

# You Write

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## EAC's stand on secondhand clothes has nothing to do with inferiority complex

*Are Western-trained Africans' perspectives problematic?*

Editor,

RE: "Are multilateral trade agreements overrated?" (*The New Times*, July 26). I don't have much more to add than the excellent advice from Ggwanga Mujje. However, in relation to your claim that you are 'not doing anyone's bidding at all', that you are 'an independent thinker', who likes 'well-researched and objective commentary on real issues', allow me to paraphrase Charles Baudelaire: *'The greatest trick our colonizers ever pulled, is to convince our évolués that they are not conditioned; that Steve Biko was wrong, the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is not the minds of our westernized intellectuals whose education has for matted them into half-baked westerners.'*

For, make no mistake about it, many African intellectuals do not realise that their very basic analytical frameworks, inherited from their westernised education systems make them their very own worst enemies, for their deep-seated 'values' are those of those who have an interest in keeping them in their place while they themselves maintain their commanding heights.

Until our 'intelligentsia' realise how our own 'thinking' is used against our own interests we will continue to wrestle with our shadows while those who benefit from our inability to emancipate ourselves continue to feed on us.



Second hand clothes and bags on display in Biryogo market, Kigali. File.

Editor,

RE: "Cagua: EAC should remain firm and reject US blackmail" (*The New Times*, July 25). Frankly speaking, I think our reactions are often guided by fanaticism against the West and all that comes from there. For the moment, our developing countries would lose much in banning *cagua* than keeping it for a while. As somebody said, our choice should be guided and determined by dispassionate calculation.

Keeping *cagua* in our developing countries does no harm to our still-nascent industries which must of course be strengthened. It should always be borne in mind that the majority of the populations in our countries do not have sufficient means to buy brand-new clothes.

We should therefore keep *cagua* for a while until our countries are able to ensure the de-

velopment of the textile industry that is able to market affordable textile products for the population.

By the way, secondhand clothes sold in Africa are not meant to dehumanise Africans. I have seen the same secondhand clothes being sold in Western countries. It seems to me that some of us cannot yet get rid of this complex of inferiority with respect to the West.

John Peter

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I FIND you the perfect proof of what we have been saying about indoctrinated Africans (starting with the name that has nothing African at all about it) and continuing all the way to the opinions you espouse. You are a living illustration of exactly what Frantz

Fanon, Bob Marley and Bantu Biko warned about alienated blacks, the need to emancipate the colonised from mental slavery, and the most potent weapon of the oppressor being the mind of the oppressed.

And kindly don't project your inferiority complex on those of us who hold our *agaciro* as something more than just a word.

On your muddled thinking that we should keep *cagua* until we have been able to develop a local textile industry, you seem to be unable to understand a simple fact of crops being unable to thrive in the presence of weeds which throttle their growth.

There is no way a domestic textile garment industry can emerge, grow and thrive in the presence of such rubbish being dumped on our local markets. A bit of clearing of your thought processes would help you no end.

Mwene Kalinda