



For safety is not a gadget but a state of mind

ELEANOR EVERET

■ OPINION

Covid-19 a ruse for mass surveillance

SAM DITSHEGO

WHY were freedom fighters Robert Sobukwe, Zeph Mothering, Jaftha Masemola and many others imprisoned? They were freedom fighters. Onkgozope Tiro, Steve Biko and many others killed?

They were imprisoned and killed because they were fighting for the liberation of the African people from mental, physical and economic oppression.

In 1994, the ANC was given nominal independence and the right to seek negotiations. The ANC hasn't used that nominal independence to pursue the objectives for which the freedom fighters mentioned gave their lives.

They have not pursued those objectives with the same zeal they are using to fight against a non-existent disease and virus.

The South African government takes its cue from the World Health Organization (WHO), which shows there is no self-determination and that ANC leaders are not mentally liberated. President Cyril Ramaphosa sounds like a broken record about getting vaccines to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Ramaphosa and his ANC government ignore a mountain of scientific literature showing the disease's trajectory.

The Italian government has recently commissioned a study to establish if the WHO and Bill Gates vaccines do what they claim they are supposed to do. When is Ramaphosa and his ANC government going to do what it has done?

The supposed spread of Covid-19 is meant to be used to put people under surveillance and to control them. From June 1, Australia is going to begin to use face-recognition cameras to monitor if people observe social distancing at their workplaces. In totalitarian China there are more than a million face recognition cameras.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, big pharma and China control the WHO. The vaccine will not be for Covid-19 because that disease doesn't exist; the vaccine will be for something else. This is where the improper use of the Covid-19 disease as a pretext to effect surveillance and control has gone wrong.

If the billion-dollar vaccination project of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the WHO is not exposed the way the Italian government did, people will be forced to get vaccinated before they travel or are provided with services using nanotechnology. I am watching with keen interest what's going to happen to people who were supposed to receive the R500 million.

If people are forced to be vaccinated then Gates' digital ID2020 that's going to be implanted in our bodies will become a reality. Christians refer to it as the mark of the beast, found in the Book of Revelation. That's why the churches are disengaged from congregating, because they will mobilise against the implants.

These implants are going to be connected to the 5G grid and we will all be China's slaves or robots because China controls its totalitarians.

We can ignore Sobukwe's warning at our own peril. May 25 was Africa Liberation Day and the media celebrated it without mentioning Sobukwe. Local radio stations can't even play one of the late Miriam Makeba's three songs which she dedicated to Sobukwe. But the songs are still loved by Melba and the distorters and falsifiers of history in government and the media – that they are concealing the name of one of the key historical figures who made it possible for them to celebrate Africa Liberation Day.

The South African media and ANC government can distort and falsify the history of the last 50 years. So do we as much as we want to, but the facts will contradict this. As Sobukwe said: "We have history on our side."

■ LOCKDOWN

We were set up to lock down

Government policy decisions do not estimate the health burden of Covid-19

THESE is a standard line.

South Africa's decision to lockdown when we did was sensible.

Little was known about Covid-19 and its potential impact here.

Since then, the situation has changed but we still don't know how the pandemic is likely to unfold and who this disease affects, and we have made preparations to deal with the likely impact. The economy continues to deteriorate each day we stay locked down and with it, people's livelihood. It is now time to unlock; in fact, unlocking is overdone.

Decisive steps should have been taken to restore the economy, education, health services, and other pillars of the nation to their "new normal" functioning. This familiar story is wrong.

The evidence available at the time we locked down supported doing something more moderate.

Lockdown was not the right response for South Africa. It was a threat Covid-19 posed to South Africa.

It's potential benefits for a population the majority of whom is under 27, and can expect to be dead by their mid-sixties, did not outweigh the certain costs to the one in four living in poverty, and the many more who would join them on losing their livelihoods.

Besides, it was obvious that, for most of the population, lockdown was impossible due to overcrowding, shared sanitation, and the necessity of travel to receive social grants.

Contrary to what's said, the evidence hasn't changed. The relevant characteristics of Covid-19 were apparent by the end of March when the decision to lockdown was taken in current circumstances.

Much of it is cited in an opinion piece published on the same-day lockdown was announced. March 23, a piece arguing that a one-size-fits-all approach could not be applied to achieving social distancing.

We felt we were presented with two options, and chose one of them as a preference. We did not necessarily choose the opposite direction to the one we adopted. We wrote several further pieces, and by April 8, I was sure that lockdown was wrong for Africa, including but not limited to South Africa, and published an opinion to that effect. The next day lockdown was extended.

What had changed? Is it the evidence, or is it intellectual fashion?

It's possible that those of us making anti-lockdown arguments two months ago are still stopped clocks that inevitably tell the right time when it comes.

■ COMMENTARY

Scrapping 'sovereignty clause' is Africa's first step



LETEPE MAISELA

LAST Monday marked the 57th Anniversary of Africa Day, inaugurated at the founding of the OAU – in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1963 where there were only 32 countries who raised their collective hands vouching to become members of the Organisation of African Unity.

Later the name was changed to African Union in 2001, probably to fall in sync with our northern neighbours, the European Union, but the ideals remained unchanged.

South Africa joined the AU on June 6, 1994 after the demise of apartheid and the ushering in of the new democratically elected government in 1994. Some Africa attended the first Assembly of Heads of State and Government (OAU) Summit held in Tunis, Tunisia on May 23, 1994.

The SA delegation was led by the late foreign affairs minister Alfred Nzo, President Nelson Mandela was

but the likes of Kwame Nkrumah, first prime minister of Ghana and one of the earlier preachers of the pan-African philosophy upon whose foundation the AU was built, went astray and declared himself president for life and thus led to his being deposed in a military coup in 1966, where was the voice of the AU.

Hiding behind the excuse of "country sovereignty", the AU and later the AU soon became an exclusive country club for African dictators. When Muammar Gaddafi, another passionate supporter and funder of the

to address the OAU Summit on July 8, 1996 held in Banjul, Gambia.

Today the AU boasts 55 member states, representing the rest of the continent.

The next significant question to ask is Is it worth celebrating Africa Day which is ipso facto celebration of the apartheid regime to Kimberley where he died a lonely death, did we hear from the OAU? Same as the Rionva trial, led by Mandela who was sentenced to life in prison in Robben Island, where was the OAU? When African presidents and prime ministers sought and held on to power by all means necessary, including coups and rewriting of their own constitutions, the world did not see any meaningful intervention by the AU.

From my recollection of historical events, there are a myriad of mishaps that took place over the years under the guard of the AU, that my opinion mitigate strongly against celebrating African Day as its current form.

When the likes of Kwame Nkrumah, first prime minister of Ghana and one of the earlier preachers of the pan-African philosophy upon whose foundation the AU was built, went astray and declared himself president for life and thus led to his being deposed in a military coup in 1966, where was the voice of the AU?

It was ample proof that the AU for all its lofty ideals remained a big boys' club, not loyal to its African leadership than its people.

In many military activities on the continent the AU had held back and was even overtaken by European



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LIMPOPO IS FAR FROM READY TO REOPEN SCHOOLS*

The biggest trade union for teachers in South Africa, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu), has said that schools in Limpopo are far from ready to be reopened on June 1.



CAUGHT IN the middle of a lockdown on World Hunger Day the community of Cosmo City were given some relief when the Engen retailers' association delivered food hampers that would feed a family of four for a month. TIMOTHY BERNARD African News Agency (ANA)

as being chained to the bed, or indeed being shot dead on the spot.

These are dire consequences for society, none of which show up in the model, none of which this doesn't matter in the developed world, where economic downturn means poverty but not starvation. But it's crucial in the developing world, where recession often means death.

Second, and relatively, contextual differences were related to the scale to measure the reduction in social distancing. This meant that, for instance, a 60% reduction in social distancing was represented as the same thing in Geneva and Joburg.

Whereas, of course, that is an outcome one takes by implementing policy decisions, which were not really to do with the scale of the context.

Third, the different scenarios modelled were then given different names, re-introducing a qualitative difference between them that was simply absent in the input. Qualitative differences were thus obliterated in the inputs – perhaps reasonably, from a modelling perspective – then introduced in the outputs – and before we had (say) a 40% reduction in distancing, we have "mitigation".

And instead of (say) a 60% reduction, we have "suppression". These began life as arbitrary points on a con-

tinuous scale, as the modellers would have been the first to admit.

But with different names, they became modelled as qualitatively different strategies. Moreover, the leading models at the time predicted huge greater benefits from suppression compared to mitigation.

Thus, almost magically, the huge range of possible measures, varying between context depending on context, policy priorities, became transformed into a choice between lockdown and no-lockdown.

Lockdown was exemplified already in China and Europe as a set of specific restrictions, and not as an abstract percentage reduction in social contact.

All context, all nuance, all qualitative factors were lost, washed out in a modelling exercise that was insensitively applied to the whole of Africa.

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Thus, almost magically, the huge range of possible measures, varying between context depending on context, policy priorities, became transformed into a choice between lockdown and no-lockdown.

Lockdown made no difference, if those graphs are to be believed; and it's hard to know what other data to look at.

The decision to unlock is, as Glenda Gray pointed out, not backed by any scientific evidence.

Yet it's the right one, not because the evidence changed, but because it was right all along.

Lockdown was always wrong for Africa, including South Africa.

rule, not much that I know of has benefited the people of this country, besides our costly indulgences like hosting the Pan African Parliament, the legislative body of the AU.

Post Covid-19, I will expect the new AU chairman – President Cyril Ramaphosa, to ring in some serious changes to make the organisation more effective, user-friendly and accountable to the citizens of Africa.

The AU ideals and objectives must be drastically overhauled beginning with the blankly withdrawn of the "sovereignty clause" that the AU conveniently hides behind, when over-looking excesses committed by leaders of member states. It is also imperative that the AU becomes self-funding in order to act independently.

All these changes are accompanied by a necessary move to control costs and not allow the AU to be converted into a sheltered employment agency for Africa's ageing diplomats and bureaucrats.

It's going to be a long haul but as the Chinese put it: the journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.

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