



# Kongomano la Mageuzi: A Luta Continua!

By Willy Mutunga



The launch of Kongomano La Mageuzi-VUMA (KLM-VUMA) comes at a time when COVID-19 has brought home to the planet, the African continent and our country that we must reject all normality past and present and imagine new societies that are just, free, peaceful, non-militaristic, ecologically safe, egalitarian and equitable, non-racist, non-ethnic, gender-just, prosperous, and socialist. Of course, from lessons learnt over the last 100 years, socialism is being critiqued, historicised, and problematised in various creative ways. The focus seems to be on consolidating the strengths of socialism and mitigating its weaknesses. Public and organic intellectuals and movements are engaged in the quest for a paradigm or paradigms that will liberate the planet.

It is therefore useful to position KLM-VUMA — this movement of civil society organisations, social movements, and individuals committed to the transformation of the economic, social, cultural, spiritual, ideological and political status quo of our motherland — within the global, regional, and national contexts, so that the movement can clearly see the challenges that lie ahead, the difficulties that it will have to surmount.

The great African Marxist revolutionary Samir Amin has written extensively on the exploitation, oppression, and domination of the Global South by the imperialism of the West (neoliberalism), or what he calls the imperialism of the Triad (America, Europe, and Japan) with its satellite countries comprising Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In Europe, Germany seems to dominate the former states of the Soviet Empire, while Russia has not managed to remove itself from the clutches of the

imperialism of the West. Nevertheless, neoliberalism as a paradigm for socio-economic life and politics has failed.

Social democratic societies seem to be consistently moving to the right, particularly in Europe and Canada (where there has been a muted social democracy). The Nordic countries and Holland —which experimented with a model of social democracy that prioritised public goods and radically mitigated capitalism —also seem to have moved to the right and are comfortably installed within the orbit of the imperialism of the West.

China has become the focus of attention for many liberation movements. Afro-Chinese relations are examined and debated but a consensus is yet to be reached on whether China is a neoliberal imperialist country. In my view it is. We hear the beating of the global drums of war as we witness cyber warfare and geopolitical positioning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Kenya, and indeed the Global South, has a great opportunity to regain its sovereignty amidst the growing tensions and hostilities between the West and China. We must take this opportunity to redress the historical injustices of colonialism. We should not be trooping to the US and the UK to sign skewed free trade agreements. It is this reimagining of Kenya and Africa — and its place in the world — that KLM-VUMA seeks to ignite.

On the African continent, the burning question is how to bring about the resurrection of radical people-to-people Pan-Africanism as envisioned, not by the leaderships of the African Union, but by the people of Africa themselves. Debates on this issue are reaching back to the political positions of Nyerere, Nkrumah, Cheikh Anta Diop, Amilcar Cabral, Gaddafi (particularly his call for African Unity to include a free African currency) and others in the African continent and Diaspora.

Closer to home the pandemic has exposed the wicked rule of the Kenyan elite and their foreign backers. Like their foreign patrons, our elite believe money is all it takes to organise and mobilise in politics; the Constitution decrees otherwise. The commons and public goods have been commodified. The mitigating vision of the 2010 Constitution has been subverted. Poverty has become a way of life for the majority of our compatriots. The middle class is shrinking and joining the ranks of the working class. In his time, J.M. Kariuki feared for a Kenya of ten millionaires and ten million beggars. Now we have (according to an Oxfam Report) a Kenya of 8,300 Kenyans billionaires and multi-millionaires whose assets equal those of the rest of us combined — all the 47 million of us.

The status quo in land, resources, the ownership of the commons and public goods is unacceptable and unsustainable. Kenya has a sovereign debt that makes it difficult for Kenyans to call our country free and independent. We have an elite that is daily engaged in grand corruption and all the ills of an illicit economy. President Uhuru Kenyatta has admitted in public that KSh2 billion is stolen daily in Kenya. As to why he has done nothing about it, your guess is as good as mine.

The Kenyan elite are without a doubt leaders unto darkness and death. They are geniuses in the politics of division and in the politics of inhumanity; the data proving this fact is incontrovertible. They have managed to keep Kenyans divided for the last 57 years and their ongoing intra-elite succession struggles seek to snuff out other political narratives and kill off any nascent alternative political leadership. It would not surprise me to see the opposing factions come together in the near future in the name of national unity; one only need analyse the alliances formed by our elites since independence.

The Kenyan elite have subverted the vision of the constitution and corrupted all its transformative ingredients. The opposition has joined the government, a faction of which now claims to be the opposition. We have a continuation of the dictatorships of the past.

The Kenyan middle class — particularly the lower and the middle middle-class — is being pushed back down into the ranks of the working class while the upper middle class, in its quest to join the ranks of the elite, continues to subsidise those elite. The entire Kenyan middle class actually subsidises the state. The monies they pay to the extended families to enable them to access public goods (education, housing, health, employment, water) even as they are heavily taxed, should motivate them to join the ranks of this movement. Will they?

Yes, we know Kenyans have resisted dictatorship since the 19th century. This resistance has taken place both underground and overtly. The Mau Mau War of Liberation fits within this trajectory of resistance and struggle for our land, our national resources, and our freedom and human dignity. History records that at no point did Kenyans ever stop struggling for justice, freedom, emancipation, and democracy. So why should we stop now? Kenyans have always consolidated the gains achieved and struggled for greater social reform.

There have been great leaps forward since independence, through the second liberation to the constitution making that culminated in the third liberation, the promulgation of the current constitution on 27 August 2010. The struggle for the full implementation of the constitution continues, with the Kenyan elite subverting its vision and clawing back the gains of 2010 in order to restore the status quo.

But there are challenges to be faced, and questions whose answers will give KLM-VUMA its manifesto, clarify its United Front ideological and political position, state its message clearly to the working class, the middle class and the popular nationalist and democratic forces, the baron-elite compradors, and the foreign interests of the West and East.

To begin with, we must study our history and learn about those who were here before us and about the pitfalls they faced so that we can go to the field well prepared. The essential question we must ask ourselves is: what has KLM-VUMA learnt from past movements and individuals including Me Kitilili, Waiyaki wa Hinga, Muthoni Nyanjiru, the Mau Mau Liberation Movement with its female and male leaders, the various religious and education movements such as Dini ya Msambwa and Dini ya Kaggia? What have we learnt of the struggles of Markhan Singh, Pio Gama Pinto, the Kenya People's Union (KPU), the Kenya Socialist Alliance (KASA), Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the December Twelfth Movement, the Mwakenya Movement? What of the various movements of exiled Kenyans after 1982, the second liberation movement, Wangari Maathai, the National Convention Assembly-National Convention Executive Council (NCA-NCEC), and the constitution-making movements that gave us the progressive 2010 Constitution?

We must not forget to look outside Kenya, to Africa and beyond, to see which movements are working and those that aren't. What has made certain movements successful and why others have failed. We must use this age of technology to learn about the past, understand our present and have a vision for the future — and a strategy and responses ready for when we do hit those walls.

Have we learnt the lessons from all these movements, their strengths and their weaknesses? Have we assimilated the principle of non-partisanship having learnt from the movements that received foreign funding which incapacitated them politically? Have we interrogated the importance of alliances with political parties that reflect our ideology and politics? Are we ready to contest for political power so that we can implement the 2010 Constitution and correct its weaknesses? Have we reflected on whether the movement will incubate alternative political leadership?

Which movements come under the umbrella of KLM-VUMA? Is DeCOALONIZE — which has shouted a loud NO! to the nuclear power and coal plants that our political leadership wants to obtain corruptly from countries that are discarding them) on board? The social justice movements should

be on board, as indeed should the artists and movements in this country.

Have we analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the elites (economic, social, cultural, spiritual, ideological, and political) and the challenges posed? How shall we deal with the politics of division?

How shall we deal with the challenge of mobilising and organising? Are we ready to raise our funds from Wanjiku since we do not have finances?

How will we guarantee free, fair, peaceful, credible, and acceptable elections?

Will we build on the gains we shall make in 2022?

Will we become the people's opposition even if we do not win in 2022?

Will our movement reflect the face of Kenya? Will this movement be led by the youths (women and men) of this country who reflect the vision for the change that we need?

What is the movement's position on the resurrection of radical Pan-Africanism? Do we have positions on Palestine?

Are we anti-imperialist and anti-Kenyan elites?

What is our position on the rights of LGBTIQ+?

What do we consider to be the major weaknesses of the 2010 Constitution?

Do we believe that our movement has all the expertise it needs to serve as a government in waiting?

Are we going to dust off all the reports of the various historical injustices in this country and implement them?

If KLM-VUMA comes to power, will we pursue revenge politics against the elite? And if so, have we sufficiently analysed the political consequences?

What social reforms will we undertake?

What political messages will we have for Kenyan capitalists oppressed by the elite?

What political messages will we have for the foreign interests (a euphemism for the imperialism of the West and East)?

Have we thought through which anti-baronial political parties we will work with and why?

Have we clarified the ideological and political ingredients of a United Front that is anti-imperialist and anti-baronial?

Have we identified the public and organic intellectuals we shall work with? No movement can survive without organic intellectuals.

These are some of the burning questions that Kenyans must address in order to provoke a new political awakening, imagine a new politics, a new humanity, and bring about a fourth liberation — the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution.

A luta continua, vitória é certa.

The struggle continues, victory is certain.

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