

It's an insult to education to compare Nyerere, Mandela and Macron to Sonko
By Miguna Miguna, May 14, 2017

I'm seething with rage and embarrassment at the level of pedantic articles in our newspapers. I love reading. I read ten newspapers published locally and abroad from page to page on a daily basis. Once upon a time, I used to look forward to and relish reading *The Weekly Review and Beyond* magazines – as well as the *Sunday Nation* and *Sunday Standard*, which used to be elegantly written and edited.

Not anymore.

For more than fifteen years now, going through our local dailies has become such a drudgery that I only endure due to my religious reading habits. Poor education may be responsible for a lot of shortfalls in the mediocre levels of the local media except that ignorance or lack of intellectual rigour alone wouldn't transform one into a cartel apologist who deliberately disregards journalistic ethics, turns a blind eye on criminality and coddles the merchants of impunity. Stupidity is not moral corruption.

A genuinely free and independent press owes its credibility on the fearlessness and professionalism of its journalists; journalists who scrupulously investigate stories, check and cross-check facts and publish logically coherent commentaries and stands on the side of the “public interests.”

That's how *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker Magazine* and *The Economist* – for instance – have occupied venerable positions in the world for decades.

Kingwa Kamenchu's “It's time for new political model in Kenya” (*Sunday Nation*, May 14, 2017); Njuiiri Kimaru's “Sonkorism: How voter rebellion against the norm could hurt Kidero” (*Sunday Standard* (May 14, 2017); Susan Mugwe's “How ‘Sonkonomics’ politics influenced Nairobi primaries” (*The Star*, Saturday, May 6-7, 2017); Njoki Kaigi's “If Sonko can get that makeover, you too can...and this is how” (*The Standard on Sunday*, May 7, 2017); Macharia Gaitho's “Sonko ups bid for governor job with new image” (*Daily Nation*, May 5, 2017); and John Kamau's “Rise of Generation X in Nairobi closes door on veterans” (*Sunday Nation*, May 7, 2017) are typical examples of the local media's uncritical glorification of “mitumba” politics where despicable voyeurism, opportunism and PR stunts are celebrated as “popularity.” This is “Brown Envelop” Journalism attempting to perpetuate the culture of impunity at its worst.

The “Brown Envelop” peddlers have concealed and suppressed Mbuvi Sonko's criminal records, thuggery and spectacular failure as a legislator, choosing instead, to mischaracterise his exploitation and manipulation of the poor youth as acts of philanthropy.

I am particularly incensed by the logically defective and abominable comparisons between Sonko and Julius Nyerere; Sonko and Nelson Mandela; Sonko and Jomo Kenyatta; Sonko and Donald Trump; Sonko and Emmanuel Macron and - this one is criminal - Sonko and Jesus Christ.

Many contaminated writers have over-simplified our national issues of artificially created poverty, unresponsive and unaccountable leadership and the emergence of functionally illiterate and criminal “handout politicians” by presenting the underworld tendencies of Sonko as the “cure Kenyans need.” They have portrayed the stupendous failures of Evans Kidero as being the “problem with having PhDs in leadership.”

Firstly, Mr. Kidero holds no PhD. He is a pharmacist; not a physician. Secondly, Kidero’s kleptomania is not traceable to his university education. Unless the compromised media is implicitly admitting that Sonko has a forged university degree, what makes Kidero a university graduate and not Sonko? There are no university programs dedicated to teaching students how to steal.

Thirdly, Kidero’s failures are directly linked to his well-documented misappropriation of public resources and the grabbing of public land – from the Mumias Sugar Company to Nairobi City County. Kidero’s failure to deliver services cannot be blamed on education or higher learning.

Fourthly, whereas Sonko has criminal records for fraud, forgery and drug peddling both Mandela and Jomo Kenyatta were persecuted by the Apartheid System in South Africa and the British Colonialists in Kenya, respectively, for their struggles for freedom and self-rule.

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere was not just a sophisticated philosopher and writer; he was a premier Pan-African revolutionary who left a legacy of *Ujamaa* – self-reliance and mental, political, economic, cultural and intellectual independence. Sonko, on the other hand, is perpetuating the culture of dependency.

Fifthly, unlike the incoherent, chaotic and thuggish Sonko, Macron attended elite institutions of higher learning such as Lycee Henin IV, Nanterre University and Ecole Nationale d’Administration where he excelled in Philosophy, Literature, Public Policy and Administration.

Let’s be crystal clear: Sonko doesn’t understand or respect the principles of governance, devolution, constitutionalism, rule of law, public policy and even philanthropy.

Asked to explain how he intends to address the horrendous traffic gridlock in Nairobi, he blurted out that he would “turn Uhuru Park into a matatu terminus.” At a later interview, he smugly stated that he would construct a 3,000 parking lot.

Asked why he is vying for the position of governor, he stated that, “there is no money at the senate. I need to be a governor because there is money there.” During a live TV interview, he argued that “even though I failed in Maths; I know how to count money.” When asked the sources of his wealth, he responded, implausibly, that his “wealth comes from God.”

There have been no interrogations of Sonko’s ridiculous and childish antics. Our contaminated media have raised no questions on Sonko’s suffocating ignorance.

Sonko's manipulative handouts in response to complex public policy failures are routinely glorified as "generosity" and "philanthropy." No journalist has pressed Sonko to outline even rudimentary policies and programs.

Instead, Sonko's primitivity has been repeatedly offered to Kenyans as "Sonkconomics," "new political model," and other meaningless terms.

It's a grievous insult to education for such a criminal charlatan like Sonko to be constantly paraded as a virtuous man when even my 13-year old knows that the man is a horrible scoundrel.

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