

Vol.5 No.9
 SEPTEMBER 1989

AFRICA EVENTS



S. Africa: Exit of the Crocodile
Mozambique: Prospecting for Peace



Salim Ahmed Salim:
**AFRICA'S
 SUPERPERSON**

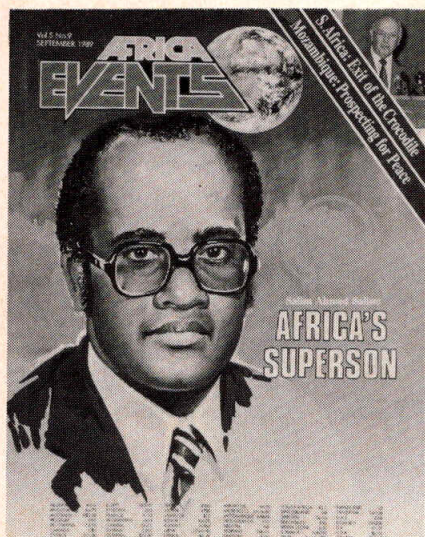
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-Muhawad Said-
 Saturday Sept 23/1989
 (Saffar)
 22 Mfungo Tawo Kilo

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The OAU Summit

Critics have dubbed the OAU as a private club for Africa's leaders and its conferences as a talking shop, where resolutions are passed but never implemented. Was the recent Summit any different? *Our Correspondent reports*

OAU summits may be fun for the participants, but they seldom provide much to cheer about; and not always too many people to cheer either. This year the loudest welcome for those arriving at Africa Hall went to the guerilla leaders, SWAPO's Sam Nujoma, and the PLO's Yasser Arafat. Among the Heads of State only Kenneth Kaunda, perhaps, got a bigger reception.

Sam Nujoma, with his promises to return next year as the head of a free and independent Namibia, proved one of the main personalities of the conference. He was articulating and appealing idea, and everybody welcomed it.

The final resolutions had much to say about South Africa (there were the usual calls for tougher and mandatory sanctions) and Namibia, and were aimed to ensure that nothing should stop SWAPO's accession to power. There was a call to increase the size of the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) from its present 4,650 to the originally intended 7,500. South African activities were criticized and she was accused of trying to manipulate the independence process and rig the elections. Of particular concern was the future of the former counter-insurgency force, the infamous and highly controversial Koevoet unit, now integrated into the police force in contravention of UN Resolution 435.

The UN Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar, who took the opportunity to hold talks with many of the Heads of State present in Addis Ababa, described this as a matter of "serious concern"; the summit called for the disbanding of Koevoet, which is now being touted by South Africa as an anti-poaching force.

OAU Summits have the air of three-day cocktail parties for old friends; cynics may be forgiven for thinking this is the only value, though this incidentally was not a Summit distinguished by any conspicuous consumption. But it is useful to meet old friends, even old enemies, or to get to know the new faces. The arrival of Lt Gen Omar Hassan of Sudan in Addis Ababa created considerable interest, and not just for the journalistic pack. He had lengthy meetings with the leaders of virtually all Sudan's neighbours. The discussions he had with President Mengistu were particularly valuable for Ethiopia. Lt Gen Omar Hassan, for the first time, explicitly linked the solutions to the wars in Eritrea and Southern Sudan, and provided firm indications that he was prepared to co-operate with Ethiopia to help get political solutions.

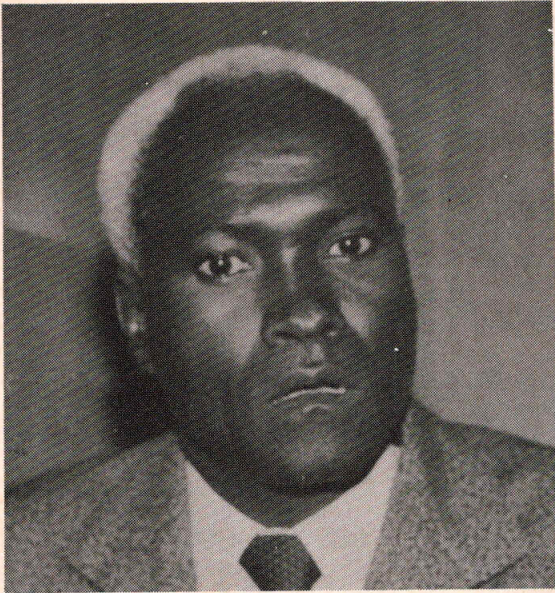
When President Mengistu spoke of Ethiopia's peace initiative on Eritrea, he startled many of his listeners. None of his fellow Heads of State had heard him refer to the 28-year old war in Eritrea in an OAU Summit before. It was only a few words at the end of a speech perhaps, but it was a major step for Mengistu to take.

This year, as usual, there was a long list of unresolved conflicts - Senegal and Mauritania, Libya and Chad, the SADR and Morocco, and the civil wars in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sudan, as well as the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. But everyone was conscious that the Summit was of course taking place against the apparent world-wide outbreak of peace, temporary though it may prove to be. The improvement in East-West relations, and the fact that the US and the USSR have, for the first time for many years, been scaling down their support, whether direct or indirect, for military adventures, has meant that many African leaders are also prepared to look for peaceful solutions. Several spoke of a new mood of reconciliation and realism.

A new realism, perhaps. But virtually none of the current peace initiatives in Africa, or indeed the progress towards a settlement in Namibia, have anything to do with the OAU. Jimmy Carter is brokering the possibility of talks between the EPLF and the Ethiopian government; President Mobutu hosted the regional Summit on Angola and the historic handshake of Dos Santos and Savimibi; President Moi is mediating between RENAMO and the Mozambique government. The 26th Summit didn't get the Presidents of Chad and Libya, or of Mauritania. The President of Senegal came while the OAU conference was ending. As Chairman, President Mubarak will need his considerable diplomatic skills to bring together the various African countries or factions which are hostile to each other.

Similarly, although President Mubarak has stressed his desire to win Morocco back into the OAU, he may have difficulties. The Summit underlined the permanence of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic's (SADR) place in the organization. Recent suggestions by President Bongo of Gabon that the SADR's seat should be frozen until after the referendum (due to take place later this year) appear to have little future. One response to the recent Moroccan diplomatic efforts to reverse the 1984 admission of the SADR was the choice of the SADR as rapporteur during the pre-Summit Council of Ministers meeting. Backers of the SADR remain in the majority.

An object of suspicion or not, President Mubarak certainly won praise from all for his tough chairing, his capacity to hold people to time and to get resolutions passed with so little fuss. OAU conferences have been known to last through the early morning hours. This one was wrapped up by the early evening of the third day. And few would disagree with President Mubarak's stated desires to promote Afro-Arab relations, resume the North/South dialogue, ensure that the independence process in Namibia does not falter, and hold an international conference on Africa's economic prob-



Ide Oumarou: defeated in the third round



President Husni Mubarak: the new Chairman

lems.

Africa's indebtedness was, of course, a major theme of the conference. The Continental debt is now about \$230 billion - an "excruciating" figure. But what struck most participants, as well as most observers, was the commitment of the conference to actually do something about it. A whole series of resolutions was passed on economic issues. The Heads of State made it clear they did want an international debt conference. President Moussa Traore of Mali suggested December as a date, but others seemed to feel a later date would be more realistic. The 12-nation committee set up last year, and headed by President Traore, to push the idea of such a conference of creditors, was given a renewed mandate. While donors are divided, with many still preferring to work on a case-by-case or country-by-country approach, President Mitterand of France has accepted the proposal, and the European Community has also backed it.

The initiatives of France and the US writing off credits to some of the poorest countries was welcomed; but the Summit also called for much more public sector debt-relief and for urgent steps to reduce interest rates. The IMF and the World Bank were asked to set up a new agency to buy back part of the debt to commercial banks at highly favourable discount rates; the deals could be financed by voluntary contributions from developed nations and by unallocated resources from the main international financial institutions. The Summit also backed the Economic Community of Africa's (ECA) alternative Structural Adjustment Programme; endorsed a report calling for the stabilization of world commodity prices by the creation of a global compensatory mechanism; and supported the blueprint calling for an African Economic Community to be introduced in the ten years after 1998.

A new factor in several of these resolutions was the recognition that Africa as a whole could do more to help in their implementation. One element suggested for commodity stabilization was the creation of an African Commodities Exchange to provide producers with

storage for commodities, and with advice on production, sales and market strategy.

For many delegates, the realistic approach was more obviously apparent in the election of the Secretary-General, often the high point of an OAU Summit. Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania was chosen on the third ballot. In the first round he had 24 votes to Ide Oumarou's 23; in the second round it was 27 to 23 and in the third, and final, vote the figures were 38 to 12. President Mubarak had organized a behind-the-scenes deal to avoid prolonging the voting and possibly causing a rift between the so-called Anglophone and Francophone blocks. It was decided that the candidate who emerged in front after the second ballot should get the job. The final vote was to satisfy the OAU rules under which the winner has to have two thirds of the votes cast.

To be Secretary-General of the OAU is not usually seen as a job for an ambitious politician, but if anyone can give the post real stature, it is probably Salim. He has impressive credentials.

Salim indicated immediately in his acceptance speech that he planned to be an interventionist Secretary-General, with his references to the political choices that faced the OAU and that were needed now. And not all of those who voted for him were too pleased by his calls to action - on the economic front, with the need to get rid of "the image of a Continent where poverty is endemic, where human suffering is taken for granted"; on the social front, to ensure that the "social, economic and political changes being sought translate into the greater good for its general citizenship"; and in the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, a first step towards "institutionalizing human rights" in Africa, but which has yet to be adopted by many States. Salim also put considerable stress on the problems which transcend national boundaries - refugees, the environment and economic co-operation.

Many delegates left the Summit with a feeling that things had gone well, that some new ideas and attitudes were apparent, and that there was still some very useful life left in the organization ●



The Challenges Ahead

The new OAU Secretary-General, Salim Ahmed Salim, has been elected to the post when the organization is facing acute political and economic problems. *Abdulahman M Babu* charts the path ahead for the Secretary-General

The tasks confronting the Secretary-General of an international organization are vastly different from those facing a Foreign Minister of a sovereign State. Although a Foreign Minister may have some leeway in dealing with fellow diplomats in his new role as head of an international organization, their respective roles now are essentially distinct. A Foreign Minister has some definite policy reflecting the national interest of his country, whereas the head of an international organization necessarily has none; and if he tries to devise his own policy, he will definitely end up in serious trouble. His role is simply that of being able to interpret the various policies of member-states, define the main threads, and artfully weave them into a sort of coherent blueprint, and package it in a way that would make most of the member-states feel comfortable to be identified with it.

No Secretary-General of the OAU, from Diallo Telli to Ide Oumarou, has been able to achieve this feat largely because, except for Ethiopia and Egypt, the countries that comprise the OAU have no definable foreign policy. And these two exceptions have evolved their respective foreign policies as a result of their participation in the scramble for colonizing Africa. Consequently, their foreign policies are tinged with predatory designs. Both had imperial monarchies with expansionist ambitions; both claimed their ancient histories as a justification for colonizing what they regarded as the more backward parts of the Continent; both were used by the competing big powers to advance their colonial interests in the region; both took part in most of the major Big Powers' conspiracies of the last century, which determined the fate of Africa.

Moreover, since all international organizations, including the OAU, are based on the legal precepts of the last century, which were largely designed to minimize conflicts among the predatory "Big Powers" - ie, the five European powers, who not only dominated, but also changed, the course of history of the entire world - it is difficult for a leader of an organization bound by such legality to distinguish between a policy based on predatory objectives, and that which is based on principles of liberation. The confusion is worse in an organization of ex-colonies like the OAU, whose Founding Fathers, far from creating conditions for the evolution of a doctrine of resistance in the Charter that brought them together, have, on the contrary, swallowed hook, line and sinker every piece of trash from the so-called Geneva Conventions, which were designed to oppress them in the first place. The posture of

"running with the hares and hunting with the hounds", which projects itself in most of the OAU initiatives, is a direct result of this confusion of principles of resistance, and the predatory principles of dominance.

Salim Ahmed Salim, the new Secretary-General of the OAU, will therefore take over the administration of an organization lacking any clear-cut position on all major international issues, except perhaps that of Southern Africa; and even on this ready-made one, there is no well defined policy with which member-states can identify, without much hesitation. It is unfortunate, moreover, that his first year on the job will be under President Husni Mubarak of Egypt, whose country is virtually tied to a superpower the US, a country which is also deeply involved in the complexities of the Middle East crisis from a very complicated and compromised position of being at once on both sides of the conflict - officially with the Arabs, unofficially with the Israelis. The confusion will be even worse confounded by the fact that while the new Chairman of the OAU leads an organization which has no diplomatic relations with Israel, his own country, Egypt, of which he is the President, is the only one among the Arab countries which has diplomatic ties with this arch enemy of the Arabs. The Secretary-General will find himself in a most unenviable position every time such questions are inevitably raised.

Those elements who are keen on dividing Africa on such irrelevancies as "black" and "Arab", will have a field day with this new awkward situation.

Zambia's President, Kenneth Kaunda, has already been the first on record to jump in with this racial approach by cynically "advising" Mubarak to ask his Arab colleagues to stop supporting the Eritrean liberation struggle against Ethiopia, as if that has been the essence of the Eritrean struggle these last twenty-eight years. Similarly, those with vested interest in splitting the Continent on religious lines, Muslim vs Christian, will also have ample opportunity for mischief in that direction, especially when Mubarak's Egypt is itself deeply involved in the Sudan conflict, with its traditional Muslim/Christian division, which has been thoroughly exploited since the inception of the Sudan as we know it today.

The timing for the Mubarak/Salim take-over is most unfortunate too. Most of the conflicts that currently face the OAU have racial colouring. In addition to the Sudan conflict, the latest and worst is the Senegal/Mauritanian racial war, in which



Museveni: "Where were you when Uganda was bleeding?"

citizenship in the two countries has ceased to have any validity - it is a free-for-all war between "Black-African" and "Arab-African", of either country. Then there is the Libya/Chad conflict which verges on the "Black/Arab" divide, but which has been taken over by foreign powers who came on the side of Chad because of Libya's uncompromising anti-imperialist stand.

OAU has no clear-cut stand on either of the two conflicts because most member-states are themselves involved, having taken sides in both disputes.

Salim Ahmed Salim will require all his diplomatic skills to steer the OAU through the stormy period ahead, but he must never attempt to devise an "OAU foreign policy". People with his wide experience in foreign relations, both as a diplomat and as a political head of department, are always prone to succumb to the temptation of trying to "set things right". However, in an international organization, it is not a predetermined policy which sets things right, but rather a skilful and timely intervention in anticipated events, which determine the degree of success. In other words, what is needed in an international organization is not formulation of a distinct set of policies, but a capacity to anticipate. Luckily for the OAU, it is this rare endowment which Salim Ahmed Salim will bring to the organization to good effect, and it will be to his own advantage as well to make full use of it, while the opportunity lasts.

Of course there must be a well defined framework of principles within which negotiations, mediation, reconciliations, etc are conducted, but these must in principle be tipped in favour of the oppressed. The colonial principle of "non-interference in internal affairs of member-states", which is entrenched in the OAU Charter at the behest of the late Emperor Haile Selassie, has been thoroughly abused; and some of the worst crimes against the people have been committed by ruthless leaders, while the OAU was silenced by the clause. It took Uganda's President Museveni's courageous intervention to ask the OAU Summit: "Where were

you when Uganda was bleeding?" to bring the point home. Perhaps, with a little encouragement from the OAU Secretariat, the situation can be rectified. For instance, independent African lawyers may look afresh into the Charter, with a view to giving it an Afrocentric bias, and salvage it from its present Eurocentric one. Let them "brainstorm" on the subject, and free it from the 19th Century imperialistic Conventions. The Secretary-General can take the initiative on the matter, without overstepping his mandate.

But apart from political and diplomatic questions, the most challenging problem that faces the OAU is, of course, Africa's mega economic crisis. This crisis has been looming since the mid-1970s and is daily getting worse. The debt problem continues to mount, and no solution is anywhere in sight. The OAU made several futile attempts to adopt a collective African position, culminating in 1980 in the Lagos Plan of Action. The last OAU Summit in July was directed to consider a "blueprint" prepared by the UN Economic Commission for Africa as a last chance for Africa to have its own alternative solution to the crisis, which is now seen to be aggravated by the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). But, regrettably, this initiative too, like the others before it, is destined to end in a failure. And the reason is obvious. None of the proposed "solutions" has ever attempted to show how we can stop the massive net outflows of wealth from the Continent to our Western "trading partners".

The core question remains unanswered: "Is it possible to build a national economy on the basis of a colonial economy?" If the answer is negative, which obviously it is, then what do we do about it? The colonialists have built colonial economies throughout Africa designed to serve Europe's interests. All the anti-colonial struggle seems to have achieved has been to get rid of foreign administrators and plant ourselves in their place to administer the same colonial economy, and in a less "cost effective" way. Even if we were to be more efficient than the colonialists, the gains would still continue to go to our "trading partners", because that was the aim of the structure of that economy. So what the World Bank is telling us is to be more "cost effective", and we respond by arguing how best to achieve it, without raising the key question. If the OAU is to give Africa meaningful guidance to economic emancipation, then it must depart from the jaded path which leads only to a dead-end. It must initiate new thinking, starting from the vital question: How to change a colonial economy into a national economy? The rest will follow.

But in all aspects of the OAU tasks, whether political, diplomatic, economic, social or cultural, to attain positive results, the Secretary-General will find it useful to be guided by the universal, all-purpose principle, which is also the irresistible trend of history, namely, that countries want independence, nations want liberation, and people want revolution - the last being the key link to the rest.

We all wish Salim Ahmed Salim a very successful tenure at the head of the OAU's administration●



The Making of a Superson

A brief political profile of Salim Ahmed Salim

The new Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Salim Ahmed Salim, comes from a background of political struggles, both theoretical and practical. His earliest political awakening in the 1950s evolved in a Zanzibar that was undergoing extraordinarily rapid political changes, from a "calm" and subservient island, to a stormy one.

There was an Arab Association boycott of government, partly because the leading Arabic weekly, the *Al Falaq*, took a vigorous anti-British stand in favour of the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya. There was the first political assassination in Zanzibar's modern history, when a former Commissioner of Police, who later became a nominated Arab Member of the Legislative Council, was seen as a British stooge, to be got rid of when he broke the boycott by resuming his seat in the Council. The event shook Zanzibar to the core, and awakened thousands of young Zanzibaris to the politics of protest. These were the beginnings of peasant unrest in the rural areas, when the clove boom, which was brought about by the Korean war, was beginning to turn into a slump, when that same war came to an end.

Zanzibaris of Salim's generation, while they were going through these exciting experiences, suddenly witnessed unprecedented mass demonstrations, protesting against a far away event, the 1956 Anglo-French invasion of Suez, designed to unseat Gamal Abdel Nasser, the then President of Egypt. The first such mass action, and the only one of its kind ever to be staged in East Africa. The significance of this event was that it marked the beginning of a decisive shift in the world balance of forces against Western hegemony and imperialism and the beginning of the end of European colonialism in Africa.

Salim went into active, organized politics, when he became a leading member of the anti-colonial Youth Movement, supportive of the Zanzibar Nationalist Party, known as the Youths Own Union (YOU), and held a strategic position as its Publicity Secretary. He developed his oratory under the tutelage of the then Secretary-General of the YOU, the late Hassan Salim bin Brek. The Zanzibari youths in the movement tackled every area of anti-colonial politics from Algeria and Ghana, to Mau Mau and apartheid in South Africa; from the Palestine liberation struggle, to the Vietnam struggles, first against the French and then against the US.

The Zanzibari youth, as a result, developed a combative stance in the face of imperialist aggressive tactics, as the latter were being forced to retreat from the colonies. For instance, Salim, as the spokesman of YOU, was the first in East Africa to raise the alarm about the possible murder by the

imperialists of Partrice Lumumba, as soon as it was announced that Lumumba had "disappeared" at the height of the "Congo Crisis". He exposed the possible role of the CIA in the murder, and now history has confirmed it. At the head of the Youths he took a leading role in the mass protest and demonstrations against the installation of the US's "tracking station" at Tunguu in Zanzibar, which everybody knew was intended as part of US intelligence gathering world-wide. It was also at the height of these struggles that Salim met his future wife and comrade in arms, Amne Ali Rifai, who herself was active in the Youth Movement.

It was not until the formation of the UMMA Party in 1963, after the radicals' breakaway from the Zanzibar Nationalist Party, that Salim began his earliest diplomatic forays, first to Cuba and then Egypt. He was in Cuba when Castro made his famous Havana Declaration, and Salim memorized most of its essential parts in its Spanish version. After the Zanzibar Revolution of January 1964, the new revolutionary People's Republic of Zanzibar (PRZ) made Salim its first Ambassador to Cairo. After the demise of PRZ and the formation of the Union of Tanzania, Salim remained in Cairo, and then was sent to India and China. The three capitals in which he served were the hotbeds of the new Third World diplomatic offensive of the "New Emerging Forces", which was inspired by the doctrine of the "Bandung Spirit", which challenged every diplomatic initiative smacking of imperialism. Bandung, in Indonesia, hosted the first Summit of Afro-Asian leaders in 1955, which led the crusade against imperialism and colonialism.

China was his last country-position before he went to the UN. His many chats with China's consummate Prime Minister, Chou-en-Lai, the master diplomat, were probably the most rewarding in Salim's career. Chou arranged his meetings with Salim - mostly friendly, mostly long after midnight - when the Premier would be relaxed, temporarily freed from the cares of State affairs, and when he could talk extensively, covering all aspects of international affairs, without any inhibitions. It was undoubtedly a god-mine of experience for a young diplomat.

His positive contributions at the UN, where he was Tanzania's chief representative for ten years, and was also Chairman of the Special Decolonization Committee, President of the UN Security Council, and of the General Assembly, are the outcome of this unique contribution of a sound background and exposure to historic moments and personalities.

Before his appointment as the Secretary-General of OAU, Salim was Tanzania's deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence - positions he held after being Tanzania's Foreign Minister.

Both the OAU and Africa will no doubt benefit enormously from his vast experience and diplomatic dexterity●

Dear Ndugu Salim

Cameron Duodu writes an Open Letter to the new OAU Secretary-General

I should normally be congratulating you on your election as Secretary-General of the OAU. But until I get an insight into the motives that made you seek the office, I shall withhold my congratulations.

In case this seems odd to you, let me remind you that the OAU Secretary-Generalship has proved to be a dangerous job which tends to damage the future of those who hold it. So those who canvass for it may only be looking for a job to please their egos, or fill their pockets, and not necessarily to be of any service to the people of Africa.

But, of course, there must be exceptions - courageous and selfless people who see in service to Africa the pinnacle of achievement in life. I hope to class you amongst the latter - in due course - and that is why I am writing to let you know that your report card is under active consideration!

Courage in the job? Why? Well, the very first Secretary-General of the OAU, Diallo Telli, went back home to Guinea after his service at Addis Ababa, only to be starved to death in prison by the man who put him up for the job, the late Guinean President, Ahmed Sekou Toure.

Why did Sekou Toure kill Diallo Telli? Because he suspected that Telli was going to use the international prestige and contacts he had acquired as OAU Secretary-General to challenge Sekou Toure for the Presidency of Guinea. This seemed improbable. Knowing how ruthless Toure was, and how pervasive the informer system was in Guinean politics, would Diallo Telli have gone back to Guinea if he had such ambitions?

What is most reprehensible is that although Diallo Telli had served the African continent so well, speaking on its behalf to the international community and publicizing the OAU and its objectives, when he went home and fell into Sekou Toure's talons, the organization could not save him. As far as I know, no attempt was made by the other African Heads of State to bar Guinea from the meetings of the OAU until Toure released the former faithful servant of those same Heads of State.

I doubt whether they even formally discussed the matter, preferring, probably, to engage in the so-called "informal contacts" which so often lead to murder. I suspect, in fact, that the more such "informal discussion" and "contacts" took place, the more suspicious Sekou Toure became.

"Why are they pleading for him?" he would have wondered. "Probably he contacted them for support in his dastardly desire to overthrow me!" And the more his neurosis grew, the more determined he would be to administer the "Black diet" to Diallo Telli. So, poor Diallo Telli died, whilst Africa looked on completely helpless, either by design or by default.



Salim Ahmed Salim

Without being sentimental, though, one must ask: How many people did Diallo Telli himself save through his position as OAU Secretary-General when he was alive? Did he play the diplomacy game and steer away from "interfering" in the internal affairs of member-countries while human rights were being abused all over the place? Did he wish, as he starved slowly in Conakry without ever having a fair trial, that he had used his influence to set in motion some sort of machinery that could intervene when an African country treated its own citizens worse than the South Africans - whom every African country attacks - treat our oppressed Black brothers and sisters? We shall never know, because Diallo Telli is dead. But if we have imagination, we must try and penetrate his thoughts and let them guide those of us who are still alive.

Diallo Telli was murdered. What happened to his successor, Nzo Ekangaki of Cameroon? His problem was that he was accused of going beyond his powers as Secretary-General and attempting to appoint the multinational company, Lonrho, to become "oil adviser" to the OAU.

It probably was a brilliant move. Since many OAU countries were being crippled by huge oil bills in the early seventies, there was probably something to be said for approaching the issue on a Continental basis.

It stood to reason that if those who did not produce oil could make a joint appeal to the producers, they might benefit from economies of scale and save a few million dollars.

However, Ekangaki either did not carry out enough consultations before making public state-



Diallo Telli: the first OAU Secretary-General

ments about his project, or was advised against it but disregarded such advice. Anyway, he definitely overestimated his popularity with the Heads of State, and they very quickly booted him out with the full blessing of his own Camerounian government.

He left office in disgrace, with the stigma of suspected corruption attached to his name. Up to now, he has not made a full presentation of his case, probably because he still thinks it will be "undiplomatic" to do so.

William Eteki Mboumua, also of Cameroun, replaced Ekeganki. Incidentally, I have never personally understood why Cameroun was given this second chance. But the African Heads of State appear to know very little about one another's countries.

Anyway, William Eteki Mboumua does not appear to have suffered any mishap from his occupancy of the Secretary-Generalship. But not so Edem Kojo of Togo, who followed him. Edem Kojo has more or less suffered from the same Diallo Telli syndrome, although a milder form of it. He is still very much alive, but is regarded by President Eyadema as a potential rival, whose position has been strengthened by his tenure in Addis Ababa. If I am not wrong, he now operates from Paris, unwilling, or unable, to go back to Togo.

I have recounted these stories to show you, Ndugu Salim, that the OAU job is like a disease we used to fear as children - mumps. We used to sing about it like this: "Mumps - if you laugh, mumps can get you. If you don't laugh, mumps can still get you. So, why not laugh?"

Laugh? Well, figuratively speaking. What I am driving at is that you should evolve your own set of principles, which should form the basis of clearly defined objectives that you will aim to achieve in the job. In other words, do not go playing the usual, self-serving diplomatic footsie-tootsie jazz with the Heads of State in the hope that such "diplomacy" will save you if you happen to offend them. The fate of some of your predecessors shows that such "diplomacy" hardly helps in the end.

In my view, it would be nobler for you to make, as

one of your first objectives, an attempt to change the Secretariat so that it serves as a trigger to the conscience of the Continent, such as it is. The underlying principle of this objective should be that the OAU should evolve to serve the interests of the people of Africa, rather than those of the people who happen to be ruling them at any particular time.

I am afraid one is forced by history to make this uncomfortable distinction between the interests of African Heads of State and those of their subjects. For instance, even though the OAU has been in existence since 1963, there is not a single OAU treaty on the free movement of persons, or on intra-African trade. Is that in the interest of the travelling people of Africa? Africa's traders?

There is an OAU Charter of Human Rights. But look at what has been happening between the Senegalese and the Mauritians. These two countries have not hesitated to pick up each other's citizens and deport them at will, without recourse to any courts in case they believe they happen to be citizens of the country from which they are being deported! Their property is seized from them before they are deported, and there doesn't seem to be a chance in hell that they will see any of it ever again! Has the OAU investigated the loss of lives and laid blame where blame should be laid? Has it even deplored the barbarous acts meted by the two countries upon each other's citizens? No! Only "mediation" has been taking place. "Mediation" was in fact taking place when the two countries began to throw out each other's diplomats, in addition to the thousands of ordinary people they had thrown out already.

After diplomatic relations, probably war will be next. Just like Libya and Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger. Remember Rwanda and Burundi? In all of these cases, because the Heads of State are wary of "interfering" in the internal affairs of member-states, they wait for people to die first before they try "mediation".

Well, the dead and the maimed, the unjustly deported, those dispossessed of their property after years of toiling in a foreign environment, would, if asked, say to hell with interference in internal affairs. What about fairness? What about "traditional African hospitality?" What about the Charter of Human Rights and the principles it advocates, to which all the Heads of State have appended their signatures? What about freedom to enjoy life and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Freedom to own property and not be deprived of it unless through the due process of law?

I repeat: the time for private representations is past. The African people would like to be told in public that something is being done on their behalf, whenever there is a crisis that entails loss of life. For without public condemnation, there can be no deterrence, and that is a most important consideration in international relations.

The people of Africa are tired of being in a position when, before they know it, something has happened to them as a result of some silly action by politicians. They feel even more frustrated when they realize they cannot do anything about it. What they need is a champion, Ndugu Salim. A champion who knows the

rules, and is so concerned that he will make them work for the people rather than against them. Can you be that for them? You certainly have the credentials. Yes, Ndugu, you are just the man to be able to lead the Secretariat to evolve from its current low profile image.

Do not be intimidated. What is needed in Africa now is no longer so much emphasis on decolonization. We have won almost all our struggles against colonialists. Namibia is almost ours. South Africa will be next. So, let us turn our attention inwards.

We must demonstrate to ourselves and the world that we are mature enough to give to ourselves the freedom that we demand the racists should give to our brothers and sisters in Azania. It is too damning to be told by the sympathisers of the racists, "You guys have been governing yourselves over the past quarter of a century. What have you done with your freedom? Aren't your jails still full? Aren't your countries full of refugees from other African countries?"

But you ask: Suppose the Secretariat does evolve into a high profile body, as you suggest, where will it get its financing from? Have you forgotten about the perennial lack of funds that is caused by non-payment of dues?

Yes, I am aware that is one way the Heads of State

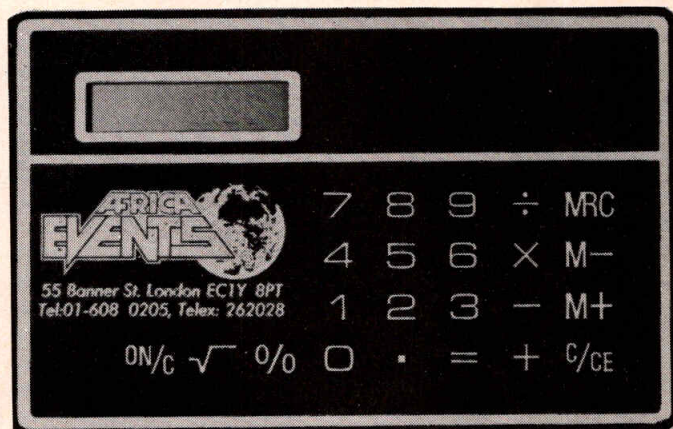
keep the Secretariat weak. But remember that the United Nations is similarly starved of funds most of the time. Yet the Secretary-General manages to lay down clear policies on many issues, and follow them. He can even finance controversial peace-keeping operations which some world powers oppose. It is all a matter of moral conviction. If the Secretary-General is convinced that he is helping humanity and he acts sincerely, he usually gets the backing of majority of the world community.

The UN Secretary-General, you see, has an excellent Public Relations outfit that publicizes the UN's financial problems, the thoughts of the Secretary-General, and the actions of UN bureaucrats. We in Africa, on the other hand, make a fetish of not "washing our dirty linen in public." Well, if you don't, there will be no pressure on those who default in payment of dues, for instance, to settle their arrears.

In short, Ndugu Salim, do not allow yourself to be weak. Otherwise, the very weakness which you fear to court, if you adopt a high profile, will come to undermine you by the back door! Certainly, Africa is ripe for the emergence of a hero, and you, my dear brother, more than most, have the qualifications to fit the bill. Do not let the African Continent down. Otherwise history will judge you very harshly indeed!



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