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Selected topics in the African reflection on international relations – a study of the views of George M. Carew

Published in: *Re-Visions and Re-Orientations: Non-European Thought in International Relations Studies*, ed. by J. Zajączkowski, M.F. Gawrycki and A. Bógdał Brzezińska, Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 112-129.

In this paper I present and make a critical analysis of the thoughts of the Sierra Leonean philosopher George M. Carew,¹ who is the author of one of the broadest contemporary visions of the political future of Africa. Carew is disappointed with the decades of authoritarian rule in African countries, which have brought about neither development nor prosperity. He believes that the only political system able to change this situation is democracy.²

In the opinion of this thinker, the prerequisite for building and consolidating democracy in the African state is democratisation of the mechanisms governing the current global political and economic order. The hierarchisation and unfair, in Carew's opinion, principles governing the provision of assistance to poor countries are a substantial hindrance to the development of democracy there. Carew also enumerates several arguments supporting this thesis.

The philosopher subjects various elements of the world order to a tough evaluation and is particularly critical of the mechanisms governing the decision-making processes. As a result, he is a proponent of far-reaching democratisation of international economic and political relations.

The significance of Carew's views consists mainly in the fact that he points out the importance of the concept of deliberative democracy for the African countries looking after their interests, as now they do not have any effective instruments of acting in the global

¹ George Munda Carew – one of the leading contemporary political thinkers of West Africa; a Protestant missionary and lecturer in Liberia; PhD in philosophy at the University of Connecticut; professor of philosophy in: Fourah Bay College in Freetown in Sierra Leone, University of Connecticut, University of Iowa, Spelman College in Atlanta, and the United Methodist University in Monrovia in Liberia; former ambassador of Sierra Leone in the United States; author of many papers on political thought, published largely in the West.

² For more see: K. Trzciński, 'Budowanie demokracji w Afryce. Wizja George'a Carewa' ('Building Democracy in Africa. The Vision of George Carew'), *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe*, vol. 1, no. 7, 2010; J. Zdanowski (ed.), 'Idee i ideologie w krajach Azji i Afryki' ('Ideas and Ideologies in Asian and African states'), *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe*, vol. 1, no. 7, 2010, pp. 249–272.

environment.³ In Carew's opinion, democratisation of the world order should consist in the order being reformed in accordance with three principles which he considers the fundamental ideals of deliberative democracy: rational deliberation, participatory politics and civic governance.

The international civil society should help execute this objective, its organisations should be the first to be governed in accordance with the principles of deliberative democracy and then serve as a model to other entities in the international arena. Carew believes that a success in introducing deliberative democracy in the international order should also contribute to the implementation of its ideals within the African state.

Influence of external factors on the development of democracy in Africa

In Carew's opinion, internal political, economic and socio-cultural transformations in the African state, however deep, are alone insufficient for democracy to develop and prevail. He states that 'just as the environment within the state must be conducive to democracy so must the climate outside the state be democratic in order for the African state to be capable of democratic action'.⁴ At the same time, Carew points out that the contemporary global economic and political system has a deeply non-democratic character.

Furthermore, the philosopher believes that the present world order, in which policy is conducted through financial organisations operating globally, is weakening the processes of democratisation in Africa. This is the case primarily because of the fact that burdensome economic reforms are forced, especially by the states and organisations of the rich West, upon the poor African countries. In Africa, this practice often leads to the emergence of a rift between the liberal, free-market economic transformation and democratic transformations.

Carew expresses the view that the economic globalism, which he defines as the global dimension of the functioning of a strongly liberalised free-market economic system, has a detrimental effect on the democratisation of poor countries. In the opinion of the Sierra Leonean philosopher, it is symptomatic of economic globalism that economic inequalities exist and constantly grow in the world and that the hierarchy basically composed of two main groups – rich states and poor states – is ever more consolidated.⁵ In this hierarchy, the poor African countries have been assigned a marginal position of dependence, from which they cannot break free. In Carew's opinion, in the world today the rich states and their societies are very clearly more privileged at the expense of those which

³ Also called 'discursive' democracy. See e.g.: D. Miller, 'Deliberative Democracy and Social Choice', *Political Studies*, vol. 40, Supplement 1, 1992, pp 54–67; A. Gutman, 'Democracy', in R.E. Goodin, P. Pettit (eds), *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993; J. Węgrzecki, 'Przyszłość demokracji deliberatywnej' ('The Future of Deliberative Democracy'), *Athenaeum*, vol. 22, 2009, pp. 27–42.

⁴ G.M. Carew, *Democratic Transition in Postcolonial Africa: A Deliberative Approach*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006, p. 132.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 129.

are poor. This is proven by, for instance, the fact that the poor states are a testing ground for economic experiments conducted by specialists from countries whose societies would never allow such experiments to be conducted on them.

As Carew notes, especially in African countries, rigorous liberal reforms were introduced for many years with the aim of 'healing' their economies. They were devised and largely also implemented by the proponents of the strongly liberalised, free-market economic system. In most cases, the implementation ended in a fiasco.⁶ What Carew refers to are particularly the so called Structural Adjustment Programmes,⁷ developed principally by experts from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and implemented with assistance from them. The introduction of these programmes in African countries involved deregulation of prices of imported goods, reduction or elimination of various government subsidies, elimination of barriers to trade, curbing inflation through devaluation of local currencies, facilitation of capital export to foreign countries, etc. The consequence of these at least partially sound – it seems – policies was bankruptcy of many enterprises, increased prices of most goods, the outflow of capital from Africa, and mass layoffs, in both the state and private sectors. Carew is appalled at this situation and asks: 'How was it to be explained to a household of several sub-family units that the few breadwinners in the household should be laid off as part of an IMF-inspired downsizing of government bureaucracy?'.⁸

As the Sierra Leonean philosopher notes, economic transformations have weakened the African state, for its institutions were not able to help those who were harmed by their effects. In Carew's opinion, in the past, adjustment programmes considerably contributed to the destabilisation of the political situation in various African countries, including military coups d'état. Of course, this took place in complete contradiction to the intention behind democratisation. Consequently, as Carew claims, economic globalism has not modernised the African countries, but has made them even more backward.⁹ Today, these countries are experiencing severe economic problems which, in the philosopher's opinion, are correlated with the realities of global economy and politics. Under economic globalism, poor countries are even undergoing a process of recolonisation, as Carew points out, adding that they are 'former colonies, which received their independence only to be recolonised'.¹⁰

⁶ Cf.: K. Trzciński, 'Depolityzacja społeczeństwa i organizacja władzy autorytarnej oraz ich wpływ na brak rozwoju w państwach Afryki' ('Depolitisation of the Society and Organisation of Authoritarian Power, as well as their Influence on the Lack of Development in African Countries'), in T. Koziełło, P. Maj, W. Paruch (eds), *Adaptacja–reforma–stabilizacja. Przestrzeń publiczna we współczesnych systemach politycznych (Adaptation–Reform–Stabilisation. Public Space in Contemporary Political Systems)*, Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2010, p. 267.

⁷ Presently replaced by Poverty Reductions Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

⁸ G.M. Carew, 'Economic Globalism, Deliberative Democracy, and the State in Africa', in K. Wiredu (ed.), *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 465.

⁹ Carew uses the term 'obsolete'.

¹⁰ G.M. Carew, 'Economic Globalism, Deliberative Democracy, and the State in Africa', p. 469.

The philosopher is convinced that the economic and political transformations conducted simultaneously in African states proved to be mutually exclusive rather than complementary because the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund considered the implementation of the free market principles the prerequisite for democratic reforms. However, with the rigorous conditions of economic reforms imposed by these institutions, the hope for democratisation proved illusory.

In Carew's opinion, it is external factors that are largely responsible for the governance crisis and unsuccessful development of democracy in Africa. The philosopher is convinced that the sources of economic and political underdevelopment are to be found already in the policy of, as he calls them, the framers of constitutional decolonisation. He writes that: 'From their perspective, the postcolonial state had taken its place among the family of equal sovereign states and should discharge its obligations as a sovereign nation by simply adhering to the rules. That is to say, like the other states in the global economy, the postcolonial state was expected to promote a market economy'.¹¹

However, the essence of the problem is that, as the Sierra Leonean philosopher repeats after Crawford Young¹², the poor African states have always been forced to accept a subordinated status in the international hierarchy.¹³ Struggling with various challenges, the weak states were to conduct their internal policies according to rules which they were not allowed to set by themselves and which did not necessarily correspond to the conditions in these countries, including the state of extreme poverty and multiethnicity.¹⁴

Polemics with Carew's theses – Part 1

The views presented by Carew should not be accepted uncritically. First, however, we should sum up the principal claims of the philosopher concerning the external barriers to democratisation of the African state. Carew assumes that in the world order based on hierarchy, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF – established and controlled by the rich countries – impose programmes of economic transformations devised by their own experts on the poor countries, while the governments

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 464.

¹² M. Crawford Young – an eminent North American specialist in African studies, retired professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin, dealing e.g. with the problems of African statehood, particularly on the example of Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo); the author of *Politics in Congo: Decolonization and Independence*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965; *Ideology and Development in Africa*, Yale University Press, 1982; *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994; co-author of (with Thomas Turner) *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

¹³ For more see: C. Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 282–292.

¹⁴ For more see: G.M. Carew, *Democratic Transition in Postcolonial Africa: A Deliberative Approach*, op. cit., p. 127.

of these countries have no significant influence on these programmes.¹⁵ Consequently, the processes of decision-making concerning the life of the people inhabiting the African state actually take place outside this state and with no meaningful participation of the state's internal institutions.¹⁶ Thus, the state authorities lose a considerable share of control over the economy, while external entities in fact govern the work of key state institutions and influence the actions of its politicians so that they remain in accordance with the principles of the implemented projects. For instance, experts from international financial institutions forbid the governments of poor countries to subsidise certain sectors of their economies and order them to limit public spending. At least initially, these actions can lead to an increase in the number of unemployed people and cause a collapse of the healthcare, education or social security systems.

No one can deny the fact that the introduction of very rigorous policies which are to bring about quick and dramatic changes in developing states often results in further impoverishment of a significant share of the societies of these countries.¹⁷ This can lead to the development of social anarchy in the state. In such cases, the authorities often resort to the use of force. In a weak state, actions of this type can often take a non-democratic turn. However, even if they do not cross the boundaries of law, the very harshness of the transformation can make the society give power in the next elections to groups which promise that they will renounce the implementation of these painful reforms. This scenario is not only probable, but actually often takes place.

What is more, some academic researchers and activists from non-governmental organisations accuse the experts representing international financial institutions of repeating certain commonly accepted patterns in implementing economic reforms in poor countries without taking into account the specific factors, conditions and determinants of these countries, such as their culture.¹⁸ As a result, the reforms of their economies may and often does end in a fiasco. Thus, Carew aptly points out the importance of the social costs of

¹⁵ The well known Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah describes this phenomenon in the following way: 'under the coordinated instrumentalities of the IMF and the World Bank, programs of so-called structural adjustment have forced elites to accept reduced involvement in the economy as the price of the financial (and technical) resources of international capital. The price of shoring up the state is a frank acknowledgement of its limits: a reining in of the symbolic, material, and coercive resources of the state'; cf.: K.A. Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 167.

¹⁶ Cf.: K. Trzeciński, 'Afrykański głos w dyskusji o wpływie globalizacji na rozbudzenie tożsamości pierwotnych' ('The African Voice in the Discussion on the Influence of Globalisation on the Awakening of Primeval Identities'), in E. Reklajtis, R. Wiśniewski, J. Zdanowski (eds), *Jedność i różnorodność. Kultura vs. kultury (Unity and Diversity. Culture vs. Cultures)*, Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, 2010, p. 217.

¹⁷In this context, the critics of structural adjustment programmes have even coined the irreverent name 'Infant Mortality Fund' for the International Monetary Fund. See: P. Beinart, 'Globalization and Africa', in K.A. Appiah, H.L. Gates Jr. (eds.), *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, vol. 3, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 7.

¹⁸ James Ferguson, a North American anthropologist of culture and professor at the Stanford University, presents this problem on the example of Lesotho in the works: *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development", Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990; and *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal Order*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

reforms in the poor countries. Their inhabitants, faced e.g. with the loss of a share of sources of income or drastic increase of food prices, could stop supporting the democratic transformation, especially if they are introduced alongside arduous economic reforms and tend to be identified with them.

It should be noted that the Sierra Leonean philosopher does not oppose democratic reforms *per se*. On the contrary, he does not want them to be accompanied by an arduous economic transformation, conducted according to principles devised somewhere outside Africa and without the participation of Africans. However, it is impossible to decide whether Carew would prefer the African state to first finish political transformations and then introduce economic reforms, or whether he would agree to the simultaneous implementation of these transformations if the transformation in the economy was slower and less rigorous.

Carew criticises the fact that international financial organisations force the governments of poor states to introduce reforms which the rich states would never dare to impose on their own societies. However, we should not forget that the rich countries do not need to do that, as they are in a stage of development in which there is no need to introduce vast economic transformations. Thus, this argument seems rather inapt.

Pointing out the high social costs of the difficult economic reforms in the African countries, Carew almost ignores the fact that they are, to a large extent, generated by various internal factors, particularly related to politics. While the philosopher does not claim that the governments of African countries never make mistakes, he also refrains from criticising their dishonesty, although the degree of corruption and embezzlement of public funds in African countries is among the highest in the world. The people holding power in Africa often do not have sufficient qualifications to govern a country professionally and the political elites of many states are not at all interested in the development of the democratic system,¹⁹ which usually ensures better control over public funds and more effective actions against self-interest than autocracy. Carew, however, fails to mention that.²⁰ Consequently, one might get the impression that external entities are responsible for the majority of the problems of the African state, while this is most certainly not true.

Furthermore, the philosopher claims that implementing adjustment programmes in various African countries has led to destabilisation of their internal political situation, which often ended in coups d'état and seizing power by the military. This, however, is a far-reaching generalisation. Coups d'état have not appeared in Africa upon the attempts to introduce deep economic transformation, but were almost the typical manner of replacing the ruling elite in many countries in the postcolonial times. They had diverse reasons and

¹⁹ This view was popularised by, for instance, the eminent Nigerian political philosopher Claude Ake in the work *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, Dakar: Codesria, 2000, pp. 160, 190.

²⁰ The Sierra Leonean philosopher can avoid this criticism for example because he used to work in the diplomatic corps of Sierra Leone, representing its autocratic government.

were executed by various factions opposing the governments. It would also be difficult to prove that the implemented reforms have actually increased the number of putsches taking place. As the history of the late 20th and early 21st century shows, coups d'état are now rather rarer than they used to be.²¹ Nowadays, the West requires African politicians to get to power in a more peaceful way, which is not to say that they do this fully in accordance with the standards of established democracies. For instance, they often prolong the period of remaining in power using electoral fraud. Hence, the manner of getting to power in Africa has evolved through external pressure and although it is still not democratic, it takes a bloody turn much less frequently than it used to.

Looking for external culprits of the failure of the economic and political transformation in Africa, Carew treats the actors in the international arena selectively. He focuses only on two entities remaining in a direct relation to each other – international financial organisations and the rich countries which in fact control the former. The Sierra Leonean philosopher completely ignores supranational concerns, which have a considerable influence on global politics and which perhaps deserve criticism more than any other foreign entities affecting the situation in Africa.²² They are often accused of corrupting officials – especially the members of autocratic governments – and thus delaying the processes of democratisation in Africa. It also seems doubtful that development and consolidating democracy in countries in which the concerns employ cheap workforce, exploit natural resources, maintain plantations, or produce and sell various products and services are as important for them as their own benefit. It could also be that they influence the governments of rich countries, which, in turn, spur international financial organisations to devise and introduce such economic reforms in the African countries which will, above all, allow them to accumulate large profits.

Carew also fails to take notice of the problem of illegal activity of both African and non-African entities of various type, which benefit from, for instance, mining raw materials in Africa, selling weapons or falling forests. Actions such as these deprive the budgets of African countries of a share of due income and often lead to long-lasting and devastating internal and regional conflicts.²³

Carew's disapproval of the simultaneous introduction of political and economic transformation in the African state would be much more convincing if, instead of arguing that the economic reforms imposed by non-African experts are directly weakening the

²¹ Nevertheless, coups d'état still take place in Africa, as proved by the examples of, for instance, Mauritania (2003 and 2005), Guinea-Bissau (2003), Central African Republic (2003). For more on this problem see e.g.: A.-C. Robert, 'Afryka, demokracja i my', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Polish Edition, no. 3, 2010, pp. 14–15.

²² This problem has been voiced by C. Ake, 'How Politics Underdevelops Africa', in A. Adedeji, O. Teriba, P. Bugembe (eds), *The Challenge of African Economic Recovery and Development*, London: Frank Cass, 1991, p. 322.

²³ On the example of selected countries of West Africa see: K. Trzeciński, *Wojny w Liberii i Sierra Leone (1989–2002). Geneza, przebieg i następstwa (Wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone 1989–2002. Genesis, Course and Consequences)*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie 'Dialog', 2002.

development of democracy, he explicitly acknowledged the incorrectness of the assumption that in Africa democratic transformations should be accompanied – in accordance with the policies of most countries and financial organisations providing assistance to Africa – by a deep economic liberalisation taking place in a very short time. It seems that the fundamental problem does not consist in the claim that a free-market reform of the economy is required in order to build a lasting democracy, but rather in the very fast pace of implementation. Carew could be right in pointing out that the conditions of implementation of the economic transformations devised by international financial organisations are too rigorous for the African societies.

The need to transform the global economy and politics

Carew represents the opinion that the best help for the development of democracy in the African state would be a comprehensive transformation of the current rules governing the world order. In the philosopher's view, this order is based on – which is worth stressing once again – a system of domination of the rich countries and the international financial institutions they control over the poor countries, forced to introduce reforms the content and conditions of which hamper the development of democracy.

Carew believes that every international redistribution project devised and implemented in accordance with the rules governing economic globalism weakens the sovereignty of the poor countries, while the construction underlying the activity of various international organisations, including the UN and its agencies, essentially deprives the said countries of any influence on the decisions made in the international arena.²⁴ Especially the current system of the UN is supposed to combine two contrary principles: equality of sovereign states and the special status of a few states which are permanent members of the Security Council. Carew writes that 'the implication is that the interests of superpowers must never be sacrificed for democracy in the event of a clash'.²⁵ Consequently, in the present state of affairs equality seems but a myth.

The Sierra Leonean philosopher calls for the introduction of, as he puts it, global intervention,²⁶ i.e. an involvement of the international community in the internal affairs of its members when it is necessary, coordinated and devoid of the hegemony of rich states. Carew considers global intervention a more just form of international relations, including the process of making decisions concerning its members. Global intervention would be particularly important in the economic relations in the world. The rules of global intervention would be devoid of hierarchisation; rich states would not force on the poor ones economic solutions which do not take into account the poor countries' complex

²⁴ G.M. Carew, *Democratic Transition in Postcolonial Africa: A Deliberative Approach*, pp. 130–131.

²⁵ G.M. Carew, 'Economic Globalism, Deliberative Democracy, and the State in Africa', p. 467.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 466.

internal cultural and social particularities. Moreover, Carew is convinced that sooner or later, 'dependent states face the grim prospect of extinction without some such global intervention'.²⁷

However, global intervention should not be limited to economic issues and concern only the donors of aid. Consequently, for instance, the citizens of African countries who fall victim to illegal actions of their governments should have the opportunity to receive assistance from supranational judiciary institutions. In the philosopher's opinion, this kind of limitation of the independence of the African state is desirable, if only for the sole sake of being able to hold the governing elites internationally accountable for their actions, e.g. violations of human rights. Hence, what Carew calls for, essentially comes down to broadening the scope of activity of the international judiciary system, in particular – we might safely assume – the International Criminal Court, in such a way as to allow even single individuals to lodge a complaint with the ICC about the actions of state authorities.

Carew is aware of the fact that global intervention will still to some extent limit the sovereignty of poor countries. In his opinion, the two values do not necessarily have to be contradictory. On the contrary, they can be complementary to one another in the event of executing the concept of deliberative democracy on a global scale.²⁸ Furthermore, Carew believes that restructuring the world order on the basis of deliberative democracy would be conducive to its introduction in the African state as well.

In the philosophers opinion, the three fundamental and closely interrelated principles, or rather ideals of deliberative democracy are: rational deliberation, participatory politics and civic governance.²⁹ The first of these, the ideal of rational deliberation, includes the premise of conducting a debate based on well thought out rules which are not detrimental to any of the parties. The second ideal, participatory politics, assumes a full, actual participation of the representatives of various parties (or interests) in politics, based on identical principles. The philosopher emphasises that they all must have the opportunity to comprehensively present their positions in political and economic debates. The third ideal, civic governance, is participatory decision-making which takes into account various interests³⁰ and results in decisions which are based on the principles of freedom and equality.³¹ In accordance with this ideal, the parties to the process of decision-making need

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Among the new papers dealing generally with the principles and practice of deliberative democracy see: R.E. Goodin, *Innovating Democracy: Democratic Theory and Practice After the Deliberative Turn*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 and J. Fishkin, *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

²⁹ G.M. Carew, 'Economic Globalism, Deliberative Democracy, and the State in Africa', p. 462.

³⁰ Cf.: F. Fischer, *Participatory Governance as Deliberative Empowerment: The Cultural Politics of Discursive Space*, in: M. Bevir (ed.), *Interpretive Political Science*, t. IV: *Interpreting Politics*, London: Routledge, 2010, pp. 349–350.

³¹ Earlier Carew wrote on this issue in the context of actual equality of Afro-Americans in the United States. See: G.M. Carew, *Liberalism and the Politics of Emancipation: The Black Experience*, in L.R. Gordon (ed.), *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 239.

to understand the necessity of acting for the common good and must strive after a compromise.³² If fulfilled, these ideals are to edify the relations between the entities active in the international arena and in the future also the political reality in the African state.

In the philosopher's view, the fulfilment of the ideals of deliberative democracy in the supranational dimension would also eliminate the defencelessness of the poor countries in global politics.³³ First of all, it would allow democratic control over the world economy. Carew is convinced that in a deliberative reality, the governments of African countries would finally have real influence on the decisions being made in the international arena and concerning their societies. As a result, they would no longer be forced to policies which cause further impoverishment once implemented. What is more, the Sierra Leonean philosopher believes that the changes introduced into the international order by deliberative democracy 'will require not only redistribution of resources but also reparations to correct the injustices of a previous world order. This might take many forms, including, for example, debt cancellation, and other forms of assistance aimed primarily not at poverty alleviation, as they now are, but its eradication'.³⁴

In consequence of establishing a global order based on the ideals of deliberative democracy, it would be the state authorities and not the international financial institutions controlled by rich countries who would be playing the principal role in solving the internal problems of African societies. However, in order to fulfil this goal, it is necessary to have the ideals of deliberative democracy implemented not only in the international dimension, but also on the state level. Moreover, Carew is convinced that implementing the concept of deliberative democracy in the African state would constitute a 'useful corrective to pure democratic proceduralism, which is incapable of guaranteeing a democratic outcome that might be described as just'.³⁵

Inspired by the views of John S. Dryzek,³⁶ Carew notes that the present, unfair world order can be changed by transforming the principles of functioning of the civil society and its activation and dedication to propagating democracy. Carew particularly stresses the fact that according to Dryzek, many non-governmental organisations, operating both within

³² Cf.: J. Węgrzecki, 'Przyszłość demokracji deliberatywnej', pp. 30–39.

³³ Cf.: A. Gutmann, D.F. Thompsona, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, pp. 32–37.

³⁴ G.M. Carew, 'Economic Globalism, Deliberative Democracy, and the State in Africa', p. 467.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 463, 470.

³⁶ John S. Dryzek – an Australian political philosopher, professor of social and political theory at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, before that a professor of political science at the University of Oregon and University of Melbourne; presently he focuses mainly on the theory and practice of deliberative democracy, global governance and ecologism; the author of e.g. *Foundations and Frontiers of Deliberative Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; *Democracy in Capitalist Times: Ideals, Limits, and Struggles*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; co-author of (with Patrick Dunleavy) *Theories of the Democratic State*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

states and in the international arena,³⁷ have similar goals which can be generally summed up as providing assistance to those in need and serving the common good.³⁸ This similarity of goals could be used to deepen the mutual cooperation of non-governmental organisations, especially in order to stop the global rush of capitalism, based on hegemonic and often egoist foundation.³⁹

It seems important that Dryzek's views lead Carew to the conclusion that various civil society movements and organisations should start functioning in accordance with the ideals of deliberation and, consequently, practice democracy more broadly in their own ranks. This way, he writes, people will receive first-hand knowledge on what it is like to belong to a free association with a democratic character and they will learn the values of freedom, transparency and accountability not in theory, but as a living experience.⁴⁰

The Sierra Leonean philosopher would have democratisation of the civil society in the worldwide dimension become the model for the transformation of the international and intranational order and, especially, assist in the introduction of the ideals of deliberative democracy. In this context, Carew quotes the thoughts of Seyla Benhabib,⁴¹ among others. He points out that both the views of Benhabib and the entire idea of deliberative democracy are sometimes criticised for their supposed lack of an institutional dimension. However, he believes – as does Benhabib – that the implementation of the principles of deliberative democracy could take advantage of the already existing institutions of liberal democracy,⁴² as the problem is not the need to construct some new institutions, but rather the need to change the style of conducting politics. Furthermore, Carew believes that with the functioning of a democratic deliberative community on both the international and state levels, conflicts of interests would be solved in an atmosphere of growing trust and cooperation instead of the present rivalry.⁴³ He points out that referring to the deliberative form of politics 'would presuppose that transformation in a way has occurred in such

³⁷ See: G.M. Carew, *Democratic Transition in Postcolonial Africa: A Deliberative Approach*, p. 135, where the author mentioned the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Oxfam as examples of non-governmental organisations which perform their international tasks well.

³⁸ John S. Dryzek cites an interesting example of the Ogoni people, inhabiting the delta of the Niger River, who sought help with internationally active Western non-governmental organisations in solving the ecological conflict with the oil company Shell. See: J.S. Dryzek, 'Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies. Alternatives to Agonism and Analgesia', *Political Theory*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2005, p. 232. For more on the problem discussed here see the Amnesty International report: *Petroleum, Poverty and Pollution in the Niger Delta*, source: http://www.amnesty.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_19492.pdf

³⁹ Cf.: J.S. Dryzek, *Democracy in Divided Societies*, pp. 71–91.

⁴⁰ G.M. Carew, *Democratic Transition in Postcolonial Africa: A Deliberative Approach*, p. 135.

⁴¹ Seyla Benhabib – a philosopher dealing with, among others, cosmopolitanism, feminism, citizenship, deliberative democracy, the global civil society; professor of political science and philosophy at the Yale University; author of e.g. *Another Cosmopolitanism: Hospitality, Sovereignty, and Democratic Iterations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

⁴² For more see: G.M. Carew, *Democratic Transition in Postcolonial Africa*, pp. 92–94, where the author also elaborates on the main principles of deliberative democracy.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 95.

attitudes as are envisaged by, say, liberal egoists, who hold that politics is only about self-interest and the market'.⁴⁴

Carew is also interested in the reflections of David Held,⁴⁵ who calls for the establishment of a new, democratised and cosmopolitan world order.⁴⁶ The first stage of this process would consist in ceding the power of the present major global decision-making centres to regional and continental assemblies, which would influence matters in their respective parts of the world. Next, Held calls for a thorough reform of the United Nations system, redefining the role of international financial institutions and establishing the World Court.⁴⁷ Carew is very enthusiastic about the ideas propagated by Held. However, the Sierra Leonean philosopher believes that they can really be implemented only if deliberative culture is promoted by the civil society in the global dimension.

Polemics with Carew's theses – Part 2

Carew's belief in facilitating democratisation of the African state through the transformation of the principles governing world politics and economy requires an additional commentary. It seems important that the philosopher promotes a vision of development of an international deliberative community which would devise various policies respecting the interests of the poor states. In such an improved global situation, the representatives of all countries would have the opportunity to conduct a dialogue and actually participate in the decision-making process. Although presently representatives of poor states are admitted to debates in various global forums, they do not really have any significant influence on the decisions being made there. Carew is probably quite right in saying that requiring the African countries to automatically yield to various decisions of the community of rich states can have a detrimental effect on their internal political and economic problems.

However, it is not really certain whether it is justified of Carew to look for a means to overcome the weakness of the African state in strengthening the share of its government in the global processes of decision-making. It is not known whether having a stronger position in the international arena, the governments of African states would be able to successfully

⁴⁴ G.M. Carew, 'Economic Globalism, Deliberative Democracy, and the State in Africa', p. 463.

⁴⁵ David Held – a British political theoretician, professor of political science at the London School of Economics and Political Science; he deals with, among others, globalisation, cosmopolitanism, global governance, democratisation; author of e.g. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010; *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006; co-author of (with Anthony McGrew) *Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007; (with Garrett Brown) *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010.

⁴⁶ See: D. Held, 'Democracy: From City-States to a Cosmopolitan Order', *Political Studies*, vol. 40, Supplement 1, 1992, pp. 10–39; idem, 'Democracy, the Nation-State and the Global System', *Economy and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1991, pp. 138–172; Cf.: G.M. Carew, *Democratic Transition in Postcolonial Africa: A Deliberative Approach*, p. 134.

⁴⁷ See: D. Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

convince the rich countries to finance better programmes aimed at the transformation of their states' economy. Who would devise such optimal solutions? Would it be some native experts collaborating with the government of the African state? Carew neither asks such questions nor answers them in any way.

He believes, however, that the hierarchisation existing in the international order is bad, as in consequence the opinions of those who are subjected to arduous economic transformations are disregarded. But is there any guarantee that having a greater share in the decision-making processes in the international arena, the representatives of the poor countries would have deeper expert knowledge on how the economic transformation of their countries should look like? Should we assume *a priori* that all ideas presented by the African governments will be apt? Carew's arguments would be more convincing if he pointed out the African partners who would be able to assist the experts from international organisations in devising programmes of economic transformation better suiting the complex reality of the African state. This role could be played by some independent African professionals. Perhaps with their help foreign experts would gain deeper understanding of the local specificity, would be more open to the need to support the types of activity in which Africans have been involved so far and to taking advantage of their experience, skills and customs in devising and executing economic reforms.⁴⁸

It is also incorrect that Carew envisions only a limited role of the international civil society in the possible transformation of the hierarchised global economic and political order which he criticises. After all, there are nowadays many non-governmental organisations active in the international arena which often – even if only through trainings or subsidies – support local initiatives in the poor countries.⁴⁹ The recipients of their assistance often have great confidence in these organisations. And even though it seems that the idea of fair trade, promoted by some non-governmental organisations, is gradually becoming more and more important in the world, it is still the rich countries and various international institutions who remain the major actors in the international arena and who make the key decisions concerning assistance provided to the poor countries – which is often done without the participation of civil society organisations. Meanwhile, taking into account the experience they have accumulated, non-governmental organisations could probably play a much more significant role in the global debate on economic issues and could be helping, to a much greater extent, in devising and implementing the programmes aimed at furthering the development of African societies. Perhaps the proposals of the Sierra Leonean philosopher should be aimed at this goal.

⁴⁸ In this context, it is of symbolical meaning that the Kenyan activist Wangari Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for, among others, the promotion of sustainable social development. Maathai remains a symbol of the development of the civil society in Africa, the fight for environmental protection, for the change of the existing social *status quo* – especially regarding the rights of women, and of the fight for democracy and good governance.

⁴⁹ Probably the best example is the international organisation Doctors Without Borders, which not only provides aid in many African countries, but also trains local specialists.

Furthermore, it should be noted that Carew's proposals concerning the healing of the contemporary political and economic world order are very general. While the philosopher stresses that the key to restructuring the global *status quo* is the introduction of deliberative democracy in the international arena, he fails to specify what exactly the implementation of its ideals in the international arena should look like and whether the existing mechanisms of decision-making should be reformed through evolution or resolutely replaced with some entirely new solutions.

Carew joins the numerous critics of the United Nations system in its present shape,⁵⁰ but his reflections do not deal with such issues as whether – and if yes, then how – the composition of the Security Council should be reformed or the institution of veto should be introduced.⁵¹ In this context, the question comes to mind whether it is at all possible with some countries in the world having but a dozen or a couple dozen thousand inhabitants, while other have more than a billion citizens, to abolish unequal treatment of some of the world's entities. Of course, one could argue which states, especially among those with a large population, should have permanent seats in the Security Council, but it is hard to decide without doubt whether the norms under which the UN functions are undemocratic, or whether they would be undemocratic if, for instance, they included rules giving equal voting rights to all countries regardless of the size of their populations.

Similar doubts concern the issue of the proposed transformations of the principles under which international financial organisations provide economic assistance, its content and method of provision. How would these changes be carried out, even with the introduction of the principles of deliberative democracy, given the existing division into donors and beneficiaries? Surely we can agree with the view that many economic programmes devised by the experts from, for example, the World Bank or the IMF and either executed or co-executed by them have failed, but, at the same time, it is rather hard to believe that the members of the African state's authorities – often corrupt and incompetent – have the knowledge on how to best and most effectively help their state. Of course, we can assume that the introduction of the ideals of deliberative democracy presented by Carew in the African state would lower dishonesty and ignorance of the ruling elites, but we cannot be sure that this will actually happen, especially in a relatively short timespan.

Conclusions

Carew's reflections prove that the issues important to contemporary international relations are present in the African intellectual thought. They seem all the more valuable, as

⁵⁰ See: D. Archibugi, 'The Reform of the UN and Cosmopolitan Democracy: A Critical Review', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1993, pp. 301–315.

⁵¹ See: *ibidem*, pp. 301–302, 307–309.

they surely reflect the views of many intellectuals from the African countries which do not play any significant role in the international arena.

Furthermore, Carew's reflection constitutes evidence of the modern discourse on the need for a transformation of many elements of the world order – despite the fact that it concentrates to a considerable extent on attempts to change the present state of affairs in which rich states, especially the United States, wield hegemonic power and make decisions concerning a significant part of the world – being largely based on the ideas and proposals devised and propagated by Western thinkers and theoreticians of international relations and politics *per se*. Nevertheless, even though Carew is inspired by patterns originating with Western science and intellectual culture, he also attempts to compile their conceptual achievements, especially those concerning the implementation of the ideals of deliberative democracy and the transformation of the role of the international civil society, as well as his own views, that is proposals concerning a global intervention and broadening the competences of international judiciary institutions. It seems that he also tries to use this to better show to Africans and non-Africans the problems and challenges faced by modern African countries and to accentuate their importance for the future of democratisation in Africa and in the world.

Although Carew does not present any specific means of carrying out the democratisation of the world order which he advocates, we should also remember that political thinkers rarely suggest any detailed solutions for the issues they discuss or any methods for introducing the visions they present. They usually leave this task to sociologists, political scientists, economists, and lawyers. The role of philosophers, in turn, seems to consist in outlining some general projects, providing deeper reflection and pointing to new horizons of thought. Philosophers usually perceive reality in a much more abstract way than other intellectuals; they seem to have a broader knowledge of the human nature and the motives for man's actions, as well as the ability to compare diverse experiences with great insight and draw original and unique conclusions from these comparisons. In this sense, every thorough political vision can be of use to the science of international relations, including the one presented by Carew, especially since he has both theoretical and practical experience with the problems he writes about – as a philosopher, an academic, a former diplomat and a working missionary.