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## What is decolonial theory?

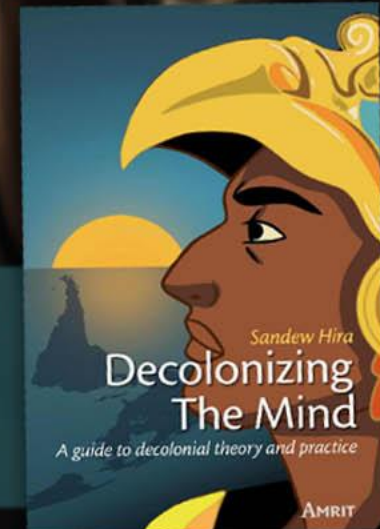
The background, nature, strength and weaknesses of decolonial theory and practice



# The current narratives about civilization: African narratives



Decolonizing The Mind,  
the final frontier of colonialism  
with Sandew Hira



#024

8-1-2024

# Palestine

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- ❑ Jan 2: Killing of Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh Al-Aroui In Lebanon
- ❑ Jan 4 bombing in Iranian city of Kerman commemoration of killing of general Suleimani
- ❑ Intense fighting in North of Israel
- ❑ Who wants to escalate the war: Israel/USA

# August 25, 2023 interview with Saleh Al-Arouri

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*"A total war has become inevitable. We all consider it necessary. We want it. At the resistance axis, the Palestinian people, and our nation, we want this total war. It is not [just] something we say in the media. We talk about it behind closed doors. We are meeting with all the parties that [will take part] in this total war, and we are discussing together the different scenarios and possibilities. We are convinced that it is possible for us... Not that it is possible. We will certainly defeat them.*

*Wars have changed. The war will not be like the one in 1967, when the Israeli air force destroyed the Arab air forces, and then was free to hunt down the Arab armies. This will not happen again. The war in Ukraine changed things. Now there are precision weapons, smart weapons, cyber warfare. War has changed and the means of war have changed.*

*Even the weapons have changed. The classic warfare of [regular] armies has changed, as proved by the Ukraine war. Since its foundation, Israel has relied on its superiority in classic warfare. They themselves are surprised by the new achievements of weapons, which can be obtained by non-state entities.*

*Therefore, we are convinced that if a total conflict begins, the airspace and seaports of this entity will be shut down, and they will not be able to live without electricity, water, and communications.*

*In an open way, they will have a curfew and their economy will come to a standstill."*

# Hezbollah Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah speech

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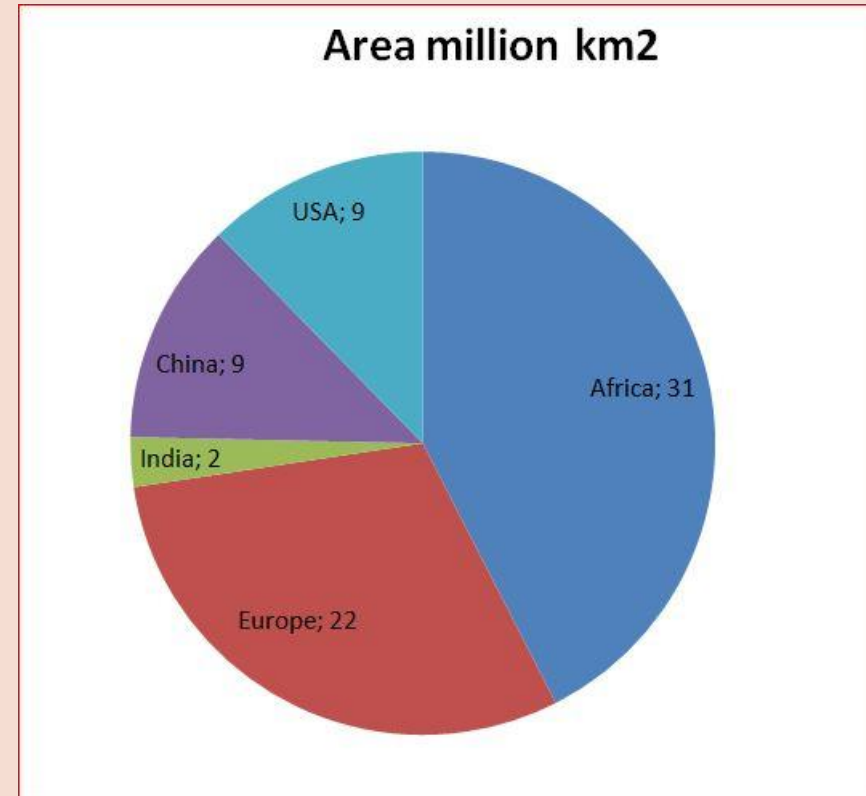
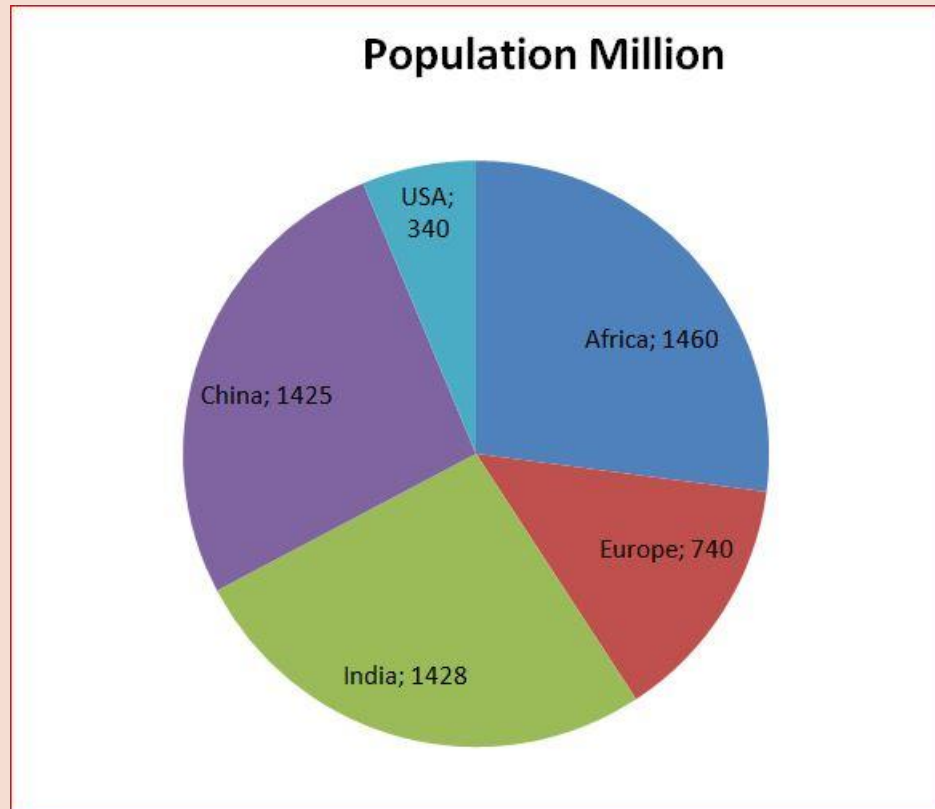
- ❑ Total liberation of Lebanon after Gaza war: Shebaa Farms etc.
- ❑ Three months: Destruction of 48 border sites, 11 rear sites, and attacks on 17 settlements and 50 border points, 670 operations. Israel does not disclose real number deaths
- ❑ In all-out Israeli war on Lebanon fight will be without any limit
- ❑ Iraq: historic opportunity to end American occupation
- ❑ CNN conforms to Israeli censorship policy: terminology.

# African civilization discourse: complex

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- ❑ African continent
- ❑ African Diaspora

# A new view of the African continent



# The economic potential of Africa



Africa's subsoil holds a range of important natural resources: 98% of the world's chromium, 90% of its cobalt, 90% of its platinum, 70% of its coltan, 70% of its tantalite, 64% of its manganese, 50% of its gold, and 33% of its uranium, as well as a significant share of the world's reserves of other minerals such as bauxite, diamonds, tantalum, tungsten, and tin.

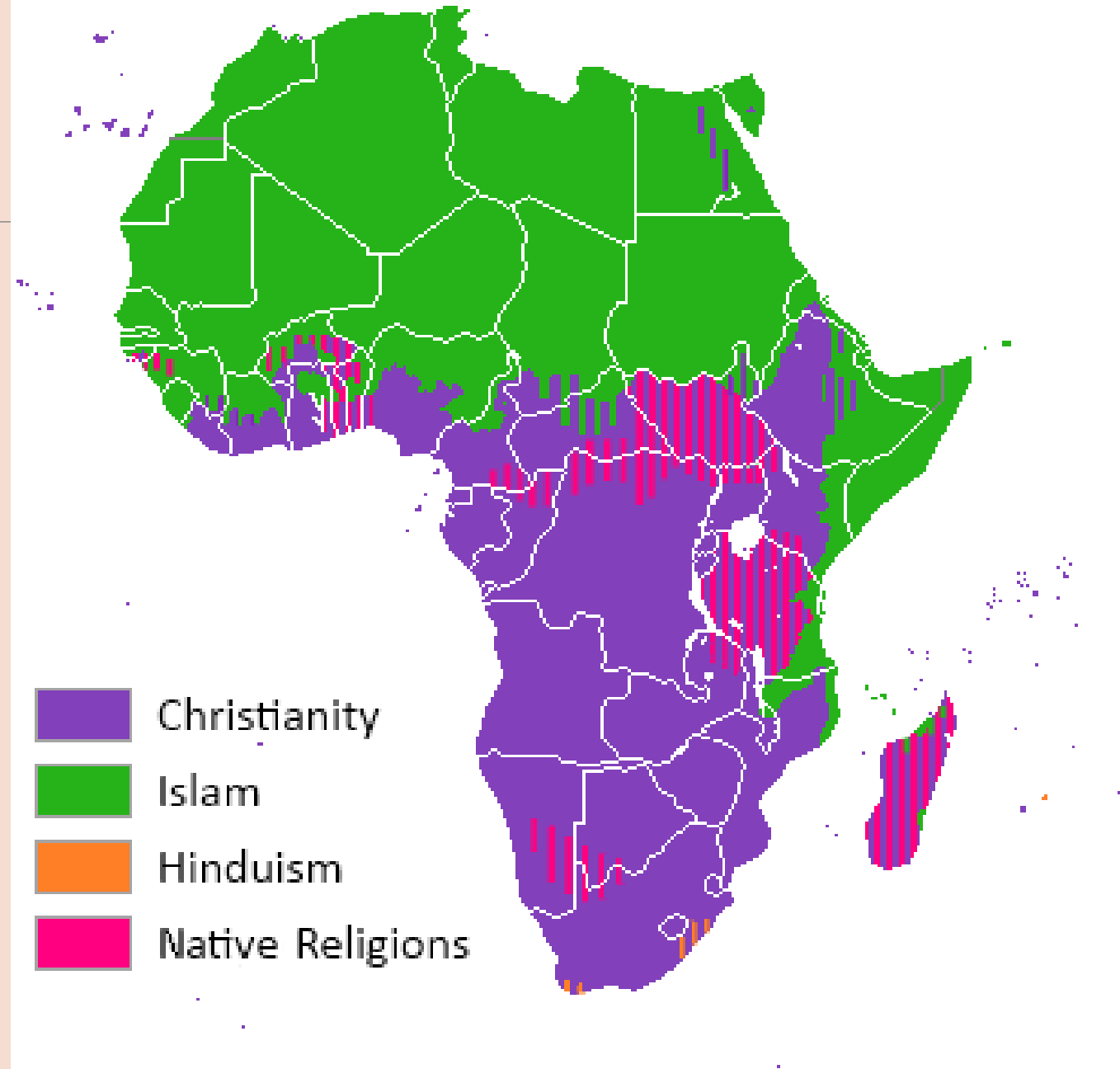
The continent holds 30% of all mineral reserves, 12% of known oil reserves, 8% of known natural gas, and **65% of the world's arable land**.





# Religion in Africa

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# Philosophical traditions of Africa

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1. Islam: came from Western Asia
2. Christianity: came from Western colonialism
3. Socialism: came from the European Enlightenment
4. Liberalism: came from the European Enlightenment
5. Pan-Africanism: response to colonialism – common history and common destiny
6. Indigenous philosophies: arose in Africa from traditional cosmologies
7. African Diaspora philosophies: came from the African Diaspora

# Islamic countries in Africa (54 countries)

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- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. Mauretania | 10. Mali         |
| 2. Somalia    | 11. Gambia       |
| 3. Algeria    | 12. Egypt        |
| 4. Morocco    | 13. Guinea       |
| 5. Tunisia    | 14. Niger        |
| 6. Sudan      | 15. Sierra Leone |
| 7. Libya      | 16. Chad         |
| 8. Senegal    |                  |
| 9. Nigeria    |                  |

# Christian countries in Africa (54 countries)

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1. Democratic Republic of Congo
2. Angola
3. Rwanda
4. Equatorial Guinea
5. Lesotho
6. Namibia
7. Zambia
8. Liberia
9. Uganda
10. Zimbabwe
11. Ghana
12. Kenya
13. South Africa
14. Tanzania

# Socialist countries in Africa (54 countries)

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1. Algeria (1962-2014)
2. Eritrea (1911-)
3. Guinea-Bissau (1973-)
4. Tanzania (1964-)
5. Angola (1975-1992)
6. Benin (1975-1990)
7. Madagascar (1975-1992)
8. Cape Verde (1975-1992)
9. Chad (1962-1975)
10. Republic of the Congo (1970-1992)
11. Ethiopia (1974-1991)
12. Mozambique (1975-1990)
13. Somalia (1969-1991)
14. Djibouti (1981-1992)
15. Egypt (1961-2007)
16. Ghana (1960-1966)
17. Mali (1960-1991)

# Liberalism in Africa

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- Educational system based on Westernized universities
- Nelson Mandela: *“From my reading of Marxist literature and from conversations with Marxists, I have gained the impression that Communists regard the parliamentary system of the West as undemocratic and reactionary. But, on the contrary, I am an admirer of such a system. The Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights and the Bill of Rights, are documents which are held in veneration by democrats throughout the world. I have great respect for British political institutions, and for the country’s system of justice. I regard the British Parliament as the most democratic institution in the world, and the independence and impartiality of its judiciary never fail to arouse my admiration. The American Congress, that country’s doctrine of separation of powers, as well as the independence of its judiciary, arouse in me similar sentiments. I have been influenced in my thinking by both West and East.”*

# Pan-Africanism

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- ❑ Based on anti-colonialism and the legacy of the European slave trade.
- ❑ Promote solidarity in Africa and the African Diaspora
- ❑ 1963: establishment of the Organization of African Unity (now African Union), an organization of states.

# African classical philosophies

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- ❑ South Africa Ubuntu: I am because we are: relation between individual and community. Mogobe Ramose: translate this to field such as law, religion, politics, medicine, ecology.
- ❑ Kenya Gĩkũyũ philosophy: build a society based concepts of justice, honesty, generosity.
- ❑ West Africa Akan philosophy on personhood: Kwasi Wiredu: distinction between a *human* - a biological entity - and a *person* - an entity with special moral and metaphysical qualities.  
Question of free will and responsibility
- ❑ Nigeria Yoruba philosophy. Oyeronke Oyěwumi: gender is not a social category in Yoruba society.



# African socialism

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1. Marxism had a big impact on liberation movements
2. How to adapt Marxism to African reality

# Amilcar Cabral (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)

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*"Our desire to develop our country with social justice and power in the hands of the people is our ideological basis. Never again do we want to see a group or a class of people exploiting or dominating the work of our people. That's our basis. If you want to call it Marxism, you may call it Marxism... We are absolutely sure that we have to create and develop in our particular situation the solution for our country."*

# Julius Nyerere Tanzania

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*“Socialism - like democracy - is a state of mind. In a socialist society it is the socialist attitude of mind, and not the rigid adherence to a standard political pattern, which is needed to ensure that the people care for each other’s welfare... It has nothing to do with the possession or non-possession of wealth... Our first step must be, therefore, to re-educate ourselves; to regain our former attitude of mind. In our traditional African society we were individuals within a community. We took care of the community, and the community took care of us. We neither needed nor wished to exploit our fellow men. And in rejecting the capitalist attitude of mind which colonialism brought into Africa, we must also reject the capitalist methods which go with it.”*

# Thabo Mbeki, member SACP, former president of South Africa (1999 - 2008)

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*African civilization: "Why can't an African world view, such as Ubuntu, be at the centre so that we can view other cultures in relationship to it?" "Ubuntu, which reminds us that 'a person is a person through other people,' does not allow for individualism that overrides the collective interests of a community. It stands in contra-distinction to the idea that an individual is the be-all and end-all, without, at the same time, positing that an individual is right-less or dispensable in the grand scheme of things. Ubuntu places a premium on the values of human solidarity, compassion and human dignity. It is a lived philosophy which enables members of the community to achieve higher results through collective efforts. It is firmly based on recognising the humanity in everyone. It emphasizes the importance of knowing oneself and accepting the uniqueness in all of us so as to render meaningless the complexes of inferiority and superiority. Indeed, Ubuntu connects all of humanity irrespective of ethnicity or racial origins."*

# Mbeki: concept of African renaissance

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The establishment of democratic political systems to ensure the accomplishment of the goal that “the people shall govern”, deal with questions of democracy, peace and stability, achieve sustainable economic development that results in the continuous improvement of the standards of living and the quality of life of the masses of the people, ensure the emancipation of the women of Africa and rediscover Africa’s creative past to recapture the peoples’ cultures, encourage artistic creativity and restore popular involvement in both accessing and advancing science and technology: *“When we speak of an African Renaissance, we speak of the rebirth and renewal of our continent.”*

# Mbeki: I am an African

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*“I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape - they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and independence and they who, as a people, perished in the result.. I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me... I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St Helena and the Bahamas, who sees in the mind`s eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death, concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins... I come of those who were transported from India and China, whose being resided in the fact, solely, that they were able to provide physical labour, who taught me that we could both be at home and be foreign, who taught me that human existence itself demanded that freedom was a necessary condition for that human existence. Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that - I am an African.”*

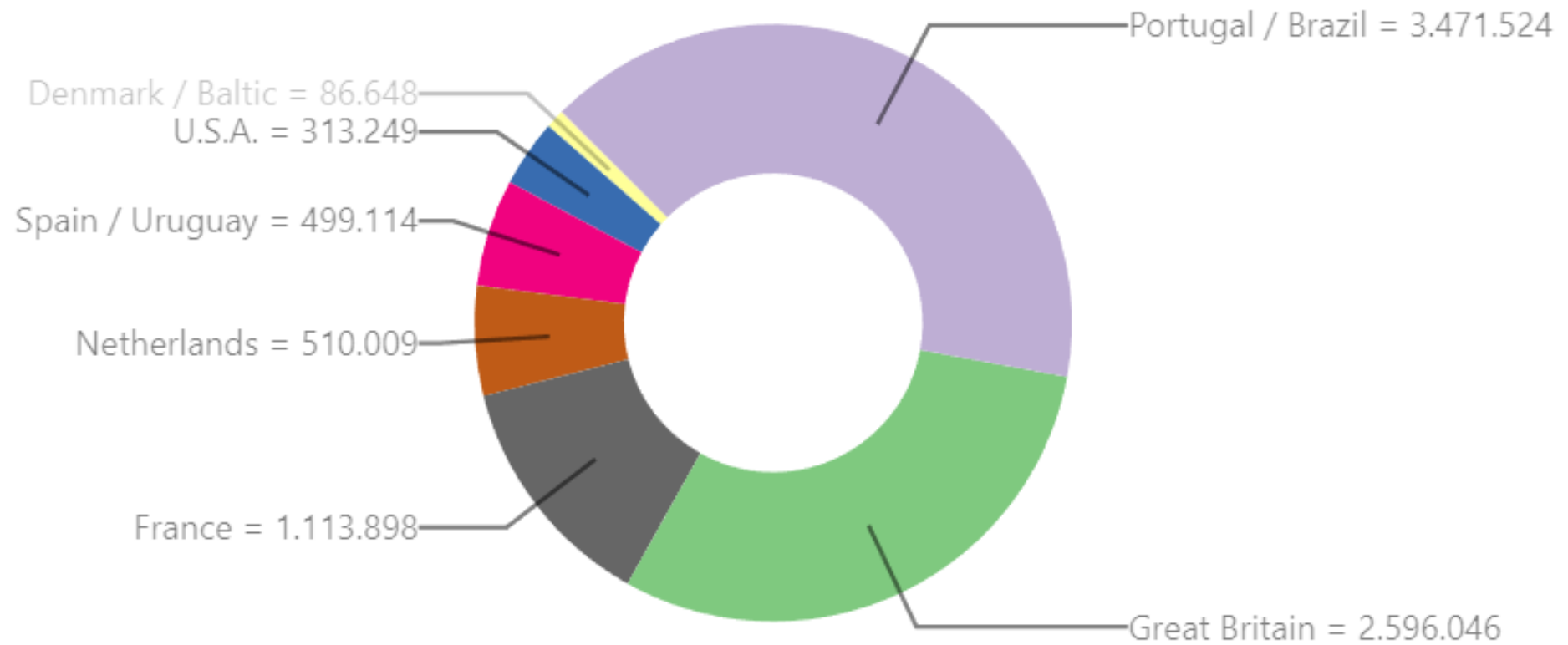
# Philosophies from the African Diaspora

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1. USA
2. Caribbean
3. Latin Abya Yala
4. Brazil

# Trans-atlantic enslavement and African diaspora

Total number of slaves disembarked





# Differences slavery USA and Caribbean

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## USA

- ❑ Economy: cotton
- ❑ Av. size plantation: 30
- ❑ End of slavery: black population increased by 400%
- ❑ Share of black population: 10%

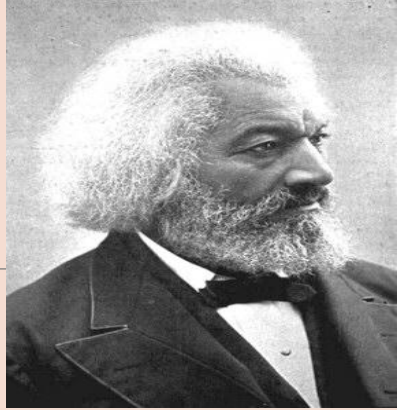
## Caribbean

- ❑ Economy: sugar
- ❑ Av. size plantation: 150-800
- ❑ End of slavery: black population decreased by 50%-90%
- ❑ Share of black population: 90%

# Black struggle in the USA after slavery

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- ❑ Reconstruction 1865-1874: Civil rights for black (voting rights, equality before the law), integration of the South in the national economy, prohibition of the Ku Klux Klan
- ❑ White betrayal 1874-1896: New laws of restricting black freedom, introduction of segregation/apartheid laws in different states, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, introduction apartheid in national law 1896: Homer Plessy v. Ferguson.
- ❑ Black activism from slavery into freedom



# Frederik Douglas 1818-1895

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- ❑ 1838: escaped from slavery
- ❑ Working with white abolitionist
- ❑ Autobiography
- ❑ Republic
- ❑ Ambassador to Haiti
- ❑ Travels to Europe

# Harriette Tubman (1820-1913)



- ❑ Escaped from slavery in 1849
- ❑ Underground railway: network of secret routes and safe houses established in the United States primarily to escape into free states and from there to Canada
- ❑ Women rights: campaign for voting rights



# Sojourner Truth (1797 – 1883)

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- ❑ 1826: escaped from slavery
- ❑ "Ain't I a Woman?" Speech combining calls for abolitionism with women's rights, voting rights, and property rights

# Landmark case: *Homer Plessy v. Ferguson*

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- Judge John Howard Ferguson
- Shoemaker Homer Plessy: 7/8 white (octoroon) 1/8 black
- Law in Louisiana 1890: black in white compartment of train: 20 days in jail or \$ 25 fine
- Plessy this is against 13rd en 15th amendment:
  - 13rd amendment: slavery is abolished
  - 14th amendment: equal rights for blacks and whites
- Lost the argument: Separate but equal
- Apartheid now in law

# Problems for blacks

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- ❑ Freedom attained in a short period (reconstruction), but gained after decades
- ❑ Strategy is determined by analysis of position and opportunities
- ❑ What if you are a 10% minority in the country



# Booker T. Washington 1856-1915

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- ❑ Business man.
- ❑ Born in slavery: white father, black mother
- ❑ Not confrontation, but cooperation with the whites
- ❑ Build small business, get a job
- ❑ Network of vocational training centers and firms
- ❑ Network of black key figures of preachers and business man
- ❑ Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama: learn a trade
- ❑ Aim: Self esteem, dignity and self worth is in providing an income for yourself, your family and your community





# W.E.B de Bois 1868-1963 and NAACP

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- ❑ Academic scholar and activist, later a Marxist
- ❑ There is more than just work and income. The question of freedom
- ❑ Niagara movement 1905: against apartheid and in favor of voting rights
- ❑ 1909. NAACP: whites and blacks. White influence is big. Einstein Princeton branch
- ❑ Monthly paper: The Crisis
- ❑ Judicial action: law suits. Aim: equality before the law

# Black American communists in the USA

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- ❑ Communist and other left parties had black members
- ❑ Important: Theses Of The Fourth Comintern Congress On The Negro Question
- ❑ Tradition goes from twenties to Black Panther Party (vanguard party) and Angela Davis
- ❑ Problem of relationship between race and class: fight racism by fighting capitalism

# Marcus Garvey 1887-1940

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- ❑ Born in Jamaica, activist and organizer
- ❑ Admirer of Booker T. Washington
- ❑ International experience: Central America
- ❑ Build his international movement from the USA
- ❑ What are the effects of laws suits?
- ❑ White workers are racists, class is not the issue, race is.
- ❑ Aim: Black unity, back to Africa, liberation of the mind, organization, black power

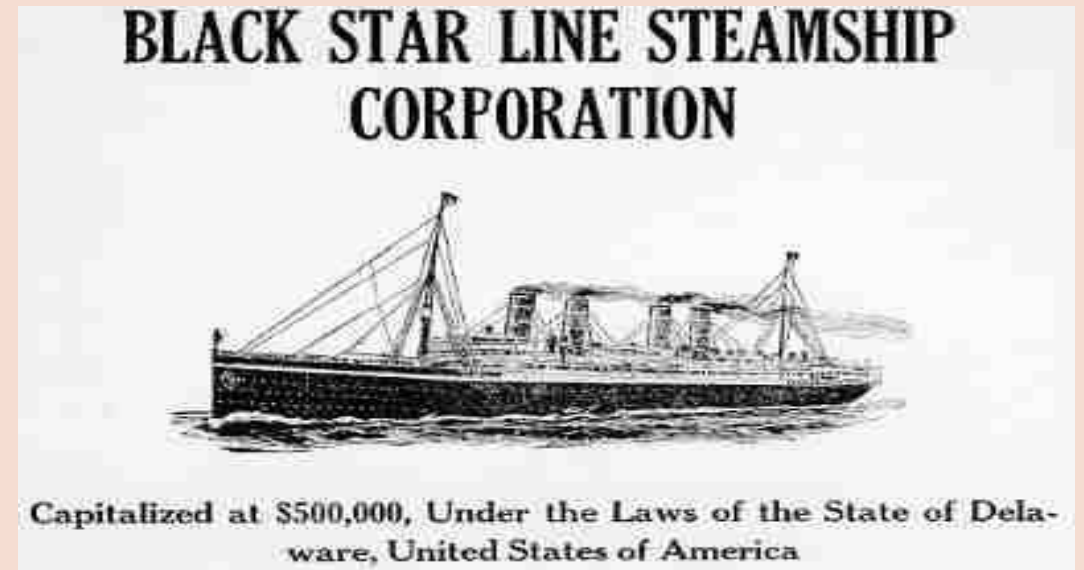
# Significance of Garvey

- ❑ 1914: left Jamaica , 1917: New York, Harlem
- ❑ 1925-1927 imprisoned on
- ❑ Black power = black organization = black funding
  - ❑ Black companies: inspired by Booker T. Washington):
  - ❑ Restaurants, laundry, meeting halls
  - ❑ Shipping line: black star liner
  - ❑ Magazine Negro World: black is beautiful
- ❑ First international mass organization of blacks: 1 million members all over the world, paying dues
- ❑ Free the mind

# Back to Africa

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- ❑ Sierra Leone – British colony:  
1787 London and 1792 American maroons from Jamaica
- ❑ Liberia: 1820 America



# Nation of Islam

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- ❑ Legacy of Garvey
- ❑ Wallace Fard Muhammad 1930's
- ❑ Own version of Islam
- ❑ Whites result of genetic experiment by scientist Yakub
- ❑ The devil exists: white with blue eyes



# Elijah Muhammed 1897-1975

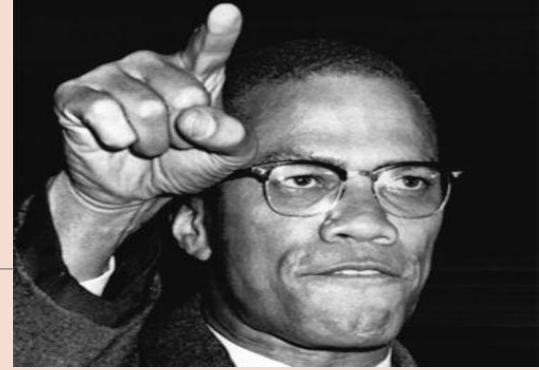
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- ❑ 1934: Nation of Islam
- ❑ 1950-60 Malcolm X
- ❑ Rift between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammed
- ❑ 1976: son Warith Deen Mohamed dissolves NOI
- ❑ American Society of Muslims: Sunni islam

# Malcolm X (1925-1965)

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- ❑ Many ideas came from the Nation of Islam
- ❑ Brought the black struggle to the international arena: from civil rights to human rights
- ❑ Was the decolonial voice in the civil rights movement: linking racism to the struggle against colonialism
- ❑ Analysis of mechanisms of colonizing the mind
- ❑ Assassinated on February 21, 1965



# Nation of Islam reborn 1981

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- ❑ 1981: re-foundation Nation of Islam by Louis Farrakhan
- ❑ 1996: million man march
- ❑ Aim: uplifting blacks mentally

# Changing tides

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- ❑ After World War II: fighting for rights of white in Europe, what about right for blacks in the USA
- ❑ Decolonization process starts internationally

# Brown versus board of education 1954

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- ❑ Oliver Brown: daughter Linda 3rd grade, take bus to black school in Topeka Kansas, while white school on walking distance
- ❑ Brown against board of education
- ❑ Supreme court: against 14th amendment: equal rights for all
- ❑ NAACP victory
- ❑ Problem: relationship between federal government and individual states



# Civil rights movement

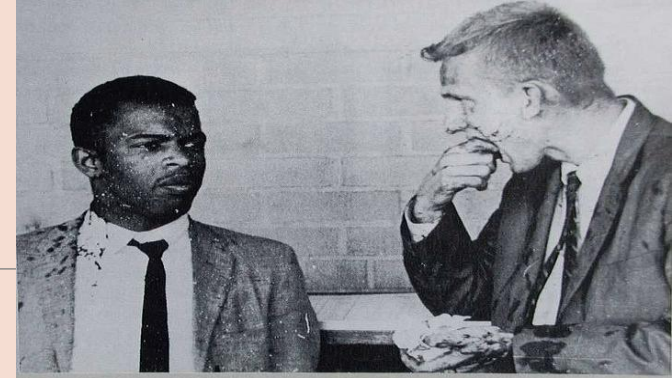
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- ❑ Rosa Park's en Montgomery Bus boycott 1955-1956
- ❑ Judicial action, non-violence, civil disobedience
- ❑ White violence
- ❑ Little Rock 1957: desegregation of primary and secondary schools

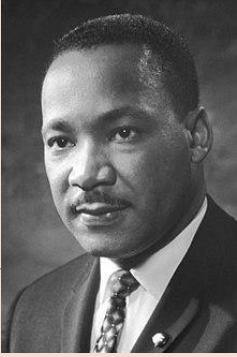
# Civil disobedience

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- ❑ 1960: Sit-in: service lunchroom North Carolina
- ❑ Developed into national tactic by Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee
- ❑ 1961: Congress of Racial Equality – Freedom Ride bussing to segregated states



John Lewis and Jim Zwerg after being



# Martin Luther King (1929-1968)

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- ❑ Strategy of non-violent resistance in a country with 10% blacks
- ❑ Leading role in Montgomery bus boycott
- ❑ Leader of civil rights actions and got more times arrested than Malcolm X
- ❑ Murdered April 4 1968



# Political developments

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- ❑ 1961: voters registration
- ❑ 1963 June 11: Kennedy civil right speech: equal rights for all
- ❑ 1963 June 12: murder of Medgar Evers NAACP field organizer
- ❑ 1963 August 28: march on Washington – political pressure – social economic agenda
- ❑ 1963 Nov. 22: murder of president Kennedy
- ❑ 1964: civil rights act: prohibits segregation
- ❑ 1965: affirmative action

# International dimension

- 1957-1975: Second Vietnam war (1954 Dien Bien Phu)
- Flower power
- Feminism
- 1968: Student revolt in Paris
- Technological changes: de contraception pill, media brings war in living room





# Black feminism

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- ❑ Historical legacy of Sojourner Truth and Harriette Tubman
- ❑ Many activists and writer followed after slavery: black women played a crucial role in civil rights movement, black panther party, communist party Angela Davis.
- ❑ Black feminism as a narrative: bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins critique of white feminism
- ❑ Concept of intersectionality by Kimberley Crenshaw: intersect of individual oppression race, gender, sexuality

# Impact black struggle in USA on African Diaspora

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- ❑ It weakened American imperialism
- ❑ It connected with Pan-Africanism and international solidarity
- ❑ Now in the era where black emancipation is embraced by imperialism and is used as an instrument of imperialism

# The new demography of the USA

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2050</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2050</b>
White	67%	47%	203	206
Latino	14%	29%	42	127
Black	13%	13%	39	57
Asian	5%	9%	15	39
Total	99%	98%	300	429
Born outside of USA	12%	19%	36	83

# Black Caribbean during slavery

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- ❑ Significance of Haitian revolution compared to racist French revolution
  - ❑ The connection with indigenous struggle: Ayiti replaces Saint Domingue
  - ❑ Internationalism: organizing armed resistance outside Haiti: Venezuela, Caribbean islands
  - ❑ A vision of a new society: eradication of racism, social justice
- ❑ New societies build during slavery in Maroon communities: Brazil, Suriname

# Black Caribbean after slavery

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- ❑ Black Marxism; Walter Rodney, C.L.R. James, Oliver Cox
- ❑ Anti-colonial tradition:
  - ❑ Plantation economy model of Loyd Best, George Beckford: Caribbean societies and their economies are shaped by the institution of the plantation.
  - ❑ Mental legacy of colonialism: Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon
  - ❑ Relationship between capitalism and slavery: Eric Williams
  - ❑ Caribbean feminism: Rhoda Reddock, Patricia Mohammed
  - ❑ Movement for reparations: Caribbean Reparations Commission

# Black Latin Abya Yala

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Fusion of African and Indigenous Liberation. Case of Túpac Amaru.

*Tupac Amaru (1545-1572) was an Inca ruler in Peru who organized an armed revolt against the Spanish barbarians. He was finally captured and beheaded. The memory of his struggle lived on in the hearts and minds of the Inca people. Two centuries later a Mestizo named Jose Gabriel Condorcanqui (1738-1781) and his Zambo wife Micaela Bastidas (1745-1781) started a rebellion of native people in Peru (1780) against the Spanish colonizer. A Mestizo is a person of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry. A Zambo person is of mixed Indigenous and African ancestry. Condorcanqui claimed direct lineage to Tupac Amaru and was called Tupac Amaru II. In 1781 he and his family were captured. He was beheaded at the same place where Tupac Amaru I was beheaded. He was forced to witness the execution of his wife and son before he was put to death.*

# Brazil

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- ❑ Largest black population during slavery
- ❑ Independence of Portugal in 1822
- ❑ Slavery abolished very late: 1888
- ❑ Quilombo maroon society: Palmeres largest community 30.000 people; state in a state
- ❑ History of black movements: Brazilian Black Front, Black Experimental Theater led by Abdias do Nascimento, Black Cultural Association, Black Movement against Racial Discrimination

# African contribution to a new world civilization

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- ❑ African indigenous philosophy
- ❑ Pan-Africanism
- ❑ African Diaspora



# Next episode: Oceania

- New Zealand
- Australia



**2** What is decolonial theory?  
The background, nature, strength and weaknesses of decolonial theory and practice



## The current narratives about civilization: Oceania



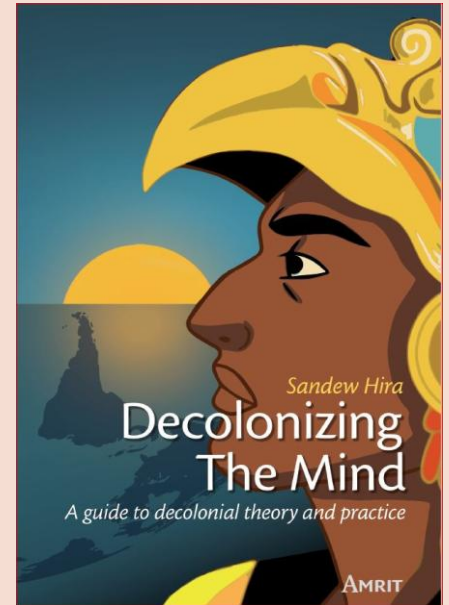
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# Source in the DTM book

- Index: Garvey
- Download the PDF of the PowerPoint on [www.sandewhira.com](http://www.sandewhira.com)



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**SANDEW HIRA**  
Author. Activist. Decolonial Thinker.

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