist approach, it wouldn’t make sense, that’s not imperialism, it’s not true...France will go along with the solution put forward by your leaders.”82 President Macron is suggesting that the currency is, in fact, beneficial to the African states that are sharing it and it guarantees financial stability in these countries. He wanted to remind the young students of the University of Ouagadougou to stop considering the CFA franc “as a political tool to control African economies and polities and also as a device for transferring, with minimal risk, economic surpluses from the African continent to France and Europe.”83

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However, the misfortune of some countries that have left the CFA zone, such as Mali, and the disaster that this has subsequently created in its economy and its return to the zone in 1984, makes more than one nation to rethink about the idea of leaving the monetary zone alone. Sékou Touré's Guinea is a blatant example. Only a few countries in North Africa have managed to stabilize their economies after leaving the franc zone. On the side of African governments, most of which are supporters of the CFA, it is a bulwark of stability that helps to avoid inflation.

Overall, the debate around the CFA is growing in the countries that use it. Everyone has their arguments at stake. It is becoming a recurrent subject in African capitals for not only the elite, but also a critical mass of the population. With the advocacy of Urgences Panaficanistes and Kémi Séba militancy and many other grassroots movements, now many voices are rising against the CFA franc in many countries. If Urgences Panaficanistes focuses on economic independence among other demands, Y en a Marre and Le Balai Citoyen are pushing for more citizen participation and democratic transition.

**Y en a Marre (We are Fed Up) and Le Balai Citoyen (The Citizen Broom)**

Y en a Marre was founded in 2011 as an association of hip-hop artists and journalists. In the beginning, the founding members Thiat and Kilifeu from the band Keurgui of Kaolack, Fadel Barro and Alioune Sané, and others were dealing with issues pertaining to Senegal, before going beyond their borders. Senegal is one of the few politically stable countries in West Africa. One of the few that never experienced the demon of coups. Although Casamance is an unstable area, Senegal as a whole has been a model of a peaceful country in a turbulent West Africa. In 2000, with the election of the eternal opposition leader to Abdou Diouf's socialist regime, President Wade opened a new chapter in Senegalese democracy. Senegal has once again demonstrated its maturity.
and showed that free and transparent elections could be held in Africa. On a continent accustomed to post-election violence, Wade's election meant a complete change and upheaval not only for the Senegalese people, but also for other African nations, especially neighboring countries. Years later, Wade, like most African presidents, wanted to remain in power through constitutional machinations. However, it was not the tampering of the constitution that created a feeling of frustration in Senegal, but rather the recurrent power outage in Dakar, the capital city. According to Aliou Sané, they “discussed the fact that a group of imams from Guediawaye had mobilized themselves to speak out against the constant cuts in electricity...If the elderly are taking a stand, how come we, the young, don’t?...The expression “y en a marre” described the general feeling of the population very well and quickly agreed on that name.”

Their mission is not only to denounce the shortcomings and evils of society, but also to raise public awareness, so that they can actively participate in political decisions and communicate their dissatisfaction when necessary. It is these types of new citizens that they call the New Type of Senegalese (NTS) “who are responsible and conscious, who participate in society, who care about where they throw their rubbish, who contribute to the community...It wasn’t only about politics.” This new type of Senegalese who they would like to see, is the one who does not sell his ballot and who realizes the stakes and challenges of his country. Above all, the one who understands that he has power as a citizen to change things in his country.

Beyond their local demands, they have a more extensive program that focuses on the continent starting with West Africa. They believe that “the countries in West Africa all suffer from the same problems – more or less, which is governance and leadership.”86 The anger that young people are expressing through pop culture, social media, and street demonstrations are the sum of decades of bad governance, corruption, embezzlement, and many other woes. Y en a Marre and many significant movements on the continental level are part of a universal discontent of economically disadvantaged people. The Arab Spring gave the impetus in Africa in 2010 that ousted some of the dictators in North Africa. The protest and the new social front opened by this generation is the symbol of a generation of Africans who refuse to remain silent on matters that concern them. This generation with few resources has become the spearhead of an entire nation, the bridge between all vulnerable segments of society, young and old, men and women, and intellectuals and illiterate. Senegal would thus become a 'laboratory' for West African youth in search of a real change not only in political life, but also in their daily lives.

In 2012, they succeeded in ousting President Wade who was running for a third term. After this important episode of their activism, they started to inspire and reach other movements beyond Senegal. For Fadel Barro, young Africans must speak about what is happening on the continent as a whole, and not only in their country.87 With that in mind, in March 2015, Y en a Marre and Le Balai Citoyen from Burkina Faso went to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in March 2015. They were arrested by the Congolese government and put in jail. A few days later, they were released and expelled from the country. This trip to the Congo is highly crucial in the struggle of

86 Ibid.
Africa’s youth, because it shows a new form of cross-border relationship between young people, and goes beyond the traditional moral support in hard times that African people have for other countries without going there and standing physically for what they believe in.

Like Y en a Marre, Le Balai Citoyen, which was created by reggae artist Sams’K Le Jah and rapper Serge Bambara in 2013, contributed to the defeat of the regime of Blaise Compaoré in Burkina Faso, in 2014. President Compaoré ruled Burkina Faso for nearly 27 years. When he decided to amend the constitution to allow himself another term in office, the members of Le Balai Citoyen voiced the frustrations of their community for better governance. Their commitment paid off when the army, strong supporters of the president, stepped in and overthrew the government. In November 2015, new democratic elections were held after twenty-seven years of dictatorship.

The slogan of Le Balai Citoyen: "Our number is our strength!” is particularly eloquent because it speaks volume about the majority of the people, the young, who are facing unemployment and are living under difficult conditions. This slogan is completed by a second: "Together we are never alone!" What Le Balai Citoyen proposes is to unite all forces, regardless of urban or rural origin, age, education, religion, and ethnicity. In this respect, the image of each twig composing the broom is very symbolic because only a unified movement at local, national or continental level get rid of corrupt regimes and dictatorships. The success of the project is thus linked to the cohesion and unity of its members. In their charter, the Balai Citoyen defines itself as “a movement committed to the struggle for the emancipation of peoples and the establishment of democracy with a human face in Burkina Faso and Africa.”

Dealing both with domestic and continental issues is the new creed of the young generations of African activists.

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Urgences Panafricanistes, Y en a Marre, Le Balai Citoyen, and many other youth movements in Africa are in line with the Pan-African philosophy, or at least, its continental form because they exchange across borders and have for role models former Pan-African leaders such as Malcolm X, Bob Marley, Marcus Garvey, Thomas Sankara, and Kwame Nkrumah. Starting with local demands, they have a continental agenda, which is to create in each country a youth movement that would speak about the demands of the population. By stepping in the political debate in countries where they do not originate, they are ignoring the colonial boundaries that are the legacy of enduring balkanization of Africa. They propose new ways of thinking and dealing with issues in their respective communities and beyond. In doing so, they send a strong message that change in Africa should be a bottom-up process and not the contrary. Their dynamism reaffirms the uniqueness of their struggle and aspirations for a better Africa, and contradict at the same time the narrative of the pessimism of young Africans who are fleeing en masse to Europe for a better life and who believe there is nothing they can do on the continent to change their daily realities.

In addition to music that they use to reach a large audience in national languages, Facebook is a powerful tool that helps those movements to get their messages across. They are also supported in that task by local radio stations. In doing so, they are closer to rural populations who have been forgotten by the decision-makers of Addis Ababa. This “Conscious Generation,” a term coined by Claudy Siar, the famous Pan-African Guadeloupean Radio France Internationale (RFI) host of the program Couleurs Tropicales, is becoming more and more committed and determined to change their lives. These past years, they have repeatedly demonstrated their importance with a

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89 He was the organizer of a demonstration in Paris following the scandal of slave auctions in Libya caught on camera in November 2017.
mobilization force that has ousted many regimes. To quote Thiat, from Y en a Marre, they want to create, “An African Union of the people” to bring real changes to Africa. The repression they are facing in their countries speaks volumes about their importance and how effective these movements are.
CONCLUSION

Five decades after the creation of the Organization of African Unity and more than a century after the London Conference, Africa has entered a new dynamic of progress towards social justice and economic freedom, led by young people who are aware of the challenges they face and the imperative to give new impetus to Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. They are more likely to quote Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Bob Marley, Patrice Lumumba or Thomas Sankara, who represented for them the truthful voice of the African revolution. Social media has liberalized the voice of African youth. They have turned most of the active users into “activists,” no matter their background, class, or geographical location. They convey notions of democracy and fight against corruption. We are witnessing a radicalization of social movements faced with the failures of political transitions in certain countries, but also with a dichotomy between a "politicalized" civil society, which is made up of urban and intellectual, and the explosion of an associative environment most popular, in rural and urban areas.

These cultural leaders decide to do politics outside political parties and traditional opposition. By integrating the values of continental Pan-Africanism and positioning themselves as a counter-power not only against neo-colonialism, but also against their governments, they are producing another narrative about Pan-Africanism in the 21st century. They detach themselves in their strategies, from early day Pan-African leaders in Africa like Nkrumah, Lumumba, Nyerere or Sekou Toure, by not running for office, but rather as positioning themselves as the watchdogs of democracy and change. This is a new chapter that is being written in the long history of the liberation struggle in Africa. Just as the original and historical Pan-Africanism was a concept built by the African diaspora, youth movements in Africa have been influenced by Rap and Reggae,
two musical genres that come respectively from America and Jamaica. They are using these musical genres to convey their messages in local languages and are becoming the voices of the voiceless. This activism of African youth is in symbiosis with that of the diaspora, mainly performers and athletes. African-American cultural ambassadors are expressing their commitment to Africa once again as seen in many video clips, outfits, duets with African musicians and singers, and philanthropic endeavor in Africa. This new Pan-Africanism is on the move.
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