

# The Goal Is Open, Why Do Africans Insist On Shooting Everywhere But Between The Posts?

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Scenes from the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on Women and Peace and Security held on 27 October 2017. The Global South has not been able to use such forums to advance its agenda (UN Photo)

The greatest propaganda campaign of the modern era, the campaign to present colonial domination and epistemic injustice as natural, even moral, is being eroded by its architects as we watch, but somehow this is not enough to jolt those who claim to oppose it into action.

To understand exactly what is collapsing, let us look at the edifice that was constructed:

epistemic justice is about fairness within the realm of knowledge. It is about who is acknowledged as possessing the knowledge, whose presentation of that knowledge is accepted as authoritative or valid, whose interpretation of our world is accepted as credible.

The Pan-Africa scholar and activist, W.E.B Du Bois was one of the first to highlight this. In describing what he called the “*double consciousness*” of Africans and black Americans, the condition of a people seeing themselves through the eyes of others, through the eyes of a world that denied their full humanity, he exposed something essential.

Entire groups of peoples were systematically excluded from the production of knowledge, beginning with the knowledge about themselves, the story of the world written without them, and against them.

The architecture of deception now seems to be unraveling from within. The world’s superpower is trampling over the self-proclaimed rules-based order.

Underlying the “*rules-based order*” was a racialized colonial ideology, which relegated

African peoples to civilizational darkness, Eastern peoples as barbaric and threatening. The ideology was born from a tension between how Europe saw itself and its actions.

On the one hand Europe was discovering the ideas of the Renaissance, as it emerged from the more obscurantist Middle Ages. The Renaissance period 1300-1600, saw Europe beginning to discover science, debate questions of morality, political philosophies, including democracy, at the very same time they were embarking on their most murderous, immoral, savagely inhuman enterprise, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, followed by a no less savage colonization.

The unbearable tension between what Europe proclaimed about itself, and what its actions demonstrated had to be resolved. The answer was to establish a belief that only among the white race were human beings worthy of the Renaissance ideas of human rights, liberties and innovations.

They pointed to their own pseudo-scientific justifications that it was not just God who ordained the natural order where the white race was superior and the black race barely fully human, but science too proved it, to their satisfaction or more accurately, their justification.

When the pseudo-science was inevitably thoroughly debunked, the ideology was anchored in cultural consciousness. Within its double standards about conflict, wars, who bore responsibility, who is entitled to put up defense measures, humanitarian interventions, all played out in halls and corridors of the United Nations.

All this justification however, is now ex-

posed for what it is, by supremacy at its most nakedly rabid. The mask thrown off, no longer any pretense of decorum, no attempt to conceal the contempt. Entire nations labelled as “*shithole countries*,” its people regarded as subhuman. No longer are the usual excuses made to justify the invasion, destruction, and pillaging of these countries.

Domestically, Western nations are taking advantage of the chaos to once again indulge in a nationalism that shamelessly justifies extraction of resources of the peoples they consider lesser, with information wars serving as a distraction.

And that brings us to the bewildering question of this moment.

One might have thought that given this state of affairs, the intellectuals, thinkers, and political leaders in the Global South, would seize the opportunity to dismantle the epistemic violence of the United Nations (UN), and its Security Council (UNSC). But there is not a peep.

It is difficult to determine whether this failure is due to mental colonization or perhaps even Stockholm syndrome. Why otherwise would it seem so difficult to think about a different world, why so difficult to formulate thinking beyond the beaten path, when an historic opportunity presents itself? The Global North is telling us, “*We may be throwing ourselves in a self-destructive spiral, and you will do nothing as we swallow you in the process*” and the response is deafening silence.

Nothing, at any rate, beyond the hysterical shrieks of impotent outrage and the fruitless fact-checking in the futile hope of shaming and exposing structures born before shame

itself, which have never had any time for facts and have operated by ignoring reality.

The moment demands that we call for the immediate dissolution of the UNSC in its present form. We should have mountains of petitions, in name of organized, transnational conferences calling for a new approach, not against the actions of one country, or a particular cause to which the West pays lip service so as not to be seen as negrophobic. All that would be futile and would achieve nothing.

But rather, such action should be directed against a system inherited from one that

saw the construction of the most extravagant bridges, monuments, mansions and institutions erected in the major capitals of the Western world, while the blood of our ancestors flowed in floods.

It incomprehensible why at this moment of profound disruption of the status quo, apathy reigns in the Global South. Are we perhaps happier dancing to the rhythm of our oppressors, following in their foots?

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