

Thandika Mkandawire: Tribute to a Mentor and Game-changer

The passing of Thandika Mkandawire in the morning of 27 March 2020 has been a significant body blow to many of us. Thandika, as he preferred you call him regardless of the age difference, was laid to rest on 15 April 2020. It is still immensely difficult to reconcile oneself with the idea that he would no longer walk among us, enthuse us with his infectious humour, and distil in his gentle manner incredible insights from his well of knowledge and wisdom. A lot may be said about the brilliance of his mind, and his sense of humour. What strikes me most about Thandika is how much he taught us, by his very life, what it means to be human. Thandika had a zest for life and boundless energy that put some of us, many years his junior, to shame. Thandika was remarkably generous and deeply caring. Above all, Thandika was a

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person of stellar personal integrity. I knew him as a mentor and a game-changer, and it is in this personal sense that I would like to present this tribute in his memory.¹

Three people have been immensely influential in shaping my analytical sensibilities and career. The first two are Omafume Onoge and John Ohiorhenuan, who were influential in shaping my thoughts in my undergraduate and graduate studies and early career. Thandika Mkandawire was the third person. The three of them shared characteristics that endeared me to them: a deep disregard for

dogmas, immense capacity for reasoning outside the box, and an unflinching commitment to Africa and its peoples. They were deeply internationalist, as well.

Initial Encounters

Encounters can be fleeting or enduring. In the case of Thandika, my encounter was both. It began at the inception workshop for the *Reflection on Development* fellowship programme held in Kampala, Uganda in 1989. Earlier that year, I had returned to Ibadan, Nigeria from a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya. This was part of the African Perspectives on Development project to which Ulf Himmelstrand had invited me to participate as a contributing author.² On my return from the July 1989 workshop in Nairobi, I walked into John Ohiorhenuan's office in the Department of Economics for

a chat on my experience. As I was about to leave his office, Johnny asked if I had seen the call for application for the Rockefeller Foundation/CODESRIA Reflections on Development fellowship programme. Johnny was a laureate of the inaugural fellowship. I had not seen the announcement and had no idea what CODESRIA was. Having completed my doctoral studies the previous year, I did not think I could apply for such a prestigious fellowship. Johnny was unrelenting in asking me to apply. It took a week, but I eventually decided to apply, framed by outstanding research questions that arose from the paper I presented at the Nairobi workshop. As it turned out, I received a letter from CODESRIA that my application was successful. The letter was signed by a 'Thandika Mkandawire—Executive Secretary.' The inception workshop was hosted by Mahmood Mamdani's Centre for Basic Research and we stayed at the Nile Hotel in Kampala.

I had a more vivid recollection of Micere Mugo and Mahmood Mamdani, both as resource persons, from the workshop than I did of Thandika. In this sense, my initial encounter with Thandika was fleeting. I remember Micere Mugo for her infectious and lively personality, which was only outdone in my recollection by her account, over breakfast on our second day in Kampala, of the nightmare she had the night before. She had relived her experience of torture when she was under arrest by the Arap Moi regime. The previous night, over dinner, Mamdani recounted how under the murderous regime of Idi Amin, the hotel was commandeered by the regime's secret police, the ironically named State Research Bureau (SRB). The SRB used the hotel for the incarceration and torture of its

victims. I was meeting Mamdani for the first time, after having read his works as an undergraduate in Ibadan, mainly *The Myths of Population Control* (1972) and *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (1976). Mamdani was already something of an academic rock star after Monthly Review Press published the former, a book that "put the spanner into the works" of the dominant narratives in Population Studies.

A more vivid encounter with Thandika, one that would turn out to be the basis for an enduring relationship, was in July 1990, at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Centre, Italy. The conference was the concluding activity for the Reflections fellowship, where the laureates presented their reports. The conference brought together laureates from Africa and Asia. I presented my fellowship report (*Labour in the explanation of an African crisis*). The fellowship, supported by a grant of US\$25 000, required laureates to spend anything between four to six months at a research outfit (with a good library) preferably outside their countries, 'put their feet up', and reflect on a development issue of their choice.³ I had chosen to interrogate the narratives of the role of labour in the emergent neoliberal discourse of Africa's development crisis. My research focused on Nigeria. The evening before the resource persons left Bellagio, Thandika invited me to take a walk with him on the grounds of the Bellagio Centre. He said he read my fellowship report and was impressed by it. CODESRIA, he said, would like to launch a multinational research network on *Labour movement and policymaking in Africa*. He would like to invite me to produce the 'green book'—a scoping exercise that would mark out the state of the

art in the literature and define the research agenda for the network. That would be the more enduring encounter with Thandika and a remarkably rewarding association that deepened with the passing years. The fellowship also marked the beginning of my involvement in CODESRIA. The green book would be published in 1992, my report for the fellowship programme in 1994 in the CODESRIA Books Series, and I would go on to coordinate the multinational research network.⁴

A mentor with a heart of gold

A vivid recollection of Thandika's humanness was from my early visits to CODESRIA when its offices were still at Fann Résidence (Dakar). I would be booked into Hotel Miramar (the Plateau, Dakar). I would spend the day working at the CODESRIA office and returned in the evening to the hotel. Thandika always made it a duty to drop by in the early evening to check how I was doing. Often, we would end up in the shop across the street from Hotel Miramar and talk away the evening. The discussions ranged widely but were never frivolous. The same routine would play out whether I was staying at Hotel Miramar or Novotel. Once or twice, I accepted the invitation to go to some clubs in Dakar. What quickly became clear was that I did not have Thandika's energy. By midnight I would ask to be dropped off at my hotel. Thandika would return to the club after dropping me off at the hotel. I would arrive in the office early in the morning to find Thandika already at work.

Thandika's car carried the 'chef du mission diplomatique' (chief of diplomatic mission) licence plate number but was far from what you would expect of a diplomatic mission. It was what in the

Nigerian parlance you would refer to as a 'jalopy'. Threadbare and unpretentious, the vehicle mirrored Thandika's light attachment to material things. Sam Olofin, who met him in Dakar, would comment that Thandika had the instinct of a Catholic priest.⁵ While a testimony to Thandika's integrity, his simplicity belies a fierce defence of the autonomy of the African scholarly community and of CODESRIA. Two events stand out in my recollection.

Sometime in 1992, I believe, a delegation from the World Bank came to see him at CODESRIA on a research project they were proposing. I was visiting CODESRIA at the time and using an office across the corridor from his at Fann Résidence. The project funding was to come from the Bank, but the delegation came with the project design and choice of technique. Thandika's response to them was that CODESRIA did not work that way. If the Bank wanted to undertake any project with CODESRIA, they could provide the fund and define thematic focus of the project, but nothing else. CODESRIA would organise for members of the (African social science) community to produce a 'green book', the Council will put out a competitive call for the research project, undertake an independent assessment of applications, and the network will be run independently of the funders. The Bank, he told the delegation, was welcome to send its accountants to examine the financial books for the project, but that would be the limit of their involvement in the project. The delegation left, and the project never took off.

The second instance involved facing down a programme officer at the Dakar office of a Canadian

funding agency that supported the CODESRIA project on structural adjustment and agriculture. The individual had demanded a seat on the scientific committee of the programme. Matters came to a head during the project's workshop hosted by the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), in Ibadan. Thandika argued that this was not a demand the individual would make if he were dealing with a European scholarly organisation. As a funder, it would be an egregious subversion of the integrity of the autonomy of the scientific committee appointed by the CODESRIA Executive Committee. The potential for this position to adversely impact the funding for the project was great, but Thandika prevailed. There was no loss in the project's financing. Such insistence on institutional autonomy from funders was Thandika's hallmark, whether at the Council or UNRISD, yet Thandika was exceptionally successful as a fund-raiser. He left the Council and UNRISD in health financial situations.

The defence of the institutional integrity of CODESRIA was not only about the external threat, but Thandika was also vocal about what he considered to be internal threats. An organisation such as CODESRIA can easily become a victim of the gate-keeping syndrome. Thandika was quite vocal about the defence of openness of the Council's programme to people in the community. The integrity of the selection process, the importance of laureates of its activities knowing and being reassured that they gained access based purely on the quality of their works not who they know, were issues that Thandika never ceased to emphasise. It is a testament to the sustenance of the founding principles of the Council

that these framing norms remain firmly in place. The same applies to the epistemic openness of the work of the Council. Thandika never ceased to recount to me the stories of former laureates that he met even after he left the Council Secretariat, who told him that the Council gave them their first break in their academic careers and access to international funding.

At a time when the Council was in great peril, Thandika used the Claude Ake Memorial Lecture that he delivered at the 1998 General Assembly in Dakar to remind the delegates of the intellectual and institutional risks that the Council faced.⁶ In addition to being a synoptic overview of the intellectual history of the Council, it offered a robust defence of the ideational heritage of the Council. Intellectually, the defence of one's sovereignty and affirmation of one's autonomy should not be misconstrued as being marooned in an intellectual ghetto. In the context of the tense and combative atmosphere at that General Assembly, the lecture had another role. Thandika called everyone in attendance to respect the institutional demarcation of the responsibilities between the Assembly and the Council Secretariat. The lecture is a document that the Council Secretariat may want to consider placing permanently on its website.

What also became clear from the lecture, and what he would recount many times to me afterwards, was that Thandika was not particularly happy at the turn of events at the 1992 General Assembly, when the Assembly voted into force individual membership of the Council. At its inception, the membership of the Council was made up, exclusively, of institutions of social science research and faculties. That was then, when national

funding for higher education was robust and participation significant. By 1992, the landscape had changed. African higher education landscape was being decimated by the retrenchment of public funding under the regime of structural adjustment. The presence of the institutional members at the 1992 General Assembly was minuscule. Some of us who pushed for the Council being opened to individual membership were concerned with the changing landscape. Equally, we could not fathom how ten or twelve representatives of institutions present could decide exclusively on the institutional structure of the Council, including the election of its Executive Committee. After all, the theme of the Assembly was democratic processes in Africa. Thandika became reconciled with the changes, but always felt we were wrong. The new regulations passed at the 14th General Assembly in 2015 seem a sensible way forward.

Thandika always felt that the affirmation of the intellectual autonomy of the African social science community and of the Council was something to be demonstrated not merely affirmed. These, he argued, should be evident in the research and publication programmes of the Council and the visibility of the Council's works. For this, an insistence on peer-reviewed, quality output, bringing the works produced within the Council and the community to the reading audience, and the defence of the autonomy of the research groups were paramount efforts by the Council. In this, he had the remarkable support of Zenebeworke (Zen) Tadesse, who headed the Publications Division of CODESRIA for a period under Thandika's leadership of the Council. Zen herself fiercely

defended the autonomy of the Publications Department from intrusion from the other structures of the Council. Attention was paid not only to the contents of the Council's publications, but their form, and the CODESRIA Books Series is a testament to this, during a period that Tade Akin Aina described as the golden era of the Council. The books were properly peer-reviewed, copy-edited, indexed and printed. Before you take a book off the shelf of a bookshop to read, you probably would first have been attracted by the design of the cover, Thandika would say. When the Council initiated its partnership with Zed Books under the leadership of Adebayo Olukoshi, I remember Thandika expressing his immense pride, over drinks at a restaurant near LSE, on seeing the books (the Africa in the New Millennium series) at the LSE Bookshop. This defence of the autonomy of the African social science community stretched to the regular publication of the *CODESRIA Bulletin*, *Africa Development*—the flagship journal of the Council. But it also involved support for disciplinary journals, from *Afrika Zamani* and *African Sociological Review*, among others. The visibility of the work of the Council, Thandika would argue, is vital for asserting the intellectual autonomy of the social science community it serves.

Affirming the intellectual autonomy, also involved responding to the existential challenges that the higher education sector in Africa faced in the wake of adjustment. The Council, under the leadership of Thandika was particularly sensitive to the capacity for intellectual reproduction of the African academy. If in the early years of the Council's existence, you could take it for granted that national-

level public funding would take care of the reproduction of the African academy, by the 1990s it was clear that this was no longer the case. The Small Grants for Thesis Writing (masters and doctorate) was one instrument deployed by the Council under Thandika's leadership to respond to the crisis of producing a new generation of African researchers. In addition to funding the work for the thesis, a crucial part of the programme was the Council's library and archival resource unit (CODICE) shipping out bundles of journal articles and books to the laureates of the small grants programme and developing bibliographies for virtually all major meetings that CODESRIA convened. For a thesis to be at the cutting edge of knowledge production, the candidates have to be familiar with current and relevant literature in their fields. The Green Book programme that foregrounds new research programmes were intended as well to familiarise the applicants with the state of the art in the literature in their fields of research interest.

This attention to the production of the next generation of African social researchers was in tandem with the mobilisation of the older generation of scholars to respond to the challenges that the continent faced. The National Working Group programme initiated under the leadership of Abdallah Bujra was sustained and expanded under Thandika to include major conferences and Multinational Working Groups to support comparative research. New initiatives, such as the Governance Institute and the Gender Institute, were launched in response to changing demands of the community the Council serves. Major conferences, on what Archie Mafeje called the "big issues" of the day, were convened to mobi-

lise the intellectual resources of the community. The lesson, for me, in all these is the necessity to remain nimble footed in responding to prevailing challenges.

Thandika's leadership of the campaign for academic freedom was at the heart of the defence of the scholarly community on the continent. It was not merely that he was himself a victim of dictatorship—stripped of his Malawian citizenship for public opinions he expressed about the Kamuzi Banda regime. It was, also, not that many of the people he interacted with, first in Stockholm and then in Dakar, were people exiled from their countries. It was that the experience of running the continental social science council brought daily accounts of academics arrested, imprisoned, and in several instances, assassinated for their ideas. The high point of the Council's push for a defined protection of academic freedom was the Kampala Declaration. Thandika has provided an account of the tension, in the Executive Committee, in the lead up to the 1990 Kampala conference.⁷ Provisions for specific protection of academic freedom would subsequently become part of the constitutions of several African countries in their transition to democracy—including his home-country Malawi. The Kampala Declaration would influence the campaign by academics in Nigeria. It would frame my thinking in the interventions in the debate in South Africa when many were offering academics a Devil's Alternative of transformation or academic freedom.

An important lesson that one repeatedly learnt from Thandika is his abiding faith in the African continent and optimism about what can be achieved when we apply our minds properly to the challenges

we face as a people. In many ways, it is an abiding optimism that he carried from his early involvement, barely out of secondary school, in the independence movement in Malawi. I recollect an incident at the 1992 General Assembly, during one of the tea breaks. Ebrima Sall, who had just defended his doctoral thesis at Paris-1 Pantheon-Sorbonne, sat with us. He commented on the vibrancy and optimism that permeated the debate and the interaction at the Assembly. He contrasted this with his experience of the pervasive pessimism about discussions of Africa that he experienced in France. Thandika's response about Afropessimism was memorable: "Mais, l'Afropessimism, c'est une maladie des européens."⁸ But it is an optimism that was grounded in the enormity of the challenge that confronts us while being situational. The theme of the Assembly was 'Democratisation Processes in Africa: problem and prospects.' Many in the room were not only scholars; they had been victims of state authoritarianism and were active in the continent's struggle for democracy.

In its situatedness, it marked his dismissal of postmodernism and its aversion for rationality. Every hundred years, Thandika would say Europeans would writhe and wring in the face of the existential challenges they face. If you experienced two major devastating wars on your territory within a generation, you have the right to question the meaning and purpose of life and existence. The question was, why would the European malady be the preoccupation of Africans and African scholars? Why should we be burdened with seeing the world from the traumatic experiences of others?

This approach to life and scholarship was not unreasoning or idle optimism either. In the wake of the euphoria of *Africa renaissance* in the 2000s and in the wake of the commodity supercycle, Thandika did not cease to remind us of the structural damage that adjustment did to Africa and its ability to convert positive terms of trade into enduring development outcomes. The contraction of African economies was so deep that it has taken three decades for the per capita income in many African countries to return to the level they were in the 1970s. It was not just the contraction but the maladjustment of African economies⁹ under the neoliberal regime, and the monocropping and monotasking of institutions¹⁰ necessary for sustained development. The Great Depression lasted from August 1929 to March 1933. Africa's Great Depression, Thandika reminds us, has been far deeper and lasted much longer.¹¹

A final lesson from Thandika is how one should not allow personal pains to obscure one's analytical capacity. To state that the regime of Kamuzu Banda inflicted immense personal pain on Thandika would be, to put it mildly. In revoking Thandika's citizenship in 1965, the Banda regime turned into a stateless person and kept him in exile that lasted some thirty years. In the years in exile, he was cut off from parents and siblings, could not attend his brother's burial in Malawi. Even while in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s, the permanent apprehension of being kidnapped by members of Banda's intelligence services was perennial. Yet Thandika could engage in a dispassionate analysis of Banda's regime and what the whirly dictator would do. An instance of this was sometime in 1993 while

visiting Thandika at his apartment in Immeuble Kebe in Dakar. We were on the apartment's balcony, and we were discussing the events unfolding in Malawi. Thandika said to me, if Banda feels that his continued stay in power will imperil Malawi, he will step down. Malawi to him was like his baby.

I would like to end this section of this tribute on an even more personal note. In the post-1990 framing of my scholarship and career, I get the impression that Thandika was always available, affirmed, and help in guiding the paths I walked. He was generous with his time, thoughts, in offering references and testimonials. By the time we met in 1989, I was already pivoting my research interest from the conventional field of Industrial and Labour Relations to Labour and Development. In part, it was because I found much of the field of Labour Relations restrictive and theoretically unhelpful. I felt I needed to apply myself to issues of broader relevance to my context. The Reflections on Development fellowship provided the space to do this, pivoting my focus to issues of social development.

Thandika, as director of UNRISD, invited me to assemble the team and coordinate the sub-Saharan Africa research component of the Social Policy in a Development Context project. The invitation and research project provided me with the space to deepen my work that, for a few years had moved more firmly into the domain of social policy. My concern with how social policy and social development are anchored in the broader development process found kindred spirits in the UNRISD project. The outcome of this is the *Transformative Social Policy* framework that shapes the work (research, training, and capacity building) in which I am

currently involved. The constant breaking of intellectual bread with Thandika and tapping into his immense insight and creativity has indeed allowed me to stand on the shoulders of a giant. It is in the future breaking of bread that I would most sorely miss by his departure.

Of Democracy, Development, and Social Policy: A Game-Changer

In April 2007, Rhodes University (South Africa) conferred on Thandika a Senior Doctorate. Among the external examiners for the award of the degree was Prof Sir Richard Jolly.¹² He noted in his thesis examination report that Rhodes University should consider it a privilege to have its name associated with Thandika. It is an affirmation of both the academic standing of the man and the reach of his ideas. It is was not merely that Thandika became more productive with age, in terms of the quality and depth of his scholarship, it was that his contributions and interventions shifted the terms and tenor of the debates. As in his running of institutions (CODESRIA and UNRISD), Thandika was a game-changer. In report after report, a constant word in the examiners' reports for the Senior Doctorate was "originality"

If there were a theme under which to compress the Thandika *oeuvre*, it would be "Democracy, Development, and Social Policy". Thandika trained as an economist, but he was an economist with strong sociological sensibilities in the tradition of Gunnar Myrdal. The interdisciplinarity of his frame of mind and a keen capacity for social observation frequently took him beyond the confines of economics as a discipline.

In the interview he had with the United Nations Geneva Office media office to mark his retirement from the United Nations and the end of his term as the director of UNRISD, Thandika was asked to reflect on his tenure. Concerning the research programme that would mark his profound contribution to the field of development—Social Policy in a Development Context—Thandika argued that if he were to design the project all over, he would do it slightly differently. He asserted that he would make the connection between democracy, development, and social policy more central to the project and make the literature in these, often discreet domains, speak more directly to one another.¹³ In a significant sense, this is precisely what the linkages within his *oeuvre* demonstrate. The *Social Policy in a Development Context* project at UNRISD has proved to be highly productive—some eighteen books and over one hundred papers—and influential.

From Thandika's 1975 piece¹⁴ to the 2001 paper¹⁵ and his 2010 inaugural lecture at the London School of Economics,¹⁶ Thandika's relentless focus was on the feasibility of the structural transformation of African economies. Unlike the assumption of a trade-off between growth and equity or development and democracy, for Thandika, development has to be democratic and inclusive. In his usual self-effacing manner, he presented this as the prevailing view within the African intellectual circles:

The general understanding within African intellectual circles then was that the main challenge of development was the establishment of state-society relations that are (a) developmental, in the sense that they allow the management of the economy in a manner that max-

imises economic growth, induces structural change, and uses all available resources in a responsible and sustainable manner in highly competitive global conditions; (b) democratic and respectful of citizens' rights; and (c) socially inclusive, providing all citizens with a decent living and full participation in national affairs.¹⁷

However, both democracy and inclusivity (equitable, guaranteeing decent living to all within a territory) are not things you see as the ends of development, but as integral to the very process of development itself. This turns inside-out the narratives inherent in classical development discourse and the growth-equity trade-off claims of the neoliberal regime that sought to displace development economics.

However, for Thandika, democracy needs to be valued for its intrinsic reasons rather than in instrumental terms. This was most obviously stated in Thandika's 1988¹⁸ response to Peter Anyang' Nyong'o's¹⁹ argument for democracy, mainly because the accountability that Anyang' Nyong'o claimed comes with democracy would be beneficial for development. In other words, the transition from authoritarian regimes to democracy in Africa is vital because it would facilitate development. "The struggle for democracy" Thandika argued "must be for democracy in its own right." It is the concern with the democratic deficit—in terms of polity that is accountable to citizens, is imbued with deliberative governance, upholds collective and individual rights—that framed Thandika's concern with issues as wide-ranging as academic freedom and the tolls of rebel movements. The 1988 piece cited above, I believe, was the first published work of Thandika that I read. It would

affect my orientation to, and involvement in, the 'pro-democracy' struggle in Nigeria in the 1990s.

Given the high mutual esteem in which Thandika and Anyang' Nyong'o held each other, a lesson for a younger generation is that belonging to the same scholarly community does not mean agreement on most things, much less on everything. Disagreement does not mean community fracture. An intellectual community is enhanced by the vibrancy of its capacity for debate.

As it turned out, the experience of the transition to democracy—in the context of neoliberal disempowerment of new democracies' policy choice, the monocropping and the monotasking of African public policy institutions, the creation of economic policy enclaves shielded from democratic oversight—created anomalies. "Democracy per se does not eliminate poverty", Thandika would later argue. "It is rather the strategies of development that do."²⁰

In the context of the so-called "post-development" and the "demise of development" narratives, Thandika was uncompromising in insisting on Africa's right to "catch up". The 'post-development' brigade, he argued mistook the Bandung Conference version of the post-World War II development discourse for the Truman discourse. The latter, which continues to shape the "international development" brigade frames development as "the moral premise for helping 'distant strangers'". The Bandung Conference discourse is, Thandika insisted, "emancipatory".²¹ It requires, in Samir Amin's terms, definable 'sovereign national projects'. It is as much a question of existential survival.

Catch-up is not mimicry. For Thandika, development as growth

with structural transformation of the economy and society and the mastery of technology requires a much higher level of knowledge endowment and generation than was available to the pioneers at their development phases. "Catching up requires that countries know themselves and their history that has set the 'initial conditions' for any future progress."²² Countries need a deep appreciation of themselves and the cultural endowments that they can mobilise in facilitating their development process. It requires significant investment in national institutions of knowledge production and basic research. Countries seeking to develop not only have to know themselves, but they also require deep knowledge of other countries as well.

It is also in the specific context of development and the imperative of inclusivity, not merely as an outcome of development but as integral to the process, that Thandika raised the issue of social policy, and his take on social policy was very specific. The question that preoccupied Thandika was "what does social policy do in a context in which a country wants to develop? What is the transformative role of social policy in such a context?"²³ It involves much more than a preoccupation with social policy as a device for social protection or mopping up the "diswelfares"²⁴ of industrialisation, which has been the focus of much of OECD social policy scholarship. A poorer, mostly residual version of that is sold to us today as social assistance. It is a take on social policy that is at once concerned with the mobilisation of human, material, and financial resources for facilitating development, as it is in ensuring equitable allocation of the burden of development and the benefits of development. The

outcome was an idea of social policy that emphasises the multiple tasks of social policy and seeks to activate them simultaneously. It became the premise for the concept of Transformative Social Policy. In other words, the mobilisation of social policy instruments for the transformation of the economy, social institutions, and social relations. Inequality (vertical and horizontal) and poverty are not things that you assume ‘development’ will take care of; they are things that must be addressed as you seek the development of the economy and social institutions. Africa must run while others walk, but we run on the legs of democratic, deliberative and inclusive governance.

Adieu Mwalimu

Thandika’s mentorship capacity and the support he gave to many like me was more by his doing. A kindred spirit that constantly broke bread with you, a fellow traveller that made the journey we transverse a delight—one who validated your thoughts and analytical sensibilities while always offering his thoughts in endless conversations. The originality of Thandika’s thinking was always a marvel to behold. You come away from each encounter, often thinking “I never thought of it that way.” His capacity for observing developments around him was remarkable. He was imbued with endless optimism (of the will), without overlooking every inch of all that ails us. Yet these encounters, the endless conversations and enunciated observations; these were his ways of offering his thoughts for scrutiny and debate—an endless workshopping of ideas, as it were.

Thandika had a distinct way of working. He allowed ideas

to gestate over a period before committing them to paper. You would read something from him and remember that five years earlier, he had ruminated on it in a conversation with you over drinks or dinner. In many ways, he was the quintessential intellectual who passed what I call the Aimé Césaire Challenge: never being walled-off in the particular; never dissolving into the universal. There is never a doubt that the locus of Thandika is Africa—a perennial preoccupation with its travails and victories. But he was also an *internationalist* intellectual who read *every* library and archive, explored every experience and thoughts, regardless of where they came from. His perennial question would be: “what does this mean for Africa?”

Thandika did only make the institutions he ran better for having him as their heads. He made every one of us better for the privilege of our encounters with him, and on the road we travelled with him. He has laid down his spear and left us a treasure trove of ideas. He gave examples of what it means to be human. The next phase of the battle is ours. And this much we can say: Thandika lived a full life.

Adieu Mwalimu.

Adieu Ndugu.

Adieu Mzee.

Notes

1. A shorter in memoriam has been produced for the *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* and a longer intellectual appreciation of Thandika’s oeuvre is under preparation.
2. The collection was published as *African Perspectives on Development: Controversies,*

Dilemmas and Openings. Edited by Ulf Himmelstrand, Kabiru Kinyanjui and Edward Mburugu. St Martin’s Press: New York, 1994.

3. For my Reflections on Development fellowship, Dharam Ghai, as director, had offered me a visiting research fellowship at the UN Research Institute for Social Development in Geneva. I spent four-and-half months at UNRISD, when it was still at Petit Saconnex.
4. See Jimi Adesina *Labour Movements and Policy Making in Africa*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 1992; and *Labour in the explanation of an African crisis: A critique of current orthodoxy: The case of Nigeria*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 1994.
5. At the time, Sam Olofin was professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for Econometric and Allied Research (CEAR) at the University of Ibadan. I was an adjunct Senior Research Fellow at CEAR—on the ‘allied’ side of its work not the econometrics side!
6. The lecture was published as “Social Sciences and Democracy: Debates in Africa”, *African Sociological Review* 3(1): 20-34, 1999.
7. See his “Social Sciences and Democracy”, 1999.
8. My appreciation to Ebrima who reconfirmed my recollection of this event.
9. Thandika Mkandawire. 2005. Maladjusted African Economies and Globalisation. *Africa Development* 30(1&2): 1-33.
10. Thandika Mkandawire, “Institutional monocropping and monotasking in Africa”, *Democracy, Governance and Well-Being Programme Paper Number 1*. UNRISD: Geneva, 2009.

11. Kate Meagher, "Reflections of an engaged economist: An Interview with Thandika Mkandawire", *Development and Change* 50(2): 511-541, 2019.
12. In mid-2006, at a Senate meeting, the portfolio of a candidate for the Senior Doctorate degree was presented for Senate's approval. I remember thinking, "I know someone with an even more impressive portfolio." After the Senate meeting, I contacted Thandika to express my interest in having him put up for the degree. This is not a honorary degree; a candidate being put up for the degree would have his/her portfolio of research outputs examined by an international panel of examiners. He was initially reluctant, largely on the grounds of modesty, but relented after further nudging. In July 2006, he formally submitted a letter to the Registrar of the university indicating his desire to present himself for a Senior Doctorate in Development Studies through the Department of Sociology. Working with one of his staff at UNRISD, we put together the portfolio of his publications. I developed the motivation for his presentation for the degree. This was supported enthusiastically by colleagues in the Department of Sociology. The nomination sailed through the Faculty Board and Senate. A panel of five examiners, all top international scholars, was appointed for the portfolio of publications that Thandika submitted for the degree. Prof Sir Richard Jolly was one of the examiners. The rest, as they say, is history. The official graduation photograph of Thandika being hooded by the Registrar of the university at the degree award ceremony has hung on the wall of my home since 2007.
13. Cf. "Interview with Thandika Mkandawire upon his retirement" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXyEQz1LfeI> (20 Dec 2011).
14. Thandika Mkandawire, "Development planning and wage employment: a review of practice and issues in six eastern African countries", International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva, 1975.
15. Thandika Mkandawire, "Thinking about Developmental States in Africa", *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25(3): 289-313, 2001.
16. Thandika Mkandawire. "Running while others walk: Knowledge and the challenge of Africa's development (revised version of the paper delivered as Inaugural Lecture for Chair, African Development at the London School of Economics on April 27, 2010)", *Africa Development* 36(2): 1-36, 2011.
17. Thandika Mkandawire, "'Good governance': the itinerary of an idea", *Development in Practice* 17(4-5): 679-681, 2007, p.680.
18. Thandika Mkandawire, "Comments on Democracy and Political Instability", *Africa Development* 13(3): 77-82, 1988.
19. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, "Political Instability and the Prospects for Democracy in Africa", *Africa Development* 13(1), 1988.
20. Thandika Mkandawire, "Disempowering new democracies and the persistence of poverty." In Max Spoor (ed.) *Globalisation, Poverty and Conflict: A critical 'development' reader*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 117-153, 2004.
21. "Running while others walk", p.7
22. *Ibid*.
23. Interview with Thandika Mkandawire upon his retirement" op cit.
24. 'Diswelfare' is a concept used often by Richard Titmuss to refer to the adverse impact of social processes or phenomenon on human wellbeing ('welfare'); their negative welfare impact.

