was the sacred cow, sovereignty of our independence leaders, who in 1966 destroyed the East African Currency Board.

As pointed out elsewhere in this study, Africa lacks a common ground or bond that can force and bring the different creations of imperialism into a union such as the African Community suggests. One only needs to look at the failure of Africa's other regional groupings and how they have fared in the period of their existence. The failure of regional bodies to live up to their expectations no doubt heralds the failure of the proposed African Economic Community. This is explained in the words of the Daily Nation editor, when he wrote:

"... Just over a month ago, African leaders congregated in Nigeria's new capital of Abuja during the summit meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), initialised the establishing document of the African Economic Community - a pan-African economic entity expected to be fully operational in 30 years. The successful establishment of this body rests wholly on the resilience, efficiency and dynamism of the sub-regional groups in East, West, Central, North and Southern Africa. These are the Building blocks which will determine the character and scope for the continental entity when it matures."

This assertion justifies our view that the AEC faces a dilemma, because its building blocks are all crumbs. The regional groups are themselves on their knees, so they cannot be used to build the continental body as proposed.

The African continent can boast of a good number of regional economic groupings, from East to West, North to South and central, but they are all mere shadows rather than true common markets. These ghosts include the Arab Maghreb Union which was created in 1989, grouping together five Arab North African Countries: Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia. Although this union hopes to set up a customs union by the year 1995 and a common market by AD 2000, it has to date failed to set up a permanent executive, because of the failure to agree on the location of the secretariat and the choice members. Indeed, this dilemma had been blamed for the union's failure to implement most of its plans. If five Arab member countries cannot agree, how will 51 divergent countries fare in the African Community?

Apart from the Arab Union, the others are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), set up in 1975. This Community of 16 West African countries is dominated numerically by Nigeria which accounts for 55% of the population and 60% of the Gross Domestic Product (GPD). Apart from this domination, by Nigeria, the community suffers from infighting as a result of small
nations refusing domination and the fact that the community groups together both former British and former French colonies with different interests. Due to different degrees of inflationary rates and economic underdevelopment, few members of ECOWAS meet their contributions. This community is now some 15 years behind schedule in its attempt to become a common market for the West African countries. If it succeeded, ECOWAS would have an effective gross domestic product of some US $125,000 million with its total population of 150 million according to the 1988 figures.30

Probably one of the problems ECOWAS is facing is the duplication of its activities with another West African economic body, the Communauté Economique de l'Afrique l'Ouest (CEAO), grouping together French speaking states of the region. This was established in 1974 and groups together six francophone countries.31 The six countries have since joined ECOWAS, an act that was at first seen as a healthy move for a larger union for economic reasons. The CEAO which welcomed a seventh member, Benin, in 1984 is still a union within ECOWAS. The CEAO has a population of some 40 million people and a GDP of about US$18,000 million, and "in general had done rather better in areas of cooperation than ECOWAS.32 This is attributed to the French colonial experience. It appears, therefore, that Africa continues to be haunted by colonialism, a prospect that does not speak well for the future of Africa and hence the future of AEC. As long as these regional bodies are weak or collapsing, certainly the continental Community had no future, since these regional groupings are supposed to be its basis for take off when they mature. But they seem to be dying prematurely as in the case of EAC to name but one example.

The ten countries of Central Africa came together and set up their own organization whose charter was signed in 1983. This is the Communauté Economique d'Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC). The problem with this young community is that it contains some of the very poorest countries of the African continent whose future prospects can only depend on the willingness of the oil-rich countries, Gabon, Cameroon and Congo to cooperate with them, and on the extent to which Zaire will accept to cooperate in a body shaped by countries with a French system.33 Again here is the effect of colonialism influencing the fate of independent Africa. Zaire was a colony of Belgium, which like former French colonies used French, but has a different colonial experience from that of its partners. If the problems of colonialism feature in relations between a small number of 10 countries, then it is likely to be a more thorny issue when the whole continent is considered for the AEC.
In the chain of sub-regional groupings that Africa is blessed with, the other one is the Preferential Trade Area (P.T.A.), grouping together countries of Eastern and Southern African. The community boasts of 20 member countries which came together in 1981 for their economic survival through cooperation. The problem with the PTA is the wide area it covers, stretching alongside the whole eastern part of the continent. After some 10 years this community had not fulfilled any of its set objectives, such as removing tariffs on intra-PTA trade or the harmonization of transport and communication, industry, and worse still, the monetary sectors. This, therefore, means that PTA is some ten years behind its schedule, because some countries did not sign and ratify the organisation's charter promptly. It appears that the countries involved have no unifying factor, and they are brought together by mutual suspicion rather than by common interest. This indicates what we can expect of the larger AEC of 2025.

The long list of African sub-regional groupings also includes the most ambitious one, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which was founded in 1980. This community brings together nine independent states of Southern Africa, namely: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which between them have a population of about 60 million. The stated aim of the SADCC had been clearly brought out by Kevin Shillington thus: "It brought together the independent states of Southern Africa in a determination to gradually break their economic dependence upon South Africa..." The community comprises some of the most troubled countries of the region, including Angola and Mozambique, which have been fighting civil wars during the colonial period and after independence.

In spite of the fact that some of these countries can boast of substantial energy resources as they are rich in mineral deposits and have abundant agricultural land, giving the sub-region great economic potential, the community cannot take off without external finance. Moreover, the individual countries' own interests limit the trade between the member countries, and it appears there is no drive for a common market. "In the conviction that common markets and custom union lead to the uneven development of member states, there is no intention within SADCC of establishing a free trade area. . . ." This can be seen as the last nail in the coffin which will bury the African Economic Community, although with the liberation of South Africa this attitude of SADCC might change. There are, however, other impediments, as will be shown below. We can state here, however, that if these sub-regional groups have not taken off after many years, then we would be expecting too much of the AEC, a much larger body of some 51 diverse ex-
colonial states. It is, therefore, a pipe dream to imagine an African Community by AD 2025.

Economic Uncertainties

The charter setting up the African Economic Community leaves a lot to be desired, and this heralds Africa's economic uncertainties. The community, according to the Abuja protocol, is supposed to come into being in the next twenty-five years, but Africa's past economic performance, if it is a good indicator, shows that things are ever getting worse, not better. I don't wish to apologize for Africa, like those who have said that "Africa cannot forever be haunted by its past," simply because many other parts of the world, which have experienced even more cataclysmic events of the past have not suffered eternal pessimism. The same apologists who have said that these events have in some places where they have occurred created a basis for overcoming inadequacies, thus becoming lovers of positive change, are aware that Africans never learn from past mistakes, as indicated by problems in Ethiopia and Sudan, which should have learnt from Uganda's.

What is interesting to note is that some of these apologists are the same people who write:

In the past twenty-five years, the image of Africa has shifted from great optimism to immense pessimism. In the minds of many, Africa is now a continent of crisis, a highly vulnerable region of the world. Famine, high population growth rates and declining agricultural production have to the external world rapidly become the most common symbols of African existence, replacing other historically entrenched stereotypes.

This assertion may not be wholly true, but it tells us what Africa has achieved in the last 25 years of independence. What the authors left out are the civil wars, coups d'état, and the refugee problem, which have become the most prominent features of modern Africa. The best examples are Liberia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad, Nigeria, and Uganda, to name just a few of them. When we talk about the dilemma of the AEC, we have in mind the chaos that has become synonymous with the continent. Africa is certainly a continent of economic uncertainties.

It should be noted that economically, Africa is in a shambles. African apologists may not agree with this assessment, and those who
agree may want to argue that the African Community is being created to readdress that precarious situation. But we know that the AEC is already a still-born child because of its charter provisions. That aside, however, we know that Africa is now groaning under a crashingly heavy debt burden of some 161 billion dollars, which it cannot repay. And yet the destruction caused by civil wars cost a lot of money for just rehabilitation, especially with regard to the people who need artificial legs and hands as the in the case of Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, to cite just three examples of chaotic Africa.

The shattered economies of Africa also need billions if not trillions of dollar cash to repair before one can talk of African economic integration. Certainly, no stable country with some semblance of economic development would wish to be saddled with the problems of Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique or Somalia in the union. Obviously, here lies the dilemma of an African Community by AD 2025. Moreover, some small countries will fear domination.

In Africa there are countries where famine is the order of the day and for the people to survive, they need constant food aid. As noted by one reporter about sub-Saharan Africa, "for every Kurdish refugee facing cold and stravation in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey, there are at least 15 Africans fighting famine in the drought-devastated lands of Africa." But the problem of Africa is that it is not only drought that causes famine and hunger, but also civil wars and, sometimes, coups, which cause political instability and hence insecurity.

Nearly 30 million Africans are estimated to be at risk from starvation. The final toll threatens to overtake Ethiopia's losses of up to one million people in the 1984-85 famine. It is, say aid workers, the biggest disaster to threaten sub-Saharan Africa, already debilitated by decades of conflict and mismanagement, and burdened with a $161 billion external debt it cannot repay.

Let the African apologists continue to hide their heads in the sand like a tired ostrich by arguing that the problems of Africa have been exaggerated beyond reasonable proportion. Without trying to be cynical about Africa, I must say that few people are prepared to say that our continent is in crisis and that the proposed African Economic Community will go the way of the many other wonderful ideas that preceded it. A news commentary on the African problem once ran:

Concern over Africa's worsening economic woes finally seems to be generating the kind of attention that will put it on the world's center stage. The call by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for cancellation of
Africa's official bilateral debt is refreshing in that the world body will now focus on one of today's biggest problems—the African poverty. 

Africa is deep in poverty and the formation of the AEC, it is hoped, is supposed to pull the continent out of the mess, but there seems to be no seriousness on the part of most African leaders, which is another cause for concern. Probably now after 28 years of OAU we would be talking of an African parliament, an idea none of our leaders would wish to hear about. It is a dilemma that continues.

The Secretary-General of the U. N. wanted the 161 billion dollar debt cancelled and he also wanted the creditors to go further and write off commercial debt, and reduce any remaining debt through donor initiatives. That would have been very beautiful, but what de Cuellar did not realize is that some of Africa's hard-earned dollars have been banked abroad by respectable Africans for their future use. It is reported, for example, that Dr. Apolo Milton Obote, former president of Uganda, left the country with $55,000,000 in July 1985, while his late Chief-of-General-Staff, Major General David Oyite Ojok, left in Lloyds Bank a staggering $175 million, and now Uganda is in crisis. The late Liberian dictator, Dr. Sergeant Samuel Doe, left one million dollars in a London bank, while Swiss bankers are whispering that the fallen Malian dictator, Mousa Traore, and allies might have banked up to one billion dollars in Switzerland. This may just be the tip of the iceberg. The point is that some of our respected brothers and sisters must be prepared to return the cool billions banked abroad, short of which Africa will never take off because of its economic uncertainties.

The fate of Africa seems to be sealed if the present trend of economic uncertainties continues. While addressing the Somali Reconciliation Conference in Djibouti in July 1991, Uganda's President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni pointed out that "Africa is probably the only continent in the world which uses tools and implements made by others, and worse still, it is the same one and the only one that almost entirely depends on food aid and donations." Museveni attributed this pathetic situation partly to internal conflicts, which deny the people time to concentrate on food production and other activities such as inventions and innovations. In fact, these days, African people think more about acquiring sophisticated weapons than uniting to build their countries, and once these weapons are acquired, civil wars begin and continue endlessly. As a result of these civil wars, the economies have been destroyed in many countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Chad. Even if wars were to be ended in these countries, the economic situation would be so alarming that integration with others would be
certainly impossible. These problems are compounded by the Gulf crisis effect and the shift of Western aid to Eastern Europe.

If what the Ugandan leader said, in addition to what former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, once said that "Africa missed the boat of development," is anything to go by, then we can say that Africa is entering the twenty-first century, when it is still in the pre-industrial age. And yet our leaders are talking of setting up viable and self-sustaining economies by the year 2025. When talking about a common market, one would be talking about intra- and inter-African trade. But when it comes to these two, there is something more than a dilemma. The leaders of African countries love their borders so much that they cannot yield even to trade which would be beneficial to their people. Idi Amin, for example, loved smuggling instead of direct trade with outside countries.

Looking at inter-African trade, one would find out that this has never been tried out because African countries, almost all of them, produce largely the same products, the so called cash-crops, which are raw materials for European industries, and are meant only for mainly European markets. As such African countries are competing to sell the same or similar products. Thus, there cannot be intra- or inter-African trade as envisaged by the African common market. The crops produced by African countries include: tea, rubber, palm oil, cotton, palm kernel, coffee, cocoa, and sisal, among others. The main minerals extracted are diamonds and copper. Unless African leaders sit down and forget their political differences and then talk about economies of scale, intra- and inter-African trade will remain just a dream. Yet many African leaders don't see eye-to-eye, so they cannot sit down to decide who should produce what according to the economies of scale, then exchange what they can produce better. Given this problem, which is of a political nature and, hence, affects the economies, the African common market remains but a dream. This will be so until all political problems are resolved and solved.

Territorial Conflicts

Africa's map is littered with patches of conflict right from the south to the north. The story of rebels, sometimes called "liberation forces," does not need to be repeated when talking about the continent. It is reported, for example, that when OAU was meeting in Abuja in June 1991, three countries were conspicuously not represented because they had no leaders at the time. These were Liberia, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The war in Mozambique has claimed over one million
people in the last 16 years alone, while many more are crippled and need artificial limbs as well as food, shelter, and clothing. Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, in Northeast Africa, Liberia in West Africa, and Angola in Southern Africa are other examples. Then there is Ruanda in Central Africa and Uganda in East Africa.

Other countries are facing riots of their nationals demanding political change and better government, and many of the African leaders can only survive in power by the support of foreign troops, as in the case of Amos Sawyer of Liberia, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, and Idriss Deby of Chad, to mention but three. Dictators everywhere are falling, but they are being replaced by similar or worse ones. In 1980, Sergeant Samuel Doe replaced William Tolbert whom he killed. But Doe was himself killed in similar circumstances ten years later. In 1990 Idriss Deby replaced Hissene Habre whom he accused of many evils. In one of his speeches, "Debby attacked Habre as a dictator who tortured and detained those who opposed him, and [as] a kleptomaniac who stole international aid and fled with most of the government treasury." But one year later, Deby was being accused by a section of his own armed forces of corruption and similar other acts.

One only hopes that African leaders will follow up the spirit of Abuja and save the continent from further deterioration, as noted by the press, that "African leaders have advocated a free course for the troubled continent with pleas for democracy, economic integration and an end to civil strife." Unfortunately, nothing has so far positively changed since the Abuja summit, and as things stand, the African political scene is getting worse with many people being killed in democracy demonstrations all over the continent. This confirms what President Museveni said in Abuja, that "the ravages of civil unrest right across our continent, the consequent retardation of creativity for our human potential . . . constitute a permanent rebuke of our political judgement and will." Africa remains a continent of civil wars, famine, and, above all, refugees, and therefore, a theater of political instability. With political instability there will always be famine and economic chaos, which means that economic integration is not feasible. It is indeed a pipe dream to talk of the AEC by 2025.

Perhaps the worst the Abuja protocol did for Africa in setting up the AEC charter was the failure to set up a separate secretariat on the lines of the EEC. As noted earlier, the whole thing was left under the same body, the OAU, which already is a total failure. The question now remaining is: who will implement the AEC charter? This, indeed, is the dilemma of the African Economic Community by A. D. 2025. As regards funding the community, it appears the African leaders found a miracle in Abuja and proposed raising money through reparations from
the West for the slaves taken many years ago. The question remains, however, as to who will write the cheque for this rare demand.

As the *Daily Nation*'s foreign editor, John Gachie, put it,

"... in a rare departure from tradition, the just concluded Organisation of African Unity summit in Nigeria's dazzling new capital, Abuja, the African leaders of state adopted a declaration on reparations for slave trade and the aftermath of the trade in Africa's development..."64

Africa certainly will not cease to amaze the world, and this is another attempt by the continent to seek sympathy where it is not really forthcoming in a bid to obscure the sorry state of the African continent.

Conclusion

The African Economic Community Treaty, which was signed in Abuja on June 4, 1991, is a welcome document. The mere fact that African leaders agreed to initial the document proves that Africa has moved a long way to reach here. One only hopes that this one will not be added on the huge heap of Africa's blue prints of economic development none of which has ever been implemented. One has in mind the 1973 "African Declaration on Cooperation, Development, and Independence," the 1979 "What Kind of Africa by the Year 2000," and the 1980 "Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act," among others. It should also be taken into account that already some 200 regional organizations have failed to weld Africa's fragmented economies into a single viable market. Will this continental one of 51 nations actually succeed where small ones have failed? If it did this would become the magic of Abuja 1991.
Appendix

The African Economic Community, whose treaty was signed on June 4, 1991 by African leaders during the opening of the 27th Organization of African Unity Summit, is expected to become a reality in 2025.

Six Phases

According to the draft of the treaty, the Community will be formed in six phases of differing lengths: starting with a five-year phase of strengthening the African integration institutional framework.

The next would be an eight year period of setting up free trade zones, while the third, whose duration is 10 years, would be devoted to the creation of regional customs unions, to be followed by the 4th phase of two years for creating a continental customs union.

The next stage, the 5th, will see the establishment of an African Common Market within five years, while the last phase of five years is expected to lead to the creation of the actual African Economic Community.

Highlights of the proposed Community will be the promotion of national and collective self-sufficiency, the integration of all sectors and the promotion of intra-African cooperation. However, the ultimate objective would be the achievement of political, economic, social, and cultural pan-Africanism as wished by the founding fathers of the OAU in 1963.

African Declaration

The treaty contains 106 articles which reaffirm the principles contained in the OAU Charter—sovereignty, equality of all member-states, non-interference, settling disputes through political means as well as the respect and promotion of human rights.

The idea of continental-scale economic integration is as old as that of African Unity, which became a reality with the founding of the OAU. However, it was not until the 10th anniversary, in 1973, that the African heads of state and government decided in Addis Ababa to adopt the African declaration on cooperation, development and independence, a blueprint with guidelines on how the OAU should proceed in running the priority economic activities, sectors, and field for the member-states.
That document remained a pious hope until 1976 when the 11th extraordinary OAU Council of Ministers, held in Zaire, adopted the Kinshasa Declaration which specified the objectives and strategies for the creation of the economic community.

The next move was a symposium the OAU organized in Monrovia in February 1979 on the theme: "What kind of Africa by the year 2000," whose recommendations were submitted to that year's annual summit held in the Liberian capital.

It was at that summit that the Monrovia strategy was born to bolster the Kinshasa declaration on the creation of the Community. Until then, the OAU had limited its affairs to political issues, putting the economic issues aside.

A decision was then taken to convene an extraordinary summit entirely devoted to economic problems. It was held in Nigeria and came up with the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act, which was adopted in April 1980 in Lagos.

Proposed

The steps and practical modalities for the creation of the Community were not better specified with emphasis on the fact that the proposed Community should arise out of the existing sub-groupings or new ones to be created in various African regions.

The OAU Secretary-General was taken to collaborate with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to set up a ministerial committee to draw the draft treaty ready for submission to the heads of state and government summit.

Things moved rather fast in 1985, when the African leaders set up a permanent OAU Steering Committee charged with the writing of a draft treaty on the creation of the Economic Community.

The committee's drafting work, which started in 1987, lasted three years. After three readings, the draft treaty was approved by the ministerial meeting of the Steering Committee in November 1990 and by the OAU Council of Ministers which held its 53rd ordinary session in February in Addis Ababa.

The Community and the OAU will have a single secretariat. It will have a court of justice and a parliament which will have full

NOTES

3. Kitete Orwa, D. personal discussion with the author.
20. In my lectures, I have often told students that if Walter Rodney were still alive today, he probably would write another book, and call it "How African leaders have plundered Our Continent." Mali, the poorest country in Africa alone boasts of a cool one billion dollars salted out of the country by the country's leaders for their future use. Certainly the $161 million debt Africa is suffering from must be yawning abroad on some leaders' accounts. For example, Milton Obote of Uganda took
$55,000,000 when he was overthrown in 1985. His late chief of staff left $175 million in Lloyds bank when he died in 1983. You could go on and on.

25 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
32 The Courier, Number 112, op. cit. p. 151.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid. p. 77.
35 Shillington, History, p. 423.
37 Shillington, History p. 423.
39 Loc. Cit.
47 Ibid.
53 Loc. Cit.
56 Shillington, History, p. 413.
58 Loc. Cit.
59 Loc. Cit.
63 Loc. Cit.