

Notes on lecture at the State  
University College, New Paltz  
on Wednesday, May 9, 1973.

TOPIC: "THE OAU, THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE  
LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN AFRICA."

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

Expression of thanks.

Highlight of the importance of the month of May for the  
liberation struggle in Africa (Africa Day).

The particular significance of May 25 marking the 10th  
Anniversary of the OAU.

2. THE ISSUES INVOLVED:

The struggle for human dignity and freedom.

The alternative - dehumanisation and perpetual bondage.

3. BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE SITUATION:

Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau  
Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)  
Namibia  
South Africa.

4. THE NATURE OF THE STRUGGLE:

Essentially armed struggle. Why?

The Lusaka Manifesto and the attitude of the Southern African  
racist and colonial regimes.

The sacrifices involved in such a struggle.

The decision of the Liberation Movements to fight on.

5. THE OAU CONTRIBUTION:

- (i) The Nkrumah dictum that African freedom is incomplete unless the whole continent is liberated.

Experiences of the constant threats against independent African States launched by the colonial and racist regimes e.g. the acts of aggression against Guinea, Tanzania, Zambia etc.

- (ii) The problems before the formation of the OAU.

The experience of the Casablanca & Monrovia Groups in relation to the Algerian war of liberation.

- (iii) The launching of the OAU in 1963.

Whatever its other deficiencies and shortcomings, its tremendous role in the liberation struggle is clearly evident.

The coordination committee for the liberation of Africa with headquarters in Dar es Salaam.

The role of the Committee in supporting and coordinating the liberation struggle (membership formerly 11, currently 17\* pursuant to decisions by Rabat Summit of 1972).

How the liberation struggle is financed and aided.

Bilateral support.

Special fund.

The OAU role in mobilising practical, moral, political and diplomatic support for the liberation movements.

6. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE 10 YEARS SINCE OAU FOUNDING:

The Accra conference of the liberation committee in January 1973 and the New Strategy: The essence and rationale behind the strategy - need for greater and more effective contribution by free Africa to the liberation struggle.

Making maximum use of our potential.

\* Composition of the Committee (1) Algeria, (2) Ethiopia, (3) Egypt, (4) Guinea, (5) Nigeria, (6) Senegal, (7) Somalia, (8) Uganda, (9) Tanzania, (10) Zaire, (11) Zambia, (12) Morocco, (13) Mauritania, (14) Congo, (15) Ghana, (16) Cameroon, (17) Kenya.

7. ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS:

- (i) The principle of equal rights and self determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter giving tremendous impetus to colonial peoples struggle.
- (ii) The growth of UN membership from formation in 1945 (51 with only 13 from Africa and Asia) to present 132 (overwhelming majority of whose addition from Afro-Asian block).  
The significance of the change to the universal struggle for the rights of peoples to self determination and independence. The change commenced in earnest in 1960 when 16 African States became members of the UN.
- (iii) The adoption of the Declaration (Res. 1514(XV) ) on December 14, 1960 with the proclamation on the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional termination of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations (30 non-self governing territories have attained independence since Declaration).
- (iv) 1961 - Establishment of Committee of 24 (originally Committee of 17).  
Outline role of the Committee.  
Other bodies dealing with liberation struggle in Africa include: Special Committee on Apartheid, UN Council for Namibia, Security Council, Human Rights Commission, Committees of the General Assembly.
- (v) Essentially the UN role has been that of supplementing the efforts of the liberation movements in Southern Africa.
- (vi) Mobilisation of world public opinion.
- (vii) Programmes for Scholarships for training of persons from Southern Africa: United Nations Educational & Training Programme.
- (viii) Among the important decisions taken recently by the UN in support of the liberation struggle in Africa, following should be highlighted:
  - (a) Recognition as from 1965 of the legitimacy of the struggle.

- (b) The dispatch by the Special Committee of 24 of a Mission to the liberated areas of Guinea Bissau in April 1972 and its results.
- (c) Observer status to the liberation movements in Fourth Committee and Committee of 24.
- (d) Assistance, however limited, by the Specialised Agencies to the liberation movements.

8. OBSTACLES TO THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE:

- (i) The consolidation of the unholy alliance of the Salisbury, Pretoria and Lisbon Axis.
- (ii) The support that this alliance gets from some of the Western Countries.
- (iii) This support is in dramatic contrast to the lip service declarations of supporting freedom. It takes the form of:
  - Economic, military and diplomatic support to the regimes particularly to Portugal and South Africa e.g. the continued supply of arms to South Africa by France, the massive economic support to Portugal - the Nixon/Caetano Agreement in the Azores.
- (iv) Violation of UN resolutions including decisions of the Council e.g. U.S. violation of Sanctions on Rhodesia by importation of Chrome.

9. TWO MAJOR EVENTS IN 1973 SO FAR:

On the minus side - Cabral's assassination - its implications and lessons to be drawn.

On the plus side - The UN/OAU Oslo Conference - April 9-14, 1973. Significance of the Conference.

The Oslo Programme.

The broadening of the United Front in support of the liberation struggle - in addition to the Scandinavian-Australis (New Zealand)

10. CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- (i) Explosive nature of the situation  
Danger of international conflagration with serious racial overtones.
- (ii) The need to support the liberation movements and to isolate the colonial and racist regimes.
- (iii) To the liberation movements - they have opted to pay the supreme sacrifice - their very lives for their freedom and dignity. At its forthcoming summit the OAU will have to make a thorough analysis and resolve in more concrete and dynamic way to support the struggle.
- (iv) Mobilisation of World public opinion.  
Such a force has already proved its effectiveness in the Vietnam war.
- (v) An expression of hope that Universities and students all over the world will play a leading role in this common struggle.