

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THOMAS ISIDORE NOEL SANKARA'S SERVANT LEADERSHIP STYLE OF GOVERNMENT IN BURKINA-FASO

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Abstract

Many authors have written and documented this illustrious and selfless son of the African continent, highlighting his unique kind of leadership different from the one that the African continent has ever experienced for a generation. His style of leadership for four years (1983–1987) as president of Burkina Faso eclipsed several African despots and corrupt leaders before and after Thomas Sankara. This article has three purposes as follows: first, to explore and celebrate the short-lived life of Thomas Sankara, and his legacies. Second, to critically evaluate his solid leadership characteristics and achievements relating it to the economy; Political, social, health, while serving as the President of Burkina Faso. Third, to highlight some of his shortcomings with the view that current and future leaders of African countries can learn from such shortcomings. This study is informed by the post-colonial theories of Ali Mazrui and Frantz Fanon. The author makes the following interesting findings. First, Sankara may have met his demise because of his country's foreign policy (Non- Aligned), his relentless anti-imperialist campaign. The author acknowledges the solid achievements, made during Sankara's brief term in office, are inspirational in the psyche of African men and women of his generation. If there is anything the author and many admirers and well-wishers of Sankara would like to see, is that his murderers are all brought to justice. More importantly, there are several lessons or styles of governance for African leaders both at home and in the diaspora to learn from this great man Thomas Sankara.

Keywords: colonialism, imperialist, neo-colonialist, women liberation, revolution, neo-marxism, self-reliance.

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1. Introduction

Upper Volta was one of the most materially destitute countries in the world. 98 percent of its population was illiterates and its GDP per capita was just over 100 dollars of the time. Out of seven million inhabitants of the country, six million reportedly belonged to the peasantry class. Amidst this atmosphere, characterised by poverty, hunger, squalor, and disease, that Thomas Sankara was born. In terms of its landscape and geography, Burkina Faso's landmass is 105,869 square miles (approximately 274,200 square kilometers) in the heart of the West Africa region, located towards the northern parts of Ghana and Ivory Coast. This is a small landlocked, without large mountains with an average altitude, ranging between 200 and 400 meters above sea level. Its capital city is called Ouagadougou and it is located almost in the center of the country [1].

Thomas Sankara without a shadow of a doubt was one of the most confident and vocal anti-imperialists of the late twentieth century. His life and political praxis continue to influence millions of oppressed people, demanding social justice from their governments worldwide. Taking a similar stance to the revolutionaries Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Samora Machel, Amilcar Cabral, Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko and Muamar Gaddafi, Murtala Mohammed, Patrice Lumumba, Sankara vehemently voiced his displeasure over the arrogant treatment of the people of Burkina Faso by the rulers of the imperialist world. He criticised the poverty and impoverished conditions of the people of Burkina Faso by rulers of the imperialist world. Sankara showed strong resilience and determination to uphold the dignity of his people who have suffered savagely due to colonialism and neo-colonialism. The strength to transform Africa lies in the foundations, laid by uncommon heroes like Thomas Sankara; a man who showed Africa and the world that with a single-minded pursuit of purpose, the worst can be made the best, and in record time too [2].

1. 1. The early life of Thomas Sankara

Thomas Isidore Noel Sankara was born on 21 December 1949, in Yako, French Upper Volta. He was third out of ten children. His father was a soldier, enlisted in the colonial army. Sankara attended primary school at Bobo-Dioulasso. He grew up as a conscientious boy and demonstrated a precocious seriousness in his studies, especially in mathematics and French [3]. His Roman Catholic parents wanted him to become a priest but he chose of joining the army. Thomas Sankara was admitted to the military academy of Kadiogo in the suburbs of the capital city Ouagadougou. It was here he met one Adama Abdoulaye Toure who tutored him in political studies after school hours. He graduated from high school in 1969, offered a scholarship to continue his studies abroad at the military academy Antsirabe, Madagascar. He stayed in Madagascar for four years where he witnessed the Malagasy Revolution in 1972. He was on the battlefield during the Upper Volta and Mali border conflict in 1974 [4].

From Madagascar, he moved on to the famous Parachute Training centre in Pau, France. During his officer cadetship, he had shone out as an excellent student, both in the classroom and on the sports field. After having completed his military training at Pau, Sankara could boast the best education a young African soldier would ever be likely to obtain [5]. On November 25, 1980, a coup d'état took place in Upper Volta, led by Colonel Saye Zerbo under the pretext of erosion of state authority [6]. Though he took no part in the coup, Sankara was appointed as Minister of Information, popularly seen in Ouagadougou going to work on his bicycle. Another military coup took place on November 7, 1982, led by Captain Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo who then appointed Sankara as Prime Minister of Upper Volta on January 10, 1983. Sankara began his foreign state visits to Tripoli, attended the Non-Aligned summit in New Delhi where he met Fidel Castro. This kept France worrying about the political evolution of one of their old colony Upper Volta. On May 17, 1983, Sankara was arrested and placed under house arrest for his anti-imperialist public rhetoric [7]. Sankara is a charismatic, neo-Marxist leader that emerged as president of Upper Volta, renamed by Sankara as 'Burkina Faso', the land of the upright men, and drafted its national anthem.

Murray [8] describes Sankarism as "a Pan African, anti-imperialist, and communist philosophy that emphasizes holistic social transformation and the permanent dismantling of the (neo) imperial structures of dispossession through the collective energies and everyday actions of African people."

Postcolonial Theoretical Framework of Ali Mazrui

Ali Mazrui [9] names the three main cultural sources in Africa: traditional Africa, Islam, and the West, he states that Africa is the cradle of mankind, where the earliest human remains can be found. Thus, Africa can be called the birthplace of human culture. However, Africa never advertised itself. Traditionally, Africans tended to stay close to nature, holding dear what was near to them. Though Africans were interested in the oceans for sustenance, they were not interested in what lay beyond the horizons. Interestingly, in Senegal, the African man is the hunter, while the African woman is the mother, cultivator, and market woman, as central to the economy as men. Mazrui [10] presents European technology as arrogant and non-compromising. Even if Africa has many resources, Africa also has extremes in poverty. The West does not share its technological knowledge with Africa to any great extent, leaving Africa with acquired Western tastes, but no skills to fulfil those tastes on their own. Mazrui [9] sees the need for more technological self-reliance in Africa. Missionaries came and taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. Africans learned to speak, dress, and think like Westerners. However, technological backwardness remains a problem.

Mazrui [11] introduces us to the six paradoxes of the African condition. The first is the paradox of the Garden of Eden in decay. Africa is probably the first home of mankind, but it is the last to be made truly habitable. In his second paradox, the author talked about addressing himself to the paradox of an Africa humiliated but not brutalised. The author's third paradox concerns a clash of cultures. African societies are not the closest culturally to the Western world, but they have been undergoing what is perhaps the most rapid pace of Westernisation we have seen this century.

Africans are caught up between rebellion against the West and imitation of the West. The author's fourth paradox is the burden of Africa's underdevelopment. A continent rich in resources is poor in performance – a well-endowed region of the world accommodates what the United Nations regards as the poorest countries in the world. Why this paradox of poverty-stricken millions in the golden continent? The author's fifth paradox is that of an understanding of the fragmentation and Balkanisation of the African continent, which is essential if we are to diagnose accurately the nature of Africa's aches and pains. In the sixth contradiction, the author takes a closer look at Africa's physical location on the globe about its economic, political and military destiny. Geographically, Africa is the most central of all continents, but politically and militarily it is probably the most marginal.

Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theory

Frantz Fanon [12] was concerned about the exploitative tendencies of the European colonialists who visited Africa under cover of a civilizing mission. Fanon warned that "colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it". Fanon also provided a provocative explanation of how the Negro is perceived in a post-war, Western, white-dominated society. He argued that "everywhere the Negro turns in Europe, he is dehumanized by white folks ... The white man is convinced that the Negro is a beast, if not the length of the penis, and then it is the sexual potency that impresses him... The 'other' will become the mainstay of his pre-occupation and his desires. The women invariably view the Negro as the keeper of the impalpable gate that opens into the realm of orgies; of bacchanals of delirious sexual sensation ..." [13]. The author argues revisiting the wise words of Chinua Achebe [14] that Africa had its civilizations and developmental progress. The coming of the European colonialist first through colonialism was to pacify the African people to path away with their natural resources, and he concluded that it was the bible, paving way for the sword. Africa's infrastructures were not developed but were designed in such a way to facilitate the removal of goods and human services.

Aim of research

The aim of this research is to highlight and critically evaluate the servant style of government of Thomas Sankara with a view of African leaders learning from it in relation to humility and accountability.

2. Materials and Methods

The author made use of a qualitative approach, reviewed existing literature, relating to the topic "Thomas Sankara". Collected data from different sources, these data were analysed using a manually thematic coding process. As a result, themes emerged, which were arranged into specific concepts, and in a logical sequence. The author consulted several kinds of literature, gathering information, informing this study.

3. Results

3. 1. Government programmes of President Sankara from 1983-1987

3. 1. 1. Education

Thomas Sankara's government prioritised education by carrying out a nationwide literacy campaign. Before he became president, the literacy rate was at 13 % in 1983, and by the time of the assassination in 1987, it stood at 73 %. Numerous schools were built in Burkina Faso through community mobilization, teachers were trained and women were strongly encouraged to pursue education and career simultaneously without any restrictions.

3. 1. 2. Health

President Sankara flagged off a national immunization program that within weeks saw the vaccination of over 2.5 million children against meningitis, yellow fever, and measles. Access to health was a basic human right for all citizens. He also mobilized members of the community to build medical dispensaries, thereby ensuring that proximity of primary healthcare to citizens was reachable even in the most remote areas. There was one doctor for every 50 000 Burkinabè, in

addition, the country had an annual income of about \$150 per person [1]. In November 1984, the Sankara administration became the first African government to publicly accept and declare that the HIV/AIDS pandemic was real and posed serious health and socio-economic risk to Burkina Faso [15].

3. 1. 3. Agriculture and food production

Sankara rejected handouts and created a culture of self-sustenance. He spoke against the inevitability of poverty and was a major proponent of food security. Within four years of government, he turned his country from being referred to as food dependency to food self-sufficiency. This was made possible by the successful mobility of the Burkina Faso peasantry class who were predominately farmers. Radical land reforms led to state seizure of land from the aristocratic class then given to the poor to cultivate for mass production to boost the economy [16]. In addition, a dam was built by volunteers at the Sourou Valley where 8000 hectares of land was for the first time irrigated to grow sugar cane for a new sugar refinery. This was further enhanced by the fact that the use of fertilisers rose by 56 percent across the country between 1984 and 1987. To minimise “the high costs of imported fertiliser, much of this increase involved greater use of organic fertilisers. In 1987, some 180 tractors were imported for several large-scale cooperative projects” [17]. The author [16] reveals that “almost 92 % of the labour force in 2014 was employed in agricultural labour, in subsistence farming and cotton cultivation – statistics largely unchanged since Thomas Sankara’s radical experiments at pro-poor development in the early 1980s”. The Food and Agricultural Organisation [16] found that 30 % of the GDP of Burkina Faso was from the agricultural sector in 2012, which shows that Burkina Faso still depended on agricultural products even 25 years after Sankara’s death. Recent statistics, however, highlight that gold has since 2009 overtaken cotton as Burkina Faso’s most exported product with the most foreign earnings [15]. The Food and Agricultural Organisation found that 30 % of the GDP of Burkina Faso was from the agricultural sector in 2012, which shows that Burkina Faso still depended on agricultural products even 25 years after Sankara’s death. Recent statistics, however, highlight that gold has since 2009 overtaken cotton as Burkina Faso’s most exported product with the most foreign earnings [17].

3. 1. 4. Women liberation

Sankara was one of the first heads of state to condemn female genital mutilation, forced marriages, underage marriages were prohibited and polygamous practices were not allowed. He denounced the oppression and ill-treatment of women. He appointed females into high governmental positions, encouraged them to work and become financially independent, recruited women into the military, and granted pregnancy leaves during education. Sankara declared that ‘The revolution and women’s liberation go together. We do not talk of women’s emancipation as an act of charity or because of a surge of human compassion. It is a basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution. Women hold up the other half of the sky’ [18].

In September 1984, one day marked the day of solidarity where men were encouraged to switch roles with women by, for instance, going to the market for shopping of food and preparing meals at home, which is something that was traditionally done by women in Burkina Faso. This practical exercise was enforced and encouraged by Sankara, so that men could get first-hand experience and know what women go through in taking care of families with meager resources. As expected, a lot of men did not take kindly to this day of solidarity; some rebelled against it, although others participated. It was a great Learning Curve in conscientising men about the plight of women [15]. Women emancipation was one of the cardinal pillars of Sankara’s political philosophy.

3. 1. 5. Housing and infrastructures

Infrastructural challenges were tackled headlong by President Sankara mostly through the mobilization of citizens as construction workers in the building of access roads, houses were built to remove Burkina Faso from slum dwellings, hospitals, and schools across the country within a short

period. It was reported, that over 700 kilometres of rail were laid by citizens to facilitate the extraction of manganese [19].

3. 1. 6. Foreign Policy

On Non-Aligned countries, he put it this way: We the Non-Aligned countries believe that the politics of blocs is harmful to world peace. We refuse to be either backyards of the West or beachheads of the East. Though we are willing to cooperate with both, we demand the right to be different [20]. One of the many of his speeches that stand out, showing his unapologetic Pan-Africanist foreign policy stance, was delivered at the UN 39th General Assembly in New York in 1984. In this a speech he said, we must succeed in producing more—producing more, because it is natural that he who feeds you also imposes his will ... We are free. He who does not feed you can demand nothing of you. Here, however, we are being fed every day, every year, and we say, ‘Down with imperialism!’ Well, your stomach knows what’s what [21]. Sankara resented and fought against all forms of imperialism. He stated that “Imperialism is a system of exploitation that occurs not only in the brutal form of those who come with guns to conquer territory. Imperialism often occurs in subtler forms, a loan, food aid, blackmail. We are fighting this system that allows a handful of men on earth to rule all of humanity [19].

3. 1. 7. Economy

First, economic projects had to use local materials, labour, and financing as much as possible to reduce reliance on foreign aid and imports. Second, with equity as a watchword, those at the top had to lose some of their perks, so that those at the bottom could benefit. Third, whatever limited financial resources the government had at its disposal were allocated as a priority to rural areas, not the urban centres. And fourth, in a country of scant rainfall and a harsh climate, environmental concerns had to be integrated into all development efforts [3]. To boost local production in agriculture and the textile industry, Sankara made it a policy, albeit unwritten, that all public servants would on certain days’ wear clothes, wholly manufactured in Burkina Faso. Therefore, civil servants were obliged to wear Faso Dan Fani, common clothing, made from local cotton [22].

3. 1. 8. Conservation

Sankara embarked upon a large-scale tree planting exercise and irrigation water projects. He encouraged citizens to cultivate forest nurseries and over 7,000 village nurseries were created and sustained, through which over 10 million trees were cultivated to push back the encroachment of the Sahel desert.

3. 1. 9. Humbleness and humility

Mariam Sankara would later reveal to the press that her late husband sometimes refuses to sleep under an air conditioning unit on the basis that the majority of the people are not able to afford one. At the time of Sankara death, his salary was less than \$500 annually. And one of the poorest paid heads of state in the world. Amongst his recorded possessions, he left behind were: four bicycles, a car, three guitars, and a refrigerator [23]. Thomas Sankara capped his salary at \$462 and forbade the hanging of his portrait at public places and any form of reverence, attached to his person or presence. He denounced any form of personality cultism, arising out of his charismatic leadership. He often reminded his followers that his leadership was all about 7 million Burkinabe and not for Thomas Sankara alone. The people’s will and that of the leader are both inseparable, undivided, intertwined, and interwoven. The author argues that such a leader is a rare gem and hard to find in our world where humans are judged by material wealth, opulence, and possessions. One can also understand some of the reasons why it is very difficult to fill the leadership vacuum or replace Thomas Sankara in the hearts and minds of not only Burkinabe’s but all black people of African descent globally.

As another measure of saving the limited financial resources that the government had, it was forbidden for government officials to fly business class/first class when they attended government meetings in other countries. He rationalised this by asserting that whether one was in the first

or second class of the airplane when it took off, it took off at the same time with everyone, and when it landed it landed at the same time regardless of the class of the passengers. Sankara also reduced the salaries of all civil servants, and in doing this, he led by example by also reducing his salary to \$450 per month, making him one of the least paid Presidents in Africa and the world at that time.

3. 1. 10. World Bank and International Monetary fund debts

In the 1985 budget of 58 Billion Francs, Burkina Faso had to devote 12 billion to debt repayments. Thomas Sankara used the Organisation of African Unity platform to galvanise African leaders not to pay any money back to these bodies and that they lend money with high-interest rates to create and sustain a culture of economic dependency on Africa's western colonial powers. Sankara was openly critical of both debts and aid made available to African countries. Most post-independence African countries' governments have been living beyond their means by spending money they do not have and borrowing billions of dollars from private financiers and the World Bank. Coupled with the colonial debt that most countries inherited at independence and continue to pay to this day, the African debt crisis still haunts almost all African countries. Sankara [21] whilst attending the OAU meeting) went on to elaborate why it was illogical and suicidal to keep paying the colonial debt: The debt is another form of neo-colonialism, one, in which the colonialists have transformed themselves into technical assistants. It would be more accurate to say technical assassins... The debt in its present form is a cleverly organised re-conquest of Africa, under which our growth and development are regulated by stages and norms alien to us. It is a reconquest that turns each of us into a financial slave – or just a plain slave... Sankara argued that, unlike Europe, which was assisted to rebuild post the war, Africa was instead asked to pay those who brought war and plunder to it. Such hypocrisy and double standards were deemed unacceptable by Sankara that is why he strongly urged Africa to act as a united bloc in refusing to pay. Sankara argued that Africans should be the ones seeking that their blood debt is repaid as millions of Africans were barbarically killed during the middle passage as they were transported to Europe and the Americas during slavery. He explained that the same countries (former colonisers) that want Africa to pay its debts are the same countries that owe Africa “a debt of blood”, which he contents, “the greatest riches can never repay” [21].

3. 1. 11. Style of leadership

Servant leadership has emerged over the years as one of the dominant philosophies globally being discussed. In this part of the study, the author introduces the reader to some characteristics of the servant leader. Servant leadership is a philosophy, propagated by Robert K Greenleaf in 1970, in his seminal essay titled ‘The Servant as Leader’. ‘Servant leaders’ as the term suggests are “servants” first and leaders second. Their desire to serve is natural and innate, while stepping into a leadership role is a conscious choice. At its core, being a servant means taking the responsibility of meeting others’ needs upon yourself. A servant leader is a visionary person who can predict the future and how things will eventually unravel [24]. Nelson Mandela (1994) elucidated more of the servant leader as ‘is like a Shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the nimblest go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind. It is argued, that the words *servant* and *leader* are usually thought of as two opposite and contradictory words, put alongside together. When two opposites are brought together side by side in a creative and meaningful way, a paradox emerges [25].

Sankara was a bit reckless with his security because he would travel without much security during the day and at night even in remote areas of Burkina Faso. Unlike most leaders today, who spend a lot of money, while travelling with an entourage of heavily armed top security, Sankara was more concerned about being with, and among, the ordinary Burkinabe, hearing their grievances. Sankara was too devoted and invested in his relationship with Blaise, whom he saw as a brother as they grew up together in the former's home. This is a crucially important lesson for contemporary leaders, to not let their relationships and friendships with their cadres cloud their judgment when in government.

3. 1. 12. Sankarism

Sankara himself did not coin the term “Sankarism” or refer to it anywhere in his speeches and interviews; it came about long after he had died and scholars began studying his revolution and

explained this term thus: “at the heart of the Africana philosophy, known as Sankarism, is the conviction that revolutionary ideas are imbued with dynamic life over and beyond the (individual, personal) revolutionary who develops these ideas. Ideas belong to people. It can be argued, that Ideas embody a people” [26]. A more succinct definition is that “Sankarism is the philosophy, grounded by the imperative of self-sufficiency and sustainable development that emanates from within and not from without” [27]. The term “Sankarism” gained prominence and use in the year 2000 when a political party, led by Benewende Sankara. Pan-African Nationalism is the nationalistic, unified struggle/resistance of African peoples against all forms of foreign aggression and invasion, in the fight for nationhood/nation-building. The primary goal of Pan-African Nationalism is the total liberation and unification of all African peoples under African communalism. Pan-African Nationalism seeks to achieve African nationhood and nationality; human perfectibility based on the seven cardinal principles/virtues of Ma’at [28].

3. 1. 13. Characteristics of the servant leader

Spears [28], Frick, Don, and Sipe [29] present us with ten main characteristics of the servant leader as follows:

1. Listening: Leaders seeks to identify the will of a group and help clarify that will. He or she seeks to listen receptively to what is being said. Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one’s inner voice and seeking to understand what one’s body, spirit, and mind are communicating. Listening, coupled with regular periods of reflection, is essential to the growth of the servant-leader.

2. Empathy: The servant-leader strives to understand and empathize with others. The most successful servant-leaders are those who have become skilled empathetic listeners.

3. Healing: Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. The ability to heal oneself and others. There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share.

4. Awareness: both general awareness and self-awareness strengthen the servant leader. Able leaders are known to usually be sharply awake and reasonably disturbed, they do not seek solace but always have their inner serenity.

5. Persuasion: Servant leaders seek to convince others rather than deploy coercive compliance, effective in building consensus amongst their followers.

6. Conceptualization: Servant-leaders seek to nurture their abilities to “dream a great dream”, and often work relentlessly towards the realisation of the dream.

7. Foresight: it enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future.

8. Stewardship: Servant leadership is a long-term commitment to serving the needs of others. They often take pride in doing so and many see it as an honourable call to duty to serve others.

9. Commitment to the growth of the people: Places more emphasis on the sustainable growth and development of each member of his/her followers.

10. Building community: Servant leadership is built on the foundation of a communitarian spirit, with which all members are proudly associated. Every citizen is given a sense of belonging and full participation in one’s civic duties and responsibilities.

In looking at Sankara’s administration during his tenure as President of Burkina Faso (1983–1987), one can see when, where and how Sankara imbibed some of these enumerated above principles of servant leadership. His connection with the masses can be seen in this regard as a true manifestation of some of the above-given characteristics [30]. Sankara sought to forge a national identity that transcended ethnic, class, and gender differences, he created a culture of self-sustenance, self-improvement, self-awareness, and self-reliance.

3. 1. 14. Thomas Sankara’s Shortcomings

1. Not a good judge of personality and character. The author takes into consideration the circumstances, leading to his assassination. One can argue that Sankara was seeking martyrdom, he was very careless about his own safety.

2. Loyalty and trusted friends. Blaise Compaore was Sankara's childhood friend. Sankara was warned a couple of times to take his safety more seriously, especially amidst trusted comrade brothers. Sankara's warmth, love, and affection for friends led to his eventual assassination. Human beings quest for power has no boundary or loyalty.

3. Peasantry class had little or no knowledge of ideological struggle that can enable them to better understand the support and the pace of evolutionary change.

4. Carelessness and reckless with his life. Sankara rode bikes publicly to work, a testimony of practicing what he preached. His love for his people and country made him to become subjective and even more vulnerable to his detractors and haters. A true revolutionary does not often take into consideration the safety and value of his /her life [31].

5. Communism is a utopian ideal that cannot be practiced in reality. The author argued that it is difficult to find any country in the world where communism was practiced successfully. It is an ideology many of us aspire to implement but never really practiced it in the true sense of it.

6. The idealist in search for a better humanity. Sankara knew that he was born into a very corrupt society. He took it as a task upon himself to clean his corrupt infested society. He led by example and believed in the redistribution of land/ wealth.

7. Disrespectfulness of traditional leaders, customs, and traditions. It was very high to have taken on traditional leaders the way Sankara did. The king, chiefs, and priests of the African traditional and cultural groups are the custodian of the people. Africans have always looked up to traditional rulers with respect and reverence.

8. The foreign policy of Non-aligned was not strictly followed to the letter

9. Seeking martyrdom for posterity due to the lack of the use of bodyguards or assigned 24/7 security detail(s).

10. Too much focus on labour as means of economic prosperity and lost focus on capital markets driven economy.

11. Banning of trade unions and political parties. Many people were victims of summary judgment by the revolutionary tribunals.

4. Assassination of Thomas Sankara

Blaise Compaore was seen as a brother to Thomas Sankara, grew up together, as brotherly close friends. In the end, he led the assassination plot against Sankara. A betrayal of trust. Compaore was driven by power and greed with a certain elements of barbarity and evil in his personality. On October 15, 1987, Sankara was killed by an armed group of about twelve officers in a coup d'état, organised by his colleague Blaise Compaore [32]. Deterioration in relations with neighboring countries was one of the reasons given, with Compaore stating that Sankara jeopardised foreign relations with former colonial power France and neighbouring Ivory Coast. Sankara's body was dismembered and he was quickly buried in an unmarked grave, while his widow Mariam and two children fled out of the country. Compaore wanted power and got the power as president of Burkina Faso for 27 years but the innocent blood of Thomas Sankara was on his head forever. History will never forget how he planned and took Sankara's life. The author condemns the killing of Sankara. The people who killed Sankara dismembered his body, and buried him in an undisclosed location were evil, barbaric, and inhuman [33]. They killed the physical body but his ideas and legacy live with us and remain evergreen in our memory. Thomas Sankara in his preparation to transit from our sinful world provided us with a useful piece of advice "I want people to remember me as someone, whose life has been helpful to humanity"

Limitation of the study:

1. Thomas Sankara was a rabble rouser and too socialist fanatic to many critics. It will be very difficult to convince followers of capitalism, imperialism, colonialism to show love and interest on him. Hence today Sankarists are mainly from the leftist, neo-marxism, revolutionary schools of thought with a very limited base of his followers.

2. There is room for further scientific researchers to study Thomas Sankara, looking more into what shaped his philosophical thought. What would he have done if his life was not cut short by

assassins? Would Burkina Faso turned into another Cuba with failed economic policies that have kept majority of their citizens in poverty?

5. Conclusion

History is replete with martyrs, whose ideas have survived the passage of time to inspire future generations like ours. The mere fact that Sankara is more vocal and popular when dead than alive; it shows the height of his lasting legacy for all Africans both in the Diasporas and at home in Africa. Sankara's great popularity is in part a reflection of African's disillusionment with the cohort of corrupt leaders incapable of meeting the basic needs of their masses, taking marching orders from Western capital and institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and keeping citizens tramped in vicious circle poverty and hunger. Leaders of Sankara's calibre are extremely rare, if any, in contemporary Africa. Indicative of his responsibility and accountability to the Burkinabe, he once said, "I consider myself as someone who must respect the wishes and the demands of the people. I will do as I am told by the people". The author draws his conclusion that Thomas Sankara came to the international stage both as a political leader and the conscience of the African continent and people, he was well ahead of his time. As Africans, we were not prepared for such servant leadership as Thomas Sankara until he was assassinated. Our interests and appreciation of his philosophy, visionary thinking started to make more prominence to all of us. Sankara's popularity was deeply rooted in his profound sincerity of commitment to serve his people and total commitment towards the liberation of women and the emancipation of the African people and continent. It is not a coincidence during his lifetime he often referred to Mariam his wife as 'La Veuve' meaning the widow in the English language. One can conclude that this dark humorous title revealed his premonition or awareness of his early death in the hands of friends he trusted wholeheartedly. Sankara cautioned us all to remember him for his love and service to humanity. He also told us to always remember that revolutionaries can be physically murdered but you cannot kill their ideas. Sankara continues to serve as a source of hope for millions of oppressed peoples all over the world. Thomas Isidore Noel Sankara remains immortalised in our hearts and minds as one if not the greatest political and moral leaders that has even come out of Mother Africa.

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