

Third Way Thinking and the Way Forward in Kenyan Politics

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Bi Rais Mkawasi Mcharo, viongozi was chama cha KCA, wageni mashuhiri, mabibi na mabwana: hamjambo?

I bring you greetings from Canada or Canuckstan (as some US media term that country) where I live. In that country, we have a vibrant (albeit recent) Kenya community, with majority residing in the Greater Toronto Area around the Great Lakes. That said, however, our community has made major inroads in that country. For example, there is a Kenyan mayor in the City of Mission in British Columbia by the name of Marita son of former MP Atebe Marita; we also have Mathew Njenga Mburu, running for a seat in the City of Brampton just outside of Toronto. Soon, we will become of age and perhaps float a candidate for either provincial or federal parliament.

It is a pleasure to be here today at the 2006 KCA Conference & AGM. I am deeply honoured, and privileged to have the opportunity to speak at this auspicious function. Perhaps, most important, I am humbled by the fact that so many of you have turned out to listen to me. And for that, I thank you sincerely.

Back in the 1990s before the formation of KCA, a number of Kenyans (including yours truly) wished and prayed that there be an organization like KCA. This would be a body that brought Kenyans abroad together on an ongoing basis and focused attention on Kenyan issues both abroad and at home. In coming together, we would share experiences relating to our lives abroad; we would seek ways to improve our lot in these foreign lands; we would find ways through which we could collaborate to contribute to the development of our motherland; and we would find time and opportunity to show case and dabble in our culture! A friend once remarked that as a grown man, he worried about who his grown children would end up marrying! And his reason for participating in events like ours was to socialize his progeny with fellow Kenyans to create the potential for in-laws whose culture and thinking he could relate to! And indeed, there is anecdotal evidence from many Continental African organizations that this happens! Ask the Ugandans!

The Third Way & Third Force in Kenyan Politics
By Matunda Nyanchama

It was with pride that we launched KCA in 1998, after intense selfless work and massive support from prospective membership. I was privileged to be elected the first president and remain extremely proud of the organization's continued growth; and what an institution it has become! KCA has demonstrated continuity now that we have the 3rd president in office. And I believe KCA future remains bright. This is part of what we dreamed of in the early 1990s. Of course more needs to be done! And as we scale new horizons, we must never tire of working hard!

We held our first Conference and AGM at the University of Maryland, College Park in the summer of 1999. I am glad that the KCA leadership has upheld the tradition. This conference and AGM can be likened to what the Zulu term the *indaba* at which we congregate, take stock of where we have been, assess where we are and look ahead towards where we will go. It is a tradition we must continue!

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I want to speak to you about the future of our country Kenya and development uncertainties occasioned by the current crop of political leaders; and I want to demonstrate that our politics and national development need not be what it is today! And I want to propose to you that there is away forward out of the morass we see of our politics; and I want to challenge every one of us to get involved! And I want to say: to hell with those who believe in *politics for politicians only!*

The way ahead is neither the government's way nor that of the Opposition. It is the Third Way. It is the way whose approach to national development is different and is based on some core principles. The Third Way:

1. Rejects personalization of politics; and rather requires all politics to be predicated on national interest; it is premised on politics of principle rather than searching for power to dominate, plunder and eat!
2. Seeks the institutionalization of political parties in the true sense of political parties, such parties would compete on alternative ideas of development rather than rhetoric and platitudes;

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3. Stands for zero tolerance on matters corruption no matter the perpetrator, in other words, there should and MUST never be any sacred cows; you are found guilty of corruption, you pay the price; you are suspected of corruption you are investigated, exonerated or found guilty through a transparent process;
4. Is based on justice, fairness and equity (note the term equity) for all Kenyans no matter their stations in life;
5. Celebrates diversity and rejects tribalism, nepotism and cronyism; it is based on exploiting the strength that comes with the diversity of our people and natural resources and for the benefit of all Kenyans;
6. Is founded on reason over passion, i.e. logic over emotion and sound and structured approach to national challenges;
7. Is based on thinking globally and nationally and acting locally;
8. Espouses Public Accountability in all endeavours;
9. Is driven by the need to make our country Kenya, a great nation! We could become first a regional giant, a continental powerhouse and a global tiger!

To carry the mission of the Third Way needs Third Force. And the Third Force – an amalgamation of new political thinking composed of the progressive Youth, progressive Kenyans in the Diaspora, forward-looking Think Tank Networks, Civil Society, Public Watchdogs, the Press (electronic + print) and more. [I will come to this later.]

If there is something that summarizes this talk, it is a saying by Mahatma Gandhi, which goes thus:

*"The Roots of Violence [underdevelopment]:
Wealth without work,
Pleasure without conscience,
Knowledge without character,
Commerce without morality,
Science without humanity,
Worship without sacrifice,
Politics without principles" – Mahatma Gandhi*

If there is a Third Way, there must be a First Way; and if there is a First and Third Way, there must be a Second Way. And in order to be successful at implementing the Third Way, we must

understand the First Way, its substance, its thinking and its pitfalls; we must understand the Second Way, its thinking and its pitfalls.

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The First Way

The people of the First Way hold political and economic power. It is difficult (nay impossible!) to distinguish between those who hold political power and those with economic power. In fact, they are one and the same group! Now let's look at the First Way in the context of the above principles.

1. *On rejecting personalization of politics; and requiring all politics to be predicated on national interest; and espousing politics of principle rather than searching for power to dominate, plunder and eat!*

The First Way aims at monopolizing power and wealth within its elite few; as some would say, isn't it their right (not a privilege) to govern as they deem fit? Once in a while, they will rattle so-called gains "we" (effectively "they") have made since independence: *the African being in charge, the top dog Africans in Kenyan companies, senior managers that are African, the road and hospital networks, the schools and education infrastructure, etc. Their point of reference: pre-independence days!*

The First Way elite are largely a product of the elite colonial education; education whose aim was to create servants that would carry out the colonial will. Many believe in the superiority of the colonizers and demonstrate clear bias against even their best brains. Many in this class are Anglophiles, indeed white men in black skin! And if two people: a local Mr. Black Man and (local or foreign) Mr. White Boy were up for opportunities before some First Way power, Mr. White Boy will almost invariably win over Mr. Black Man! This is even when Mr. Black Man might be much smarter, more qualified and overly experienced!

For First Way politicians, it is about power (economic and political) and the fact that they hold it; power allows them to maintain an intricate client-patron system composed of similar interests across the country. They arrogate themselves the right to arbitrate in matters of how the national cake should be distributed! And indeed, they end up with most of this public wealth in private hands!

The First Way is an incestuous class of economic and political interests whose priority is their well-being as opposed to nation-building!

2. *On seeking the institutionalization of political parties in the true sense of political parties, and parties competing on alternative ideas of development rather than rhetoric and platitudes;*

Wikipedia defines a political party thus:

“... an organization that seeks to attain political power within a government, usually by participating in electoral campaigns. Parties often espouse a certain ideology, but may also represent a coalition among disparate interests.”

Our political parties are no more than vehicles for attaining political power by the wealthy and influential; they have neither ideology nor a coalition of interests other than to get power for the elite! Just look at Narc and now Narc-Kenya; and there is ODM-Kenya; before that we had NAK, DP, LDP, Labour Party, Ford-K and Ford-People, name it! And there used to be Ford, Ford-Asili, NDP and Kenyan Socialist Congress (now dead and buried with the passing of its founder, George Anyona) and many more!

There is more! Currently we have a clamour for minimum constitutional reforms; at the centre of this is how to divvy up power among the expected top dogs in a future administration. Missing in the equation is Wanjiku, the Civil Society, the Youth and Religious interests! And they claim it is in the nation's interest!

3. *On standing for zero tolerance for corruption no matter the perpetrator, in other words, there being no sacred cows*

For the First Way, tribalism, corruption, cronyism and nepotism are its lifelines! Money, power and influence course veins of their client-patron networks! Corruption is hush-hushed, if not embraced in toto!

The First Way does things with impunity, as if it has a God-given right to do so! It perpetuates corruption and when others question them, it circles to protect their own. And we know this is true because some, notably the late Dr Robert Ouko (God rest his soul) have paid with their lives; and for what? For asking simple questions about misuse of power for personal enrichment!

The First Way cooks schemes like Goldenberg and Anglo Leasing, and continually works to cover its tracks.

4. On justice, fairness and equity (note the term equity) for all Kenyans no matter their stations in life;

The First Way is a selfish elite whose intent is to stay power for the gains power brings.

Aggrandizement, economic and political domination/subjugation of others appears to be the norm; platitudes about serving the people form its rhetoric. It cannot heed Mahatma Ghandi's wisdom that "*Earth provides enough for every man's needs, but not every man's greed!*"

Through a convoluted network of individuals, First Wayers manipulate the economy, government and the justice system for their own benefit! The judiciary, which is supposed to be independent, is part of the power elite. Remember not too long ago there was an extensive purge of the judiciary! And we expect justice from this entity?

The First Way seems to care less about Wanjiku's suffering: lack of health care, poor access to education, lack of employment opportunities, rampant crime, poverty, hunger and (at times) famine!

5. On celebrating diversity and rejecting tribalism, nepotism and cronyism; and exploiting the strength that comes with the diversity of our people and natural resources and for the benefit of all Kenyans;

The First Way elite rides on the word tribe; many elite trumpet the superiority of their own and discriminate openly without shame. Many of us recall remarks by late Kuguru, at the time a Minister in the Moi government, that the Kikuyu cannot accept a *kibi* for president, a clear reference to then Ford-Kenya presidential candidate the late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, a Luo! Recently, we have heard subtle tangential remarks on Jaramogi's son Raila Odinga. Good people, this is the 21st century! And as far as I am concerned, what lies in a man's pants is business for his wife, girlfriend, mistress or concubine!

Tribalism for them is a means to the Mecca of national eatership!

For the First Way the rich culture of our nation doesn't seem to matter: the foods, the music, the varied tales from times gone, the wide-ranging traditions (marriage, rites of passage, songs and dances) across the country, the diverse thinking and different approaches to issues and more!

The First Way forgets that monocultures soon die off! It is diversity that is the strength of the survival of species/ideas/interests/and more.

6. *On reason over passion, i.e. logic over emotion and sound and structured approach to national challenges;*

Some in the First Way talk of the glorious years of their past, and how things would have been if they hadn't worked hard! Didn't they (though this is a dying breed!) fight for and win independence for Kenya? Haven't they brought development since we won *Uhuru*? Look, as some would say, at the number of roads, hospitals, schools, urban centres! *Si hayo ni maendeleo*? They would ask? And rightly so! But it is from an antiquated point of reference!

Some talk of their detention in the Kenyatta and Moi eras; and wear this as a badge of honour and call this their ticket to power. Ask them what they would do for the country when in power and the answer is convoluted. *Hawana mpango! Hawana Plan*, as the kids would say in Sheng.

We must divorce this emotion from the search and exercise of power; we need the reasons they want power; we need the logic to elect them to power; and we need to know how they would exercise power. For these people, I offer this quote:

The past is to be respected and acknowledged, but not to be worshiped. It is our future in which we will find our greatness. [Pierre Trudeau](#). Canadian politician (1919 – 2000)

We don't want to hear the vote seeker merely articulate the issues we have! C'mon! We all know them. I'd rather hear about the solutions, the strategy, the means and the viability (how realistic? How affordable) of the solutions they propose.

7. *On thinking globally and nationally and acting locally;*

One can think locally & act locally; one can also (in the least likelihood) think locally and act globally; also one can think globally act locally; and can also think globally act globally.

The First Way thinks locally and acts locally. Their knowledge and actions are informed by the least common factors possible to maintain their privileged position. In fact, they gain advantage by keeping the people backward! And the more backward the people they lead, the greater their chances of maintaining their position.

We live in the age of globalization; we need to make sure we think globally! We must learn from others that have faced and continue to face similar challenges like us and the ways and means that have made them successful.

8. *On Public Accountability in all endeavours-*

The First Way cares less about Wanjiku and her interests; they trample *mwananchi* and get away with it using the systems they control; and systems they have been perfected in protecting themselves. And yet Wanjiku pays the bills even as she struggles with the mess created by the First Way.

Do you recall how, with impunity, members of parliament have been increasing their emoluments? In this scheme where they are judge and jury, a clear conflict of interest, who looks after Wanjiku's interests?

9. *On being driven by the need to make our country Kenya, a great nation! We could become first a regional giant, a continental powerhouse and a global tiger!*

First Way elite cares less whether Kenya becomes a regional midget, an international dwarf or a local nincompoop! All they seem to care about is that they have power and control the levers of the economy. They want to swim in the tiny pond that is Kenya and yet there are many lakes and seas out there that we could all possibly swim in!

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The First Way elite cannot understand the agitation for change; many think things are going well and that as long as they are in power, all is fine.

The First Way occasionally appears to have solutions for the intricate Kenyan concerns. Their approach appears limited to tinkering, with a bone or so thrown at their challengers, those of the Second Way. In some cases, their rhetoric suggests they are aware of what solutions should be in place. However, they appear unwilling, if not unable to implement those solutions!

Ask them how to deal with crime and their answer is "shoot to kill"! Yet the divide between haves and have-nots, and lack of opportunity are factors they don't want to speak about! Ask them about land disputes in the Rift Valley and they will ask people to return to their *ancestral lands*! So a child born (say) in Molo in the 1970s/80s would be asked to go back to an ancestral home in Kisii, Kiambu, Nyeri, Kakamega or some other such place! Good God! The person's only known home is the place s/he was born and raised! Ancestral lands my foot! This is the 21st century!

The First Way resists change for fear of loss of power, fear of loss of domination, fear of loss of the *status quo*!

Look at what they did with the constitutional reforms.

First, it was the Moi regime. Instead of saying: "let's talk and see what is best for this country", people lined their short-term interests into the reforms process in delegate selection and draft constitution crafting.

In comes Kibaki and he perpetuates the same! And because the delegates were not stacked properly to cater for his class interests, the process had to be scuttled! It is simple: the Bomas process was rotten from the beginning! It was naïve of us all to expect miracles out of this process! It was flawed! It was bound to fail! And the failure happened with the referendum of November last year.

But I digress!

Now the Second Way!

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The Second Way

If the First Way's intention is to retain the power they wield, Second Way elites aim at wresting power from First Way elites. Those of Second Way covet the power of the First Way and are envious (nay jealousy!) of the fact that they are not themselves in power! They want to be on the other side!

They oppose those in power because they want the goodies that come with power and control. They fight not because they will bring fundamental change but because they want different actors in power – themselves. In simple words Second Way elites are opposed to those in power because they are out of power!

In their fight for control, they bark and quote from the heroic past of the struggle against colonial and post-colonial oppression. Some of them have even been detained and proudly wear this as a badge of honour!

For their struggles, we should be grateful to them; we should honour and respect them for advancing the cause for justice. I just don't think the struggle for change and being detained by themselves are sufficient conditions for us to grant them power. If it were so, then the search power would be an end in itself! And indeed, that is the case – just check out the conduct of Kibaki's Narc in power and Moi's Kanu!

Some have likened Second Way's search for power to the barking of hungry dogs; give them a bone and they will be too busy chewing to bark!

We have witnessed this far too often to make us sceptical of promises made by those in the Opposition. Think about it. In Opposition president Kibaki stood for constitutional reforms; in power he has been at best intransigent to the process leading to the first referendum and defeat. Some of the past Opposition champions, once on the other side, have become reactionaries like one could never imagine! Have you watched Hon Koigi wa Wamwere lately? Did you see what became of Hon Kiraitu Murungi when he became Minister of Justice and Constitution affairs? At this rate Kenyans' hope for change would fade away!

Second Way elites condemn corruption and aver to fight it to death, given the chance. Their rhetoric appeals to the people. Once in power, however, Second Way elites evolve into First Way elites! Kanu had its Goldenberg and many others mini-Goldenbergs! Narc, composed of former Second Wayers, gave us Anglo Leasing and other mini-Anglo Leasings! It is no accident that the two (Goldenberg and Anglo Leasing) are mirror images for the First and Second Way elites are mirror images of each other!

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The Third Way

Allow me to elaborate a little more on the Third Way; after that, I would like to propose an action plan, a road map for getting there.

Let me reiterate Third Way principles and, in the process, add a little more meat into the skeleton of these principles.

1. Rejects personalization of politics; rather it requires all politics to be predicated on national interest; it is premised on politics of principle rather than searching for power to dominate, plunder and eat!
 - The politics we play should and MUST pertain to issues (the education, security, health, prosperity, jobs, national well-being, etc.) for our people and MUST be based on alternative ideas of advancing the country. Politicians should be elected based on the solutions they present to deal with issues that affect the people. And political competition should be on ideas and which of those ideas are most

viable and likely to produce the best outcomes for the country. Politics should not be about Moi and Kibaki and Raila and Kalonzo and Mudavadi and Ruto and Nyachae; we should be asking what Kalonzo would do differently from Raila and the viability of the solutions he presents; we should ask what Raila and Kalonzo would do differently from Kibaki and how viable their solutions are! Ruto should tell Kenyans what magic he has for tackling challenges facing the country.

- Kenyans should reject individuals bent on acquiring power to serve their self-interest; such individuals talk language with words like “our turn”, “Kikuyu ate under Kenyatta”; “the Kalenjin ate under Moi”; “andu aitu” and the like!
 - There is something I call the “Kaggia test”; poor Kaggia stood for principle, i.e. the reasons for fighting for independence and swore not to use his position to his own advantage! The opposite is the “Kenyatta view of Kaggia” when Kenyatta attacked the latter for failing to take advantage of his position to enrich himself.
2. It seeks the institutionalization of political parties in the true sense of political parties, such parties would compete on alternative ideas of development rather than rhetoric and platitudes;
- This is as opposed to contraptions for people to simply get to power! These contraptions usually when their principals move on! I am sure you remember parties like Ford Asili, NDP and KSC to name a few. In Third Way thinking, parties would become institutions backed by sound ideological positions and program alternatives. Political parties would also be funded by the state as opposed to individuals as is the case in present Kenya.
3. It stands for zero tolerance on matters of corruption no matter the perpetrator, in other words, there should and MUST never be any sacred cows; you are found guilty of corruption, you pay the price;
- In this respect I wish to congratulate former Permanent Secretary John Githongo for his gallant efforts of exposing high-level corruption in government. We know he did this at great personal risk; his advancement of the fight against corruption

must be applauded. The Third Way aims at protecting whistle blowers and those who expose misuse of office.

4. It is based on justice, fairness and equity (note the term equity) for all Kenyans no matter their stations in life;
 - A while back when Moi came to power he appointed the late Moses Mudavadi as Minister for Basic Education; and there arose an occasion for selection of primary school teachers; the outcome from the college selection process was astounding! The then Kakamega District had been allocated close to 50% of all places! Asked why this was the case, the Minister replied that they were playing catch-up! Now, I know many regions were short-changed during the Kenyatta era; the joy of arrival of a new regime was the hope that there would be fairness and equity for everyone, especially those who had failed to benefit, in a disproportionate manner, from Kenyatta's reign! And a lot of regions (like Kakamega) were doing catch-up! Yet the Minister selfishly allocated close to half of places available to his district! What of others? Is that fair? Does that sound just?

5. It celebrates diversity and rejects tribalism, nepotism and cronyism; it is based on exploiting the strength that come with the diversity of our people and natural resources and for the benefit of all Kenyans;
 - Tribalism has huge downsides and once it becomes a norm, it never ends. At local levels such discrimination manifests itself as clanism, which reminds me of what is happening in my own Gusii region; here, and in the case of schools, people fight for their clansmen to head schools, even when, from year to year, their children fail! Yet these teachers remain protected and continually inflict damage as they stunt kids' potential. Show me a more backward act than this! Tribalism is clanism's equivalent on the national stage.
 - It is inconceivable that in modern Kenya, the only qualified individuals to staff some position in a department or corporation would be from one ethnic group! There is something of value in thinking about diversity. Diversity makes good business sense, it enhances the image of leaders/companies/departments that

practice it and improves relationships and promotes common understanding of the different peoples of Kenya. All of us Kenyans need education on how to deal with departments and companies where tribalism is practiced. We should religiously expose bigotry and boycott those companies and organizations that thrive in discrimination against others. (By the way some of the most entrenched tribalists I have met live abroad, kind of saying that you can take a tribalist out of a tribe but it is hard to take tribalism out of a tribalist.)

6. It is based on reason over passion, i.e. logic over emotion and sound and structured approach to national challenges;
 - In each and every action, the question should be how best the action serves national interest. And no one, be the personal in high office in Nairobi or Wanjiku walking the slopes of Mount Kenya, should act in ways that are detrimental to national interest. So when Second Wayers seek power they should, as a matter of course, indicate not just what they intend to do, but also how they would achieve intended results; we need a demonstration of not just the end but the means thereof. In the last elections Narc promised to creation over 500,000 jobs on an annual basis. No one asked them how this would be achieved! Good people, we were carried by the euphoria of the moment! It is no wonder we are disappointed.
 - Third Way advocates reject the search for power for power's sake; instead it asks politicians and political parties to demonstrate what they will do in government; it asks politicians to back their promises with evidence that the promises are doable; recall the story in 2002 where the mantra was *Moi Must Go!* Even when he was not running for presidency; there was a famous song that did the rounds at the time saying *yote yaezekana bila Moi!* The song went on to proclaim how we would get a new constitution *bila Moi*; how we shall do better farming *bila Moi*; and why? The song seemed to suggest that *Moi* was the stumbling block to everything that ailed the country; rid the country of *Moi*, and all will be heaven in Kenya. Well, we know what happened! First, we still have the same constitution we had under *Moi*; corruption ails Kenya as it did in the *Moi* era and

Kenyans haven't seen more *sufurias of ugali* on their tables than at Moi's time. For some it has worsened!

7. It is based on thinking globally and nationally and acts locally;

- Recognize that we live in the age of globalization and that our national economy is a drop in the global bucket! We can choose to play in the small puddle that is Kenya or work to be global tigers in the global sea – *[I grew in Kisii, a place of rich farmland; as the family size holding shrinks, the land becomes more precious. Our neighbour had this uncanny act of "pushing" the natural hedge that marked the boundary almost a foot a year, through some clever plant gravitation whose details I won't go into today. One day I chose to confront him and asked why he was doing so! He started fuming complaining that as a child, I had no right to ask him; and that he would only deal with my father or the clan elders. I persisted and after some argument I made the comment that this land was too small and worthless fighting over; and that there were plenty of opportunities out there and we shouldn't be focused on small stuff that may result in injury! And for no good cause! I went away, the man stopped his antics and many years later (perhaps 25 or so) while I was visiting home, the man recounted the story saying that I had made him think seriously and in any case 'today you don't live on this land and you seem to be doing better than you would being here!'* The fact is that there are tons of opportunities out in the world and that we in Kenya at times fight over small stuff not knowing that we are missing out on big opportunities in the world; many would like to be small kings in the fishpond that is Kenya rather than swim in larger global oceans.

8. It espouses Public Accountability in all endeavours in service of Wanjiku

- Advocates for the creation of a Public Watchdog, a constitutional office of an Ombudsman. The Ombudsman would ensure accountability of our parliament (e.g. when they increase their salaries to stratospheric levels), the provincial administration, judges/magistrates, and many others that imperil Wanjiku's rights.

9. It is driven by the need to make our country Kenya, a great nation! We could become first a regional giant, a continental powerhouse and a global tiger!

- To be a great nation is to champion and realize the cause of the people; it is to become an example for others to follow; it is to hear our voices, once again, heard on international forums and for others to emulate what we stand for and do!

The Plan of Action

I have covered a lot of ground today; the scope of the challenge is huge and I don't expect that changes will come overnight; as well, the action plan I propose is a work in progress. It will mature with debate and convergence of opinion.

Take what I present here as the first draft of the necessary long-term plan of action. And I would like us all to take this debate to places we frequent, to individuals we interact with and to events we attend; that way we can stir debate and get every one of our people thinking on the way ahead. Today we plant those seeds of change; tomorrow we, and future generations, will reap its fruits in a more democratic, transparent and just society that Kenya will become.

Fix the Financing of our Politics:

More than ever before, there is a need to fix the way political parties raise and spend money. A proportion of party funding, of necessity, should come from the tax payer with the rest raised from membership. Political parties would also raise money through the sale of membership, and donations from individuals and businesses. Clear caps, on how much individuals or businesses can contribute to a political party, must be enforced to ensure that no single entity controls the financing of a party. For example, it can be stipulated that no more than x% of a party's finances should come from a single source, be it a business or an individual.

The government would include party funding in its budget on an annual basis; parties would receive funds proportional to the popular vote received in the previous election. Parties that don't meet a minimum threshold in popular vote would not qualify for government funding. New political parties would have to demonstrate their popularity (membership recruitment and winning a threshold of popular vote) before they can qualify for taxpayer funding.

(Incidentally, the Kenyan parliament keeps pussyfooting on passing the associated bill even when it has been around for a long while!)

Strict regulation of political party funding political parties would ensure that they do not become personal fiefdoms for power seekers. Parties would cease to be beholden to individuals

and interests bent merely on acquiring power. And since parties would be compelled to sell membership in order to survive, they would open space for wider participation across the country.

Fixing the funding for political parties would force these entities to become truly mass movements as parties should be. And it would ensure to attract individuals who believe in the parties they support.

If such a law had been in place, complete with requisite strict annual audit requirements, we would have known (for example) who funded the lavish Narc and Kanu campaigns of 2002; it would then have been clear what influence these financiers exercised in the Narc administration, for we know that *he who pays the piper calls the tune*. (Prior to the elections, NAK and LDP didn't even appear to have any money; yet come the wave of *Kibaki Tasha*, the campaign became awash with cash! Amazing how things could change so fast! And I am sure those pouring the money into the new party expected favours thereafter once power was won!)

The government in turn would require transparency in the way parties raise and spend money. One condition would be the requirement to produce **annual audited accounts** indicating how much money was raised, the sources of the money and how it was spent; it would also include a report on a transparent and democratic process for the party's spending plans achieved to a defined strategic plan.

Now let's get out there and lobby parliamentarians to pass the political parties' bill! It is URGENT!

Institutionalizing Political Parties

The above financing approach will nudge political parties to becoming institutions. Further, sound management of political parties is required as stipulated in their articles of association. For example, it is unconscionable for parties to go for more than several years without holding elections. It happened in Kanu under both Kenyatta and Moi! And it failed to happen under Kibaki's Narc. If such strict management were in place and Narc ceased to exist as it has, we would have had political consequences in which people lose office/face the law because of lack of adherence to the law!

Financing alone would not see the institutionalization of parties. More must be done. Example: how about parties based on ideas – perhaps socialist-leaning versus free market enthusiasts?

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By Matunda Nyanchama

Let's demand that political parties start honouring and living to their own constitutions and the law MUST kick in to ensure that they do; those that fail to do so need to face the full force of the law!

Further, let parties offer ideas and programs when they compete for elections! It is about time we moved away from individual-centred parties as we have today! Think about it: once upon a time there was FORD, which produced more FORDs like FORD-K, FORD-Asili (now no more!) and FORD-People! We also saw DP, NAK, then NARC, then LDP, and NDP and now what do we hear of? ODM-Kenya!

Politics of Ideas versus personalities - I

In 2002 Narc government told Kenyans that they would have a new constitution in 100 days. They further promised to create more than 500,000 jobs on an annual basis! We were all ecstatic about this as it would place the country on a new level, and pedestal.

In retrospect we missed an opportunity to ask how the many promises would be achieved. It is one thing to harp on what needs to be done for rhetoric is cheap. It is another to make things happen. We should have asked the presidential candidates how they expected to create (the 500,000!) jobs they promised; we should have scrutinised their answers and done a reality check to confirm or debunk the rhetoric.

We know the story! Politicians were selling us snake oil!

Political parties should be encouraged to create policy think tanks that research and demonstrate the viability of their ideas. And I know that some people may have a negative view of Think Tanks given the Kanu experience in the 1990s where well-educated professors were used to rubberstamp retrogressive policies of the regime. However, if every party had its own Think Tank, competition would ensure quality of proposals and outcomes.

Let's start demanding that politicians back their promises with facts. So when Kalonzo, Raila, Ruto, Mudavadi, et al tell us they will fight corruption, we should ask for a roadmap and evidence that the roadmaps are viable. It is about time. And when do we start? NOW!

Politics of Ideas versus personalities - II

Talking of Policy Think Tanks, the country spends awfully little in dealing with problems in a systematic manner. (Granted that a lot of work happens at the Ministry of Planning & National Development; that is good; this, though, reeks of central planning that have failed many states.) A lot of programs are implemented without requisite study, analysis, assessment of program

viability and pitfalls thereof. We plunge headlong into programs and only come to grips with challenges once we have spent substantial resources in implementing what may have been a faulty program. As a result, the Kenyan landscape is awash with white elephants. In fact, a while back in the late 1990s the country's project completion rate was about 4%; OK, I will concede that corruption and open plunder played a role. However, I will posit that a number of projects are not thought through resulting in a waste of precious, meagre resources!

Good example: the CDF has been hailed as a progressive idea; and indeed it is. How systematic are CDFs in prioritizing the needs of constituencies? What studies lie behind the selection of projects that are implemented? Think Tanks would ensure the efficient and effective use of these resources for the benefit of Wanjiku. Think Tanks would complement, clarify and challenge work done by the Ministry of National Planning. Specific studies would address specific issues and offer optimal solutions based on priorities.

Think Tanks would provide us not only with strategies but also tactics of realizing defined strategies. Sun Tzu once said that: *Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.*

How do we fund this process?

We should require that the government sets aside a port of money for allocation, on a competitive basis, to Think Tanks serving various policy areas. Like political parties, to qualify for government funding, Think Tanks must conform to strict governance requirements, including sticking to their mission and demonstrating transparency in the management of their affairs. Think Tanks would also raise money from other sources and clearly publish these sources in mandatory annual reporting.

In this respect Think Tanks would be quasi-autonomous institutions focused on specific policy research areas.

Today, the government budget hovers around Kshs 500 billion! If only 1% of this were set aside for policy research, that would be a whopping Kshs 5 billion! It would offer a whole lot of research findings and solutions to intricate national problems. It would also ensure that we are investing meagre resources wisely and that project execution will be successful.

Let's lobby hard for government investment in Think Tanks! It is a small price to pay to assure that programs implemented have a sound basis. And the time to start is NOW!

Youth Empowerment and Youth Leadership Development:

In successful democracies and corporations, succession planning is core to long-term success. Just look at our neighbouring country, Tanzania! There exists a tradition of preparing leaders for national leadership. This ensures that when the Old Guard exit the stage younger leadership is waiting in the wings to continue the journey of nation-building. In Tanzania, we saw it in the passing of the torch from Nyerere to Mwinyi; Mwinyo to Mkapa; and now Mkapa to Kikwete! And all works extremely smoothly. It is not by accident that this happened so smoothly!

Contract this with our case in Kenya. When Moi retired in 2002 there was no obvious successor in the waiting! Why? Because the system has been such that it uses people and once done with them jettisons them!

And it is not simply in politics that we should nurture future leaders; the same applies to the civil service, the corporate sector, non-governmental organizations and all.

Today we have the Tom Mboya Labour College in Kisumu focusing labour and trade unions. How about a Kaggia/Odinga/Oneko institution for political leadership development? Here we would have aspiring leaders spend time with those with experience; we would have then read about great world leaders, the challenges they faces, the successes they had and the perils some met!

And the Youth should demand a portion from the state coffers to set up such an institute.

One can think of such leadership development centres for other sectors: corporate, civil service and NGO.

Let's demand an allocation of a portion of the national budget on Youth Leadership Development. And when do we start? NOW

A Public Watchdog – Office of Ombudsman

Today, Wanjiku's rights are trampled left, right and centre by the powerful and connected. They could be members of parliament who treat themselves to huge emoluments regardless of Wanjiku's opinion, condition or justice. It could be the police that impose their oppressive will on Wanjiku in form of demand for bribes, illegal confinement and the like. It could be the chief

and their assistants treating themselves to Wanjiku's chicken in the name of raising funds for schools. Or it could be the local tycoon, well-connected, who gets away with undue practices that keep Wanjiku downtrodden. It could be ... you can name many more such circumstances.

In all of them, Wanjiku has little in terms of recourse! In the MPs' case, she can do little to stop them from doing what they want. In the cases of the police and chiefs, she could possibly seek legal challenges. However, we know how unequal access to justice is in the country, let alone that the judiciary itself stands accused of corruption! And it is a maze for Wanjiku to navigate!

The solution is simple: establish an independent office of an ombudsman to which Wanjiku can resort to in such cases. This office was proposed to parliament as far back as 1975! We must revisit the proposal and set in motion the process of creating this office. It is the only way to give Wanjiku recourse to structural injustice in the current system.

Let's demand the immediate creation of the office of ombudsman! NOW!

O-O

Call to Action

Back in the late 1940s as the struggle for independence took root, there was one person named John Kebaso, then a prominent leader and freedom fighter from my area. In discussing the possibility of self-rule, he made the struggle for independence appear monumental and near impossible. It is said that he went around the country, visited Nairobi, central province and the coast. He saw what the *Mau Mau* movement was doing. It is further told that he surveyed and was awed by the British military might! His conclusion, which he supposedly documented in a pamphlet he authored and circulated widely at the time, was that the struggle for independence was an exercise in futility for the African. And that Kenya will remain a British colony at least until the year 2000!

The man lived to see the country's independence in 1963 and served in the Kenyan Senate and later parliament for a total of 6 years!

The task ahead is onerous but not insurmountable; we can do it! Indeed, as they say, even Mugumo tree can be felled! We merely need to remember that *haba na haba hujaza kibaba*.

There may be others saying that this struggle may go against tradition; and my reply is captured in the following quote:

Let us overthrow the [political] totems, break the taboos [taboos]. Or better, let us consider them cancelled. Coldly, let us be intelligent. [Pierre Trudeau](#). Canadian politician (1919 - 2000)

And how do we carry out this mandate you may ask!

It is simple: we create a Third Force, guided by Third Way thinking and focused on making Kenya a strong country, a key player in the international stage, a country of justice over passion and one where Wanjiku's interests prevail; and a country to be proud of once again.

Time doesn't permit me to speak on the details and composition of this Third Force. At a high-level we must get right thinking youth on board, the civil society needs to be on our side, the intelligentsia must offer their knowledge and experience and of course Wanjiku! Wanjiku, ultimately must learn that the Third Force is her salvation and Wanjiku will give power to those that will serve her: the Third Force.

For the moment, the call is to Third Way thinkers to fan out in all directions, register for elections in Kenya and participate in the political process from grassroots to national level; our objective must be to elect as many Third Way players as possible no matter the party they run for, be Narc-Kenya, ODM-Kenya, Ford-Kenya, Ford-People, Labour Party or whatever other contraption has yet to be created!

Let me leave you once again with the words of Mahatma Ghandi when he says that:

*"The Roots of Violence [underdevelopment]:
Wealth without work,
Pleasure without conscience,
Knowledge without character,
Commerce without morality,
Science without humanity,
Worship without sacrifice,
Politics without principles" – Mahatma Ghandi*

Viva the Third Way

Viva the Third Force

Viva Kenya

Viva Africa