



CALL FOR PAPERS
SMAIAS-ASN SUMMER SCHOOL
2–6 FEBRUARY 2026
DAR ES SALAAM



Rejuvenating Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism with all its chequered history has been an enduring ideology and outlook in Global Africa since its founding in the Americas and the Caribbean towards the end of the nineteenth century. The landmark turning point was the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945, with W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963) as its President. The demands of the previous four congresses had revolved around racial discrimination and hierarchy afflicting Africans in the North Atlantic European countries and colonial Africa. The Fifth Congress for the first time explicitly demanded complete self-determination for colonised Africa envisaging a kind of social-democratic future for independent Africa.

The mobilisation of Pan-Africanists and Asian anti-colonial freedom fighters based in England around the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy in 1935 played a big role in the awakening and forging of solidarity among Africans and Asians. Among the leading organisers of the movement against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, who also played leading roles in the organisation of the Fifth Pan-African Congress, were Amy Ashwood Garvey (1897–1969), George Padmore (1903–1959), Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972), and T. Ras Makonnen (1909–1983). Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta (1893–1978), who were joint secretaries of the Fifth Pan-African Congress came to lead their respective countries to independence and served as first Presidents of Ghana and Kenya respectively. Their subsequent roles in Pan-Africanism and African unity is emblematic of the bifurcation in Pan-Africanist ideology and politics in independent Africa between people-centric and state-centric Pan-Africanism in the post-independence trajectory of Pan-Africanism.

Key moments in the history of Pan-Africanism include the 1958 All-African People's Conference of freedom fighters, trade unionists, other activists and heads of state of the few independent African countries originated by Nkrumah with the help of his friend and mentor George Padmore, to continue the anti-imperialist struggle for freedom from colonialism.

The Bandung Conference of 1955, coming ten years after the Fifth Pan-African Congress, may be considered a kind of interregnum between the anti-imperialist struggle for freedom sparked off by the 5th Congress and the 1966 Tricontinental Conference held in Havana, which

recaptured the anti-imperialist, militant spirit of the 5th Congress. Attended by some 29 countries, the focus of Bandung was on keeping distance from the rising superpowers, the United States and Soviet Union, who were then engaged in a fierce Cold War and the formation of respective military blocs in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, formed in 1949) and Warsaw Pact (formed in 1955). Bandung is considered the progenitor of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which was formally established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. For three post-colonial decades from the 1960s to the 1980s, before the advent of neoliberalism, NAM played a significant role in the United Nations and its councils to bring to the forefront the concerns and demands of the Third World revolving around political and economic self-determination and, among other things, fair terms of international trade.

The Tricontinental Conference held in Havana in 1966 can legitimately trace its lineage to the 5th Pan-African Congress. It was attended by some 500 delegates from 82 countries of the Third World - Africa, Asia and Latin America. Among the attendees were progressive countries, including from the socialist bloc, national liberation movements and prominent individuals. It was at this conference that Amílcar Cabral, the leader of PAIGC, the national liberation movement of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, made his famous presentation on "The Weapon of Theory". The Havana Conference concluded with the formation of OSPAAAL, Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

State-centric Pan-Africanism was translated into the unity of African states embedded in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), later reorganised as the African Union (AU). The AU has not lived up to the expectations of the people of Global Africa, particularly the younger post-colonial generation. Nonetheless, the Pan-African spirit manifested in the solidarity of people, oneness of Africa and people-led anti-imperialism has endured and continues to fire the imagination of the youth of Africa. Frustrated by the self-seeking rule of the African proto-bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, African masses and committed Pan-African intellectuals continue

to struggle to build and enhance anti-imperialist resistance and African liberation and emancipation.

The Pan-Africanist movement has been riven by unfortunate schisms about its future directions and who are its legitimate heirs. More productive have been the significant debates that have continued to refine the ideology and thought of Pan-Africanism and set its revolutionary agenda. Major debates in this regard include who is an African, whether Pan-Africanism is compatible with territorial/state nationalism, what class forces will lead the Pan-African Revolution at this stage, how to combine national liberation and social emancipation in the context of Pan-Africanism, and how to convert Pan-Africanism into a category of intellectual thought. The Decolonial moment in knowledge production has also been pivotal in generating debates about epistemic justice as a contribution to the Pan-African revolution. Pan-Africanism has also in the last decades been enriched by debates emanating from the “margins of theory”, by social groups raising the question of difference as a historical and therefore fundamental concern in any ideology of liberation. In this regard, gender, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality constitute major contemporary domains of struggle over the meaning and potency of Pan-Africanism as liberatory thought and practice.

The current historical conjuncture is a testing time for Pan-Africanism. The unfinished political, economic, social and environmental projects of Africa’s liberation and transformation, the dominance of financialised capitalism and the crumbling global governance system that has presided over cyclical crises of economies, debt, collapsing commodity prices, existential challenges for working people and crises in social reproduction, and the negative impacts of fast accelerating climate change and growing inequalities between regions, countries and within countries, have created instability and volatility in the world. This has been compounded by the genocide of Palestinians perpetrated by the heinous Zionist state and barbaric wars waged by US-led imperialism. Pan-Africanism as an ideology of resistance, liberation and collective defence, has become an imperative. It is in the light of this urgency that the 2026 Summer School is being convened. The objective is to reignite and reimagine Pan-Africanism through well-researched presentations, deep reflections in the proposed roundtables and through formal and informal encounters explore ways and means of building sustained Pan-African camaraderie.

Keeping this context in mind, the Summer School will entertain papers on any of the issues arising from above including on any of the following broad themes:

1. Historicising Pan-Africanism and its major debates

2. Pan-African intellectuals and Pan-African thought on politics, ideology, social emancipation and economic liberation
3. The state, politics and political movements in Pan-Africanism
4. Pan-Africanism and national sovereignty
5. Pan-Africanism and economic liberation
6. Pan-Africanism, the Social question and questions of inequalities and difference
7. Pan-Africanism, reparations and restitution
8. The intersections between Pan-Africanism and other emancipatory thought (Marxism, Internationalism, the Bolivarian Revolution)
9. Pan-Africanism and war and peace
10. Old and Current Debates within Pan-Africanism

The SMAIAS-ASN Summer School values diversity and promotes dialogue between academia and political activists. It brings together young and veteran researchers and activists from all continents, especially from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and provides for collective reflection and learning.

Interested researchers and activists are invited to submit paper proposals (abstracts) of up to 200 words, in English, no later than **1 September 2025**. Proposals should be submitted via the online form here: bit.ly/3IgRE65. Women are especially encouraged to participate. The selection of proposals will be made public by **10 September 2025** via our social media. The results will not be communicated individually. Please consult our social media below.

Authors of selected proposals will be invited to send their draft papers by **1 December 2025**. Kindly note that authors of selected proposals who do not send their papers by this date will not be included in the final programme.

The Summer School will be held in hybrid (physical and virtual) format in the week of **2–6 February 2026**, at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Funding for physical participation is limited. Participants who wish to join physically in Dar es Salaam are encouraged to access own institutional funding.

Papers presented at the Summer School may eventually be selected for publication in *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, subject to normal peer review process.

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