Linking the Past With the Present in Kenya
Further Reflections at the Book Launch
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Book &Cover Design by Peter Maina
Organic Intellectuals Network

Who are we?
The Organic Intellectuals Network is a broad-based collective of writer-activists and researchers from the Social Justice Movement, Ukombozi Library and the Revolutionary Socialist League.

Why Organic Intellectuals?
The network of Organic Intellectuals is an idea inspired by the thoughts of Antonio Gramsci regarding the concept of the intellectual. All intellectual activity arises from specific socioeconomic circumstances. In fact, each sector of society yields its own variety of organizers, creators, mediators, and contemplators, whom Gramsci labels “organic intellectuals.”

The network aims to generate writers and thinkers inside the movement advocating for social justice. It is necessary to have a group of individuals who are in regular study, and organizing within the social justice centers as well as other spaces and organizations to provide ideological direction for the fight for social justice.

Our Publication History
In 2021, the Network has produced a reflection of ‘Kenya: A Prison Notebook’ by Maina wa Kinyatti published online by Mathare Social Justice Centre and ROAPE. Kenya Organic Intellectuals Reflect on the Legacy of Pio Gama Pinto published by Daraja Press reflecting on ‘Pio Gama Pinto – Kenya’s Unsung Martyr’ launched on the 12th of December, 2021 is our second publication.

A short video has been produced in collaboration with Hood TV on the history of the formation of the Organic Intellectual’s Network as well as the ecological crisis. It’s available at https://africasacountry.com/2021/11/organic-intellectuals

The booklet includes solidarity statements from Shiraz Durrani, Prof Issa G. Shivji, Dr Willy Mutunga and an additional article written by Shiraz Durrani from the Awaaz Magazine in 2005.
Introduction

The book launch was attended by more than 100 people drawn from the Revolutionary Socialist League, Ukombozi Library, Social Justice Movement, Communist Party of Kenya, university students and other members from different societal setup. The occasion was also graced by Dr. Willy Mutunga, Kenya’s former Chief Justice, South Sudanese scholar and revolutionary intellectual Prof Peter Adwok among other members of the public who recognized the legendary Pio as an astute leader worth commemorating.


Gacheke Gachihi, Coordinator of Mathare Social Justice Centre read some sections of the book during the launch
Conduct of the event

The history and composition of the Organic Intellectual Network and their work were briefly explained to the participants by the moderators. The network comprises young community organizers from the social justice movements and comrades from the Revolutionary Socialist League, Communist Party of Kenya and Ukombozi Library. The writers decided to document their collective analysis and reflection of the contributions of revolutionary leaders and fighters in the country’s liberation struggle, with an aim to explore and understand history as a guide to action.

While narrating the life history of Pio Gama Pinto, independent Kenya’s first politically assassinated leader, it’s important not only to admire the personality of Pio Gama but also to reflect on his lifetime sacrifices in the freedom struggle in Kenya and other parts of the world, i.e., in India and Mozambique. When comrade Pinto, a father, journalist, politician and above all a socialist freedom fighter was gunned down at the tender age of 38 in February 1965 in Nairobi, the system didn’t envisage that his legacy and memory would inspire millions of people many years after his death who will write and celebrate contributions.

Former Chief Justice of Kenya Dr Willy Mutunga and Participants at the launch
Reflecting on the legacy of Pio Gama, 14 members of the Organic Intellectual Network remembered Pio Gama Pinto in a way never been discussed before and rightfully corrects the historical biasness and forgetfulness by which the legacy of Pinto has been subjected to. In her, reflections one of the comrades echoes Pinto’s contribution towards making Kenya free from social inequality and economic exploitation that the then regime had subjected Kenyans to and to which ironically is being subjected to citizens by the present regime. Some comrades remember him for his plan to draft a counter document to what the Sessional Paper No 10 (the economic blueprint for Kenya) that had been drafted by Tom Mboya (allegedly drafted by the American CIA) that would expose the capitalist nature of the Kenyatta regime and usher Kenya into a socialist path.

Martin Mavenjina from KHRC addressing the participants

Pinto’s call for class struggle as the means of struggle against imperialism and colonialism was also been reflected by comrades. His contribution in the formation of Lumumba Institute to train KANU cadres along socialist thoughts and organizing with the goal of leading the country to a socialist path can be seen as the actions of a dedicated and committed man with deep understanding of the struggle and the material conditions of the people. Pinto believed that if freedom was to be achieved, then it must be freedom for everyone and by dedicating his life to such a call despite coming from a middle-class family, is a challenge to all struggling for freedom.
Participants at the book launch

As an anti-colonial hero and a dedicated revolutionary for the struggle of African liberation, Pinto epitomized the qualities of a true socialist fighter and died trying to help the people. He was a master strategist and tactician who understood the importance of uniting people across the globe in the fight for similar goals and political objectives. This can well be seen in his contribution in Mozambique and his association with Malcolm X in shaping his ideology in regards to black struggles and struggles of other people of colour against the imperialist empire.

Described as an urban guerrilla who didn’t shy from being in the battlefield with his fellow compatriots, Pinto gave his all at a time when some leaders betrayed their motherland for economic favours from the colonial masters. His ability to source for funds for contribution in the struggle was an act of courage and love towards the struggle. His radical views in the journalism world made it possible to highlight Kenya’s struggle to the world and that this would be the backbone crucial in the ultimate independence of the country.

Another participant highlighted Pio Gama Pinto’s crucial and valuable vision on how capitalism would manifest itself among a few African elites, and the backbone of neo-colonial occupation in the continent. In remembering Pinto, the comrades and the participants acknowledged Shiraz Durrani for his contribution in narrating people’s struggles and publishing the revolutionary book. The book, together with the Reflections are good historical evidence, they are materials that would expose young people to an understanding of the roles played by different liberation heroes and in turn shape their political ideology.
Prof. Peter Adwok, Dr Willy Mutunga and writers of Organic Intellectuals Network

Conclusion
The contributions of comrades Nicholas Mwangi and Lewis Maghanga in editing the book and spearheading the organic intellectual network were noted. The dedication of the comrades in their ability to study, and reflect logically and critically on the book and their relation to the current system and its conditions was commended as it shows the length the young people are willing to transverse in their quest for learning the true history of our people, nation and struggles. The contributions of Pio Gama Pinto, just like comrade Che, Castro, Lenin, Cabral, Mao among others, is eternal. Their legacies, contributions, sacrifices and benevolence towards true liberation will always live and inspire generation after generation in the struggle for socialism forever.
Shiraz Durrani – Solidarity Statement

Greetings from London to all the writers of the book, to Dr Willy Mutunga, to the organisers of this event and to all those present at the launch. Coronavirus has prevented me from coming to Kenya, but I share my good wishes for the launch and give my reflections on it.

The launch of this book is significant on two counts. The first relates to the authors of this book, and the second relates to its content. The authors are the Kenyan Organic Intellectuals. They explain their vision, work, approach and the significance of their name in a video by MSJC (Mathare Social Justice Centre, 2021). They are clear about what the solution to the problems of working people in Kenya is. Another world is possible, they say. Only socialism can provide what people want, what people need and what they demand as their right. In this, they share Pio Gama Pinto’s vision. It is no accident that they chose to reflect on the legacy of Pinto. At the same time, it is important to understand the role of intellectuals in our society, in a class perspective. Intellectuals, like everybody else, are on one or the other side of the class divide under capitalism. Abdul-Yekin (2008) shows the role of bourgeois intellectuals in the impoverishment of African countries and their working people:

The African intellectual has been part and parcel of all the African policy decision making from the local government to the various national governments and to the [African] Union government. 85% of all the advisers of the African governments comprised of the so-called “intellectuals”. They have wrongly advised and helped to plunder the resources of Africa by leading the delegations of Africans in signing foreign contracts that never existed. These intellectuals have worked and headed key positions in African institutions and have connived with others to sabotage us all. In fact, the African intellectuals are the architects of the African plight of today with its gloomy future.

The ruling classes, guided by imperialism, have used such intellectuals to justify and legitimise their exploitation of working people and their loot of national resources. However, Abdul-Yekin fails to see the class position of intellectuals, as not all intellectuals are part of the scene he describes above. A class society is, in a sense, a mirror society. What exists on one side of the class divide also exists on the other, but with a qualitative difference. All aspects of life on the bourgeoisie side are mirrored in the working-class society. Thus, intellectuals exist on both the sides. But whereas bourgeoisie intellectuals support their class, the class system, capitalism and imperialism, working class intellectuals oppose all these. It is their class position that decides whether an intellectual is part of the oppressors or whether they are rooted among working people and are on the side of the oppressed and exploited. Just as the bourgeoisie need intellectuals to create an ideology and a vision to justify their class rule and capitalism, the working class needs its intellectuals to create its ideology and its vision that explains and justifies their struggle for liberation and sees its future in socialism and communism. Abdul-Yekin mentions the role of the bourgeois intellectuals; the Kenyan Organic Intellectuals are the opposite of the bourgeois intellectuals — working-class intellectuals.

African history, as written and popularised by bourgeois intellectuals and ruling classes, has failed to see the contribution of working-class intellectuals in the liberation struggle. They remain undocumented and their ideas, experiences and learning have been marginalised in a situation where the power of the ruling class bans everything that does not promote its own interests. The intellectuals who were and are involved in resistance
to colonialism and imperialism are not allowed to be seen as intellectuals by dictates of the ruling class. They are spinned out of the history book or presented as anything but intellectuals.

They remain outside the institutions of learning as created by capitalism. Those who led the radical trade union movement in Kenya, those who organised and planned the battles against a brutal enemy, those who acquired arms, those who developed the communication system to support the armed struggle – and many others, are ignored as intellectuals by the ruling and imperialism. Their very existence is rendered invisible. Kenyan universities which are supposed to be centres of learning and research and knowledge, dare not teach and research on working class intellectuals and their achievements.

Most students in Kenya would be surprised to know that there were, and there are, intellectuals from working class in Kenya. They have never heard of them, never been taught about them, never been exposed to the learning and knowledge that have emerged from the actions and thinking of working-class intellectuals. It is in this context that the Kenyan Organic Intellectuals are making history. The very name they have chosen for themselves explains whose class interests they represent. Their perspective on history, on society and on their role are then explained by the organisations they are affiliated to — the Social Justice Movement, Ukombozi Library and the Revolutionary Socialist League. The Organic Intellectuals are hosted by the Mathare Social Justice Centre – all these organisations are working-class orientated, all seeking justice and equality, none representing the interest of the ruling classes or imperialism or capitalism. So, here’s the difference that the writers and the book make: not many intellectuals come out in the open and declare their class position in writing as one of supporting the working class and its struggles. They have nothing to gain personally from taking such a stand, perhaps even opening themselves to attacks from people’s enemies. It is their dedication to working class that motivates them. This is a departure from the ‘normal’ books written in Kenya. This is a new generation of activist writers and intellectuals who care about the interests of their class and who are prepared to research and write on working class history. And their writing is not only to record history; it is ‘not only to salvage history but also to use it as a mirror to reflect on the current political, economic and social conditions in Kenya, in order to move forward’, as the blurb puts it. Action for liberation is what guides them in their research, studies and writing, not ‘ideas for idea’s sake’, but ideas and knowledge to inform action.
The Organic Intellectuals then set out to understand this contradiction and, through their research, seek answers and possible solutions which they then share with the communities they come from.

As we launch this book today, we reflect on Pio Gama Pinto and look for ways to ensure that every child in Kenya knows what Pinto fought and died for, to ensure that his — and Mau Mau’s — vision is achieved, to ensure that he is not allowed to be forgotten by pressure from the ruling class and imperialism. The Organic Intellectuals have taken a brave step in researching his history and recording their Reflections. They need the solidarity of all those seeking justice and equality in Kenya. This is not only Pinto’s struggle, not only the struggle of the Organic Intellectuals. It is the struggle of all those who seek justice, all those who want to see the vision of Pio Gama Pinto, of Mau Mau, of Dedan Kimathi, of Makhan Singh, of Bildad Kaggia and a thousand others, intellectuals and activists who fought and sacrificed to bring justice for workers, peasants and all working people in Kenya. That is the reason that the launch of this book is held on this particular day, December 12th. That is the date of our victory over colonialism, but also the date of our enslavement to capitalism and imperialism. There is no greater struggle in Kenya today than the struggle to liberate the land and people from the cutches of the ruling class, from capitalism, from imperialism. The struggle is long, it demands many sacrifices. The Organic Intellectuals have shown us the way. We cannot but follow the example they have set. Liberate our minds, restore our history and learn the lesson that history teaches — struggle, struggle and struggle until victory. Others have done it. So can we. In the absence of action on our part, resistance becomes an abstract term, removed from the reality of lives of people. It was the action of the writers of this book that enabled the book to be written and launched today. It is appropriate therefore that we act to ensure that the message of Kenya’s war of independence is not forgotten, that the lessons of Pinto’s life and death guide us to liberate Kenya from capitalism and to build socialism.
In this, we can make a start by seeking to achieve the action I had proposed to the Task Force on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission on Pio Gama Pinto in August 2003 (Durrani, 2003):

1. Immediate independent and public investigation of the assassination of Pinto. Those responsible to be charged for their crime.
2. Compensate Pinto’s family for the immense loss they suffered with the assassination of Pinto.
3. The greatest tribute that the Government can pay Pio Gama Pinto is to show the same concern to Pinto that Pinto himself had about those who sacrificed their property, educational and other opportunities, limbs or even lives in the cause of independence. He wrote:
   The sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Kenya’s freedom fighters must be honoured by the effective implementation of the policy – a democratic, African, socialist state in which the people have the right to be free from economic exploitation and the right to social equality. Kenya’s uhuru must not be transformed into freedom to exploit, or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. Uhuru must be uhuru for the masses - uhuru from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty (Pinto, 1963, 39).

4. Erect national monuments in all major towns in Kenya to honour the memory of Pinto and other freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for Kenya’s struggle for liberation.
5. Set up a National Liberation Research, Museum and Archives Centre where the histories, publications and material culture of all national heroes can be collected and used as part of Kenya’s heritage. This needs to happen urgently so that Pinto’s contemporaries can be interviewed. Many such prominent people have died over the years and Pinto’s real history is in danger of being lost.
6. Set up a Pio Gama Pinto International Award to honour those who make an outstanding contribution to the political, economic and social liberation of Africa.
7. Set up a Pio Gama Pinto Chair of History at the University of Nairobi to encourage research on the Kenyan struggle for liberation. The action proposed in 2003 is required even more today. Perhaps the launch of this book will re-energise us to work towards achieving Pio Gama Pinto’s vision for ‘a democratic, African, socialist state’. That world is possible!

The future is Socialism!

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London
01-12-2021
Prof. Issa G. Shivji Poem- Solidarity Statement

Makamaradi katika mapambano
Nawapigia saluti
Saluti nyekundu
Saluti ya mapambano

Wanazuoni wa wavujajasho
Nawakumbatia kwa moyo
Moyo mkunjufu
Moyo wa mwanazuoni katika mapambano

Wanaharakati wa tabaka
Tabaka la wavujajasho
Tuahidi kwa sauti
Sauti ya mapambano

Watafakari wa fikra
Fikra za usoshalisti
Fikra za ukomunisti
Fikra za shujaa Pio Gama

Makada wa muungano
Muungano wa wanyonge
Muungano usioteleza
Muungano usiobabaika

Wapambanaji wa kitabaka
Tabaka la eti hohehahe
Hohehahe waliopuuza ya kutosha
Waliodhalilishwa ya kutosha
Waliokandamizwa ya kutosha
Walionyonywa ya kutosha

Sasa basi, inatosha!

Njoni kwenye medani wa mapinduzi
Mapinduzi ya walalahoi
Mapinduzi ya kupindua
Kupindua walalaheri
Kupindua wenzie walalahai
Kupindua bosii yao, Mr Beberu

Leo ni siku ya Kusherehekea
Kusherehekea mashujaa
Mashujaa wa wavujajasho
Mashuja wa hohehahe
Mashujaa wa walalahoi
Leo ni siku ya kujifunza
Kujifunza kutoka kwa Wakufunzi
Wakufunzi wasiona linganiishi
Wakufunzi waliojitolea hali, mali na maisha

Tumkumbuke shujaa Pio Gama Pinto
Na makamaradi wenzake
Wanajeshi wa Jeshi la kukuomboa
Jeshi la Ukombozi wa Mama Ardhi
(Kenya Land Freedom Army)

Tusimsahau jemadari Amilcar Cabral
Na Kijana Thomas Sankara
Na mpambanaji asiena fani
Komandante Ernesto Che Guevera

Tujifunze kutoka kwa Wamajumui wa Afrika
Kwame Nkrumah na Malcolm X
Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu na Tajudeen Abdel-Rahim
Amy Jaques Garvey na Claudia Jones

Tujifunze kutoka kwa Mwalimu mashuhuri
Mashuhuri kuliko wote
Mwalimu Historia
Historia ya mapambano
Mapambano ya kitabaka

Kamwe tusisahau:
Gurudumu la historia ni mapambano ya kitabaka
Tujikumbushe daima:
Nje ya Mapambano ya Kitabaka
Usoshalisti ni ndoto za Abunuwasi

Mkamaradi mwezenu Issa Bin Mariam
Aliyena jina lililosheheni majina ya miungu
Bila sifa za yeyote
Anawatakia kila la kheri
Sherehe changamshi
Na Tafakari Tunduizi

Issa Bin Mariam (Issa Shivji)
I: Who are Intellectuals?

I like Issa Shivji’s answer to this question. Intellectuals are producers and purveyors of ideas. They produce all kinds of ideas, many ideas: ideas to rationalize and legitimize, ideas to decorate and demonize and ideas to inform and entertain all kinds of ideas. They may produce ideas gratuitously or for a price—these day, more often than not, for a price.

II: Categorizing Intellectuals

Let me start with the category close to our hearts and minds today: Organic intellectuals. The definition given by Jean Ziegler in glorifying Professor Yash Tandon as an organic intellectual has the core ingredients of this category:

Antonio Gramsci was an exemplary revolutionary and an influential philosopher. He spent the last ten years of his short life in the prisons of Mussolini’s fascist dictatorship. Arrested in 1926, he died shortly after his release in 1937. In his Quaderni del carcere (Prison Notebooks), he developed, with great finesse and drawing of numerous historical examples, the theory of the organic intellectual, the intellectual who, through [her] his analyses, his [her] visions, becomes an indispensable auxiliary of social movement.

Yash Tandon incarnates perfectly this historical function of the organic intellectual. Without him, without the power of his analytical reasoning, without his vitality, without his patience in the struggle, planetary civil society would today be far less effective…we owe him a debt of great gratitude.

Radical social movements, liberation and revolutionary wars, and academic institutions find these intellectuals critical in their intellectual, ideological, and political work. Comrade Wangui Kimari, MSJC participatory Action Coordinator, comrades in the network, clearly fit this categorization. They live and work with the social movements. Like the other activists, they are soldiers of the social justice movements and have become “indispensable auxiliary” of these social movements.

III: Revolutionary Organic Intellectuals

In liberation and revolutionary wars we can name Amilcar Cabral, Chris Hani, John Garang, Dr. Peter Adwok Nyaba, Felix Mounie, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Dedan Kimathi. There are other organic intellectuals who still reflect the element of this category although not involved in liberation wars and revolutions: Micere Mugo, Wangari Mathai, Nawal El Sadawi, Angela Davis, Walter Rodney, Samir Amin, Dani Nabudere, Yash Tandon, Karim Hirji, Issa Shivji, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Maina Kinyatti, Shiraz Durrani, Alamin Mazrui, Kamoji Wachiira, Neville Alexander, to name but a few. All these organic intellectuals are connected to the academy and the movements there, but also in other social movements outside the academy. Their research is particularly critical in glorifying work of social movements that would otherwise not be known and amplified. They are also involved in publishing books and articles that call for transformation and revolution. They are auxiliaries to feminist, reproductive health, gay, women, prison, anti-racial, non-sexist, and anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements (the last being the case of Palestine).

3. All these men are rightly categorized by Issa Shivji as “revolutionary intellectuals [who] are organic intellectuals of the dominated classes, who are committed to the transformation of society.” Note 1, Abstract, at page 1.
Former Chief Justice Of Kenya Dr Willy Mutunga officially launching the book

Issa Shivji brings in class analysis in the categorization of organic intellectuals. There organic intellectuals who are auxiliaries of the status quo while “organic intellectuals of the oppressed and exploited social classes may be considered the proto-revolutionary intellectuals to the extent they seek to make hegemonic-by word and deed—the ideology of the oppressed.” The parallel here is when we talk about activism. We are all active and activist for causes, either for the status quo for the overthrow of that status quo.

IV: Public/Academic Intellectuals
Issa Shivji also writes about “metamorphosis” of intellectuals in all categories. He gives the example of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda. An organic student intellectual who chaired the University Students’ African Revolutionary Front (USARF) at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. USARF was involved in student activism at the University for democratic teaching processes, spearheading study groups by students, and making sure that professors treated students as equals intellectually. He led an armed struggle against two dictatorships in Uganda and ultimately succeeded. He came to power with creative and radical programme of transforming Uganda. He brought about peace in Uganda except in the North. Museveni has metamorphosed to a ruthless dictator, a comprador who is an agent of imperialism, a violator of human rights, and has used his state machinery of violence against his political opponents and Ugandan citizens. His initial radicalism has served him well over years as an agent of imperialism. He knows and understands imperialism and that knowledge is critical for propping up his comprador bourgeoisie class.
Those of us who have been in human rights and social justice activism in Africa have a lot of stories to tell of consequences of such metamorphosis. Indeed, the academy is littered with such metamorphosis of academic and public intellectuals. I also know of intellectuals who has subverted the status quo and joined the ranks of public, academic, and organic intellectuals. Issa argues that not all organic intellectuals are public intellectuals because “many public intellectuals give up their organic link with the oppressed masses so as not to tarnish their public image.” There is no reason to rule out a metamorphosis that regains the organic link with the oppressed masses. I believe history must be replete with such examples from social movements, revolutionary wars, and liberations struggles.

IV: Honest Intellectuals

This a category Issa Shivji credits Fidel Castro with. Castro categorized honest intellectuals paraphrased by Shivji as follows:

Honest intellectuals do not want to tell lies. They want to pursue truth and stick to the truth. But they do not want to speak truth to power. They do not want to take sides. That is not the job of intellectuals. They plead objectivity and neutrality. They desire to change but do not want to do anything about it. They are fence-sitters. As fence-sitters, they are vulnerable; inevitably, they roll over to the side of domination, their neutrality notwithstanding.

These are intellectuals who run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. Inevitably, they get shunned by hare (the masses) and get devoured by the hounds (the ruling classes). Honesty in intellectual, ideological, and political work must rest on taking sides.

V: Self-educated organic intellectuals

There is always this assumption that when we talk about intellectuals we mean those who are products of the academy. There are self-educated intellectuals who are public/academic, revolutionary organic, organic intellectuals, and honest intellectuals. They are not immune from the metamorphosis we have discussed above. A few examples come to mind, Kimathi, Mao Zedong and Malcolm X. Self-taught and engaged in radical and revolutionary work they are beacons of this category of intellectuals. Some of the comrades in the Organic Intellectuals Network are self-taught and educated. Self-teaching and education have one great pillar: It results in rescuing the weaknesses of the bookish education and its biases unless interrogated. Self-educated comrades are critical thinkers who interrogate everything believing as Hegel said that the truth is in the whole. Our formal education can a mix-up of truths, half-truths, and lies. It requires self-criticism and reflection, and above all extensive reading, research, and investigation.

VI: This Discussion Does not Exist in a Vacuum

I believe the 2022 elections is about politics of issues and not politics of division. The elections are a great opportunity for alternative and authentic leadership (alternative to the compradors and believable by the citizens). All organic intellectuals must raise the following issues during the year of elections:
• What are we doing in Somalia? Why are we wasting reasons there in a “War on Terror” that is not ours? Somalis are our sisters and brothers and we must solve our issues politically and not through war. Is war the best way for Kenya to help in the building of Somalia? Should the money spent there be put to a good use for both Somalia and Kenya? It is now time to suggest a strong East, DRC, and the Horn of Africa community. It will a community of DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Uganda and Rwanda cannot continue their militarism in DRC. The war in Ethiopia must end. That community must be in the fore-front of resurrecting radical Pan-Africanism

• Muammar Gaddafi is remembered for not only suggesting African unity, African government, but also African currency. He also suggested the bailing out of the former French colonies from their bondage by the French. Horace Campbell has documented clearly that all these issues were the causes of the bombing of Libya by NATO and the murder of Muammar Gaddafi.

• We must implement our Constitution and protect those pillars in the Constitution that are progressive. This can only be done by a leadership that is anti-imperialist and anti-compradors (barons, cartels, warlords) and creates a new Kenya and new politics

• A New Kenya will be built on the pillars of equitable distribution of land and resources, a Kenya that is free, just, gender just, non-sexist, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-gendered, and non-homophobic. There is much homophobia among African leaders. Although many of them go to places of worship I urge them to read Desmond Tutu’s book. A new Kenya must have its core the concerns of the youth and women

• A New Kenya has to seek solidarities with the Global South and support such causes as the one of reparations in the Caribbean. Kenyan relationship with the US and Britain cannot be important than the struggles of our sisters and brothers in the Caribbean

• Why are East African capitalists not discussing our East African currency? Is a larger East African community not good for their business? Or they are stuck to laundering their ill-gotten wealth through the construction of buildings?

• On the political front I am happy with the political developments among the Kenyan elite. They have exposed their political bankruptcy and the inability to change Kenya from 58 years of Not Yet Uhuru. Let us pay attention to the United Progressive Front of CPK, UGM, and Ukweli Party as the only political formation that has refused links with the elite factions. Let us join the UPF. I am honoured to convene the UPF. I am sure you have noticed our struggles in support of the Rule of Law, Independence of the Judiciary, Obedience of Court Orders in cases of Miguna Miguna and reparations to political prisoners and detainees. We are also resisting the developments in Uhuru Park that did not involve our participation. UPF the People’s Opposition now. UPF has started a long journey of digging political graves for decadent, unpatriotic, and compradorial politics of the Kenyan elite. The 2022 elections offer the UPF great political opportunity to capture the imagination of Kenyans that a New Kenya is Possible.

• It is also encouraging that organic intellectuals at the grassroots and activists are seeking to contest political power as MCAs. That is how Kenya is to be revolutionized by building on the grassroots equitable distribution of land and resources, sharing of state power, and full participation of Kenyans at the grassroots in all societal matters. Let the grassroots be the beacons of change and transformation, and the New Kenya and New Alternative and Authentic leadership.

I wish you all Comrades a Revolutionary Jamhuri Day
Aluta Continua? A Vitoria e Certa

It is now my greatest honour to launch Kenyan Organic Intellectuals Reflect on the Legacy of Pio Gama Pinto
May the Revolutionary Spirit of Pio incite and excite us in our struggles for a New Kenya and New Politics.
Pio Gama Pinto: Conspiracy of Silence (Awaz, 2005)

Pinto was active in the struggle for the liberation of Goa for about five years. When he had started agitating against the system which kept so many people of Goa in poverty, Pinto was only 17. He became such a powerful force against the Portuguese colonial authorities that they issued a warrant for his arrest and sought to deport him to West Africa. He then decided to leave Goa and return to Kenya. He was much needed by those still active in the struggle in Goa and they were reluctant to let him go. But Pinto felt the need to be in touch with developments in Kenya. Pinto returned to Kenya from India in 1949.

BY SHIRAZ DURRANI

From his earliest years he was a rebel. It is important to note his involvement in various aspects of Kenyan struggle for liberation. This included setting up and editing newspapers and writing articles; researching and writing memoranda and reports; involvement with the trade union movement; being active in various South Asian political organisations; working with nationalist organisations, and, active participation in the militant anti-imperialist movement, Mau Mau. Pinto was active in organisational aspects of the liberation struggle, in setting out its ideological stand, as well as carrying out small and large tasks associated with organisational and other aspects of political work, including writing, distributing and pasting posters. He was happy to make personal sacrifices - time, money, energy - to advance the struggle in Kenya, Goa, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, among other countries.

Emma Gama Pinto recalls:

We had little finances. Pio sadly confessed that the money given by my father ("a substantial cheque for the wedding") had been used as part payment on a printing press which he wanted to operate as the voice of the people. The press was lost as soon as Pio was arrested.

Pinto also realised the importance of training cadres to run political organisations and led on setting up the Lumumba Institute to train Party cadres to give them a political understanding of their work; he realised the importance of controlling mass media, printing and publishing services, so got funds from India for setting up the Pan African Press which published various Kenyan papers. Yet one hardly hears his name as being the main force behind these initiatives.

Pio Gama Pinto was also very actively involved in the trade union and worker movement, hence his close relationship with the struggle for independence. Trade unions played a major part in the struggle for economic and political independence. Pinto’s publishing activities were not undertaken in isolation from the main struggles. Indeed, they were a part and a means of achieving the higher political goals. Nor were his publishing activities undertaken in isolation: he was working with the patriotic forces in various fields; trade union, military, political and social. It was publishing, however, which coordinated all these various aspects of the same anti-imperialist struggle.

Based on his achievements and vision, Pinto can be counted among a select group of world class leaders, rubbing shoulders with Che Guevara, Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, and Dedan Kimaathi, among others. Yet the world knows little about him. Even in Kenya and India, while people respect him as an important leader, few know details about what he stood for and what his achievements were. There are no research publications, no history books, no children’s books, no school and university texts on his life and times,
no monuments or major streets named after him, no films marking the remarkable achievements of this brave man. A deliberate attempt has been made to wipe him out from history and corporate memory. This is no mere accident. Pinto himself was too busy (and too modest) to record his own contributions in the various fields in which he was active. At the same time, Pinto used to write under pseudonyms, so that it is difficult to have a full list of his writings. Emma Gama-Pinto reflects on this:

My husband’s views on current affairs were often published in Letters to the Editor in the East African Standard under pseudonyms, and never remained the same over the years. Occasionally he used his own, but in most cases, he favored an African name. He was a prolific writer but remained the hand behind the curtain. He felt he could achieve more by not contesting in the race to jump on the bandwagon. His was a dedication to uncover the injustices perpetrated on innocent Africans who, although politically very mature, could not articulate in the lingua franca of the world, their grievances. They were men who were often hamstrung by the inability to retort rhetorically to the arguments that came thick and fast, and eventually had to resort to brute force. However, Pinto had been planning to retire early to write a book on Kenya. His enemies robbed history of an important historical source by assassinating him.

But a more important reason why Pinto is not as well-known as he should be having to do with the activities of his enemies, the very ones who silenced him with a bullet. Just as Pinto’s activities and influence spread wide, so did his enemies who could not find a logical argument to silence him with a bullet. Just as Pinto activities and influences spread wide, so did his enemies who could not find a logical argument to silence him.

Kenya’s history is full of examples of records of resistance movements, heroes and achievements being hidden from people. Sometimes, an imperialist interpretation to resistance is given, at other times, events and personalities are ignored totally by imperialist-orientated historians. In Pinto’s case, the reasons for “eliminating” him from history were stronger as he fought not only the European colonial powers before independence, but continued his struggle against neocolonialism after independence. He thus faced not only the imperialist powers (now joined by the USA), but also their local allies in the form of the comprador KANU regimes, initially led by Kenyatta. The KANU regime under Moi brought no changes in the policies of the Kenyatta regime, merely following the nyatos of the earlier regime in everything, including repression and suppressing the history of resistance. Pinto’s policies, practice and stand challenged the very basis of KANU regimes. His legacy was thus opposed by Kenyatta and Moi - both responsible for marginalising and eliminating a large number of progressive ideas and people associated with Mau Mau and national and economic liberation. They found that while assassinating him did stop his work and silenced his pen, his example and his writings remained for others to learn from. The only way they could stop people knowing and learning from his example was to rewrite history and to impose a total embargo on news about Pinto, making him a “non-person”. The persecution of people writing about Pinto continued up to the end of Moi’s regime.

Odinga wrote: ‘Just as Lumumba had been murdered during the course of his heroic activities, so did Pinto die. It may be some years before Kenyans see the full worth of Pinto and the part he played in our struggle before and after independence but there must come the time when this is well understood. Who were his enemies, if he were such a genuine patriot? The forces that knowingly or unwittingly are helping imperialism keep a grip on Kenya, those who have sacrificed the national advance to sectional or personal interests.

This year we mark 40 years since the assassination of Pinto. And yet the time has not yet come for “Kenyans to see the full worth of Pinto”. Soon after the death of Pio Gama Pinto, the Nairobi City Council had plans to honour his memory by naming the former Grogan Road as Pio Gama Pinto Road. This however did not happen
and the road was instead named ‘Kirinyaga Road’. Eldoret, however, has a locality name after Pio Gama Pinto. Pinto’s enemies were basically opposed to the principled stand he took, a stand he summed up in the following words:

**A DEMOCRATIC, AFRICAN, SOCIALIST STATE ...**

The sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Kenya’s freedom fighters must be honoured by the effective implementation of the policy - a democratic, African, socialist state in which the people have the right to be free from economic exploitation and the right to social equality. Kenya’s uhuru must not be transformed into freedom to exploit or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. Uhuru must be uhuru for the masses - uhuru from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty.

After the fall of the Moi-KANU government, the Kibaki government has yet to take a principled stand to restore the true history of Kenya’s liberation struggle. Nor has it restored national heroes to their rightful place in our history. There is an urgent need to act to redress the historical injustice done to Pinto and other liberation leaders by successive KANU governments in Kenya.

Until this happens, the country cannot be at peace with itself. Some possible action that needs to be taken was mentioned in the author’s submission to the Task Force on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Nothing has come of this. Part of this submission is reproduced at the end of this article.

The action demanded in the submission now needs to become a national demand in preserving the work and memory of Pinto. Pinto’s example shows that action will come from those truly committed to the principles for which Pinto and Kimaathi died. M C Chokwe said at the time of Pinto’s murder: “If the murder was to avenge the zeal against the imperialist forces, then there are many more of us willing to meet death”. Let those willing to be counted stand up now. Justice and history cannot wait another 40 years.

Submission (Edited sections) by Shiraz Durrani to the task force on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation commission (10 August 2003):

**LOSS & DAMAGE SUFFERED**

- Pinto suffered the ultimate violation of his human rights - loss of life.
- Pinto’s family has been deprived of a loving husband and father.
- Pinto’s sacrifice and that of his family has not been honoured or compensated for.
- Kenya has been denied the wealth of ideas, experience and commitment that Pinto brought to the struggle for liberation of Kenyan people
- People struggling for liberation in Goa, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and other parts of the world have had one of their most ardent supporters removed from their midst.
- Pinto’s right to justice has been violated by the Government of Kenya by not investigating and bringing to court the people who were really responsible for his assassination.
- The Government of Kenya has deprived the young generation of Kenya from knowing the real history of Pinto’s contribution to the struggle for independence and liberation in Kenya.
WHAT I EXPECT TO BE DONE

• Immediate independent and public investigation of the assassination of Pinto. Those responsible to be charged for their crime.

• Compensate Pinto’s family for the immense loss they suffered with the assassination of Pinto.

• The greatest tribute that the Government can pay Pio Gama Pinto is to show the same concern to Pinto that Pinto himself had about those who sacrificed their property, educational and other opportunities, limbs or even lives in the cause of independence.

• Erect national monuments in all major towns in Kenya to honour the memory of Pinto and other freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for Kenya’s struggle for liberation.

• Set up of a National Liberation Research, Museum and Archives Centre where the histories, publications and material culture of all national heroes can be collected and used as part of Kenya’s heritage. This needs to happen urgently so that Pinto’s contemporaries can be interviewed. Many such prominent people have died over the years and Pinto’s real history is in danger of being lost.

• Set up a Pio Gama Pinto International Award to honour those who make an outstanding contribution to the political, economic and social liberation of Africa.

• Set up a Pio Gama Pinto Chair of History at the University of Nairobi to encourage research on the Kenyan struggle for liberation.
Kenyan Organic Intellectuals Reflect on the Legacy of Pio Gama Pinto