



True and false liberations in fighting the ghosts of neo-colonialism

BY JAN LIPAVSK

THIS year, the celebrations of the victory in the World War II are being overshadowed by blood and suffering on the territory of Ukraine and destruction of Ukrainian cities. Ghosts of new aggressive, neo-colonial war of the empire, hungry for more territory, cast their dark shadows on these days, which are usually connected to celebration of peace.

The unprovoked, illegal Russian aggression against its smaller democratic neighbor should make us think about how memory can be violated in sake of neo-imperial policies. The traditional event at the Red square in Moscow has gradually changed its original purpose.

It was supposed to be the humble expression of gratitude and remembrance of Soviet heroes of many nations including Russians and Ukrainians, but it evolved into a state organised propagandist show-down and demonstration of power.

In the past years, threats usually accompanied the speeches, but this year threats have materialised into

a war.

The heroism of victims in the WWII has been used to make the case for strong hand of a ruthless authoritarian regime and its expansive dreams of colonial revival.

Czechoslovak WWII experience with a powerful neighbor (Totalitarian Nazi Germany) who invaded a smaller neighbor under the pretext of liberating the German speaking population was a preface of much greater war because this liberation was not stopped and did develop further. This lesson-learned should not be forgotten.

Czechoslovakia saw another false liberation in 1968, when an invasion army of almost half a million soldiers fulfilled the order from Moscow and killed hopes and promises of freedom of the Prague spring.

The following Soviet occupation turned a proud and independent country into a broken Soviet colony from which Europe was kidnapped as Milan Kundera famously reminded the world.

In other parts of the planet, the 60s were luckier and brought great de-colonisation movements. Empires were shaken and many nations of different continents were

allowed to taste freedom.

The former Soviet satellites like Czechoslovakia together with nations kept as part of the Russian and later the Soviet empire had to wait another thirty years for the same delight.

But with the end of the Cold War they also celebrated their moment of joy. This was how true liberation looked like.

The victory in the WWII, together with the de-colonisation process and the end of the Cold War were the greatest leaps of humanity towards freedom in the 21st century. Its beginning was bringing hopes that Munich moments when a smaller state fell victim to a bigger neighbor and Brezhnev doctrines of limited sovereignty will not be repeated.

Putin's war of choice is stealing peace and lives from millions of Ukrainians but will come to haunt us all. Russian society will be severely hurt as well. Dead bodies of soldiers returning to their mothers and wives in bags write another tragic chapter of the complicated Russian history.

Russian economy will shrink to the levels of the 90s and all the economic growth and prosperity of the last 30 years will be erased. Russia will end as a poor and isolated country. Putin's war is not in Russia's interest.

Weaponising of gas and oil is hurting many economies in Europe and elsewhere. Russian army targeting the infrastructure of stocking the grain and Russian blockade of ports and other export routes can provoke hunger of other millions of citizens in many countries in Africa and the Middle East.

Traditional donors from the EU and US will have economies weakened and less capable to perform a robust development assistance to poorer/developing countries. They will have to undertake a gigantic reconstruction effort in Ukraine. These resources will be missed elsewhere.

No one in the world was in need of this war but evil cannot prevail. We all should refuse the phantoms of colonial ages, ghosts of neo-imperialism, we cannot allow the rules-based international order to be destroyed and replaced by the power-based division of the



• The writer

political map to the spheres of influence. Illegal aggression cannot be tolerated and all peace loving people should unite in sending the anti-war signal.

Let's reject the Orwellian analogies where truth is a lie and war is called liberation. Let's support Ukraine and hope that next year the celebrations of the end of the WWII will turn back to what it should be in the remembrance of victims and fallen heroes and the promise for peace.

The writer is the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic

The bell is tolling...

BY NKRABEAH EFFAH-DARTEY

EARLY in the days of the PNDC Revolution, I was at the Arts Center in Accra one hot afternoon, when Captain Kojo Tsikata, then Special Advisor to the PNDC came to give some speech – honestly I forget now what function it was, but I so well remember when he said: “The bell is tolling.....it is tolling for you and I.....”

When I was in elementary school in Jinjini back in the 1960's, before coming over to Achimota School, I was the bell boy for the Jinjini Presbyterian Church, and early every morning at 0500 hrs I will walk from my mother's house to the roadside and ring the bell..... toll the bell..... to call people for regular daily morning worship.

In the context of Captain Kojo Tsikata's speech, he was talking about the fact that today this man is gone, tomorrow it might be you, or me..... the bell is tolling.

Last week was most unfortunate for me, a week I wish I could quickly forget, two very close friends were

served with writs of summons from Almighty God to appear before His eternal Justice.

Bailiffs of death first visited NANA YAW KWAKYE for more than four years a member of my Theatre group. The Theatre Mirrors, a journalist working with radio Gold and a traditional ruler in one of the Fante communities not too far from Agona Swedru. I remember so well the day Nana yaw Kwakye was installed as a Divisional Chief, sitting in a palanquin, borne aloft, shoulder high, on the streets of the little community.

Now he has to stand before the justice of Almighty God.

Next, I just saw a text message on my mobile phone and John Ndedugri passes away..... Oh, Good God, my Dear old John is gone?

How can I forget 31st December Revolution, in the hey days, when he was PNDC Secretary for Upper Region and how he carried the torch of the Revolution. Those were the days when because of 'integrity' probity and

accountability “public officers lived austere Lives shorn of ostentation and opulence and tried to be honest as practicable with state resources.

Then John fell out with the Revolution, became a lawyer and tried to survive as a lawyer and a northern based politician and, invariably faded away with time. He too has surrendered to the inevitable summons facing all mortals to appear before Almighty God.

And so, reader, I ask myself, all this running around, buying cars, building houses, calling ourselves all manner of titles - to what end?

Because of the sin of Adam in eating the forbidden fruit, all mortals are doomed to die, either today or tomorrow. If not through motor accident perhaps through sickness or just through sheer old age.

The other day at 37 Military Hospital where I had gone for regular check up, guess who I saw..... a trail very aged but decent elderly person.....

could that be the famous Professor Evans Anom? Yes, it was, and not long after I heard that he has passed on, at the age of 101!!!

It is no wonder King Solomon echoed by President Barrack Obama said that “vanity of vanities – all is vanity”. Today shall give way to tomorrow, and there is nothing new under the sun.

One scene which I will never forget which is always at the frontal lobes of my brain is the fresh face of Flight Lt. Jerry John Rawlings lying in the coffin just before the casket was finally closed – seen on television – and then eventually lowered into the grave.

He who could shout on tree tops screaming probity accountability, integrity – there he laid, motionless, lifeless, no move, unaware of what was going on around.

Reader, I strongly recommend that let us seek the face of God in everything we do, because all we have is NOW, the present, as you read these lines. Tomorrow may never come.

I was scared to bone narrow

when I saw a very big banner in red near the Holy Spirit Cathedral: “God did NOT promise you TOMMORROW”.....

But King Solomon said it, that the ever-menacing fear of death should not occupy you – no. Rather, enjoy life to the full, because you don't know what will happen after you.

As a court going lawyer for thirty six years, and more practically as a three-year old Head of a very big Family in Berekum, I see it, daily, that a person dies, and his estate very usually drifts away..... his children at each other's throats for control, rampant dissipation of the estate, sale of the vast properties left behind.....reader, you know, lawyer E D Kom told me something in 1987 – “Captain, use your law money to build a house for yourself in Accra and a small Cottage for yourself in Berekum and use the remainder of your money to give very good education to your children, then, Captain, enjoy life to the full, don't bother about what will happen after you.

May all the faithfully departed, my classmate Hoenyefie Bodza Lumor, my Theatre Mirrors member Nana Yaw Kwakye and fellow compatriot John Ndedugri.....may they rest in perfect peace.

Reader, the bell is tolling.