

OSCAR KAMBONA

interviewed by
FRENE GINWALA

Africa Congo & U.N.

GINWALA: Mr. Kambona, allegations have been made that a great deal of racialism has been displayed at this session of the United Nations. Do you agree? And why do the African delegations appear to be so bitter?

KAMBONA: I think it is better to put the whole thing in its full perspective. Allegations have been made, especially by those countries which conducted a rescue operation in order to rescue the hostages. They feel that if the white men who are in Africa are threatened, any country should have the right to go and kill more people in order to save a few. And the Africans feel that this is one form of racialism because if it is a question of saving life, then life—whether it is black or white—must be saved; it is not the saving of a few white lives and the killing of a very many blacks. Then there is also the question of the whole operation in the Congo. We believe that the landing of paratroopers by Belgium, using American bombers and other aircraft, was just a pretext for something else: a pretext, because before the landing of the paratroopers, no white men had been killed. Not even one. The United States and Belgium had asked Mr. Jomo Kenyatta, who is now President of Kenya, and who is Chairman of the *ad hoc* Commission of the Organisation of African Unity, to negotiate in that capacity between the two

contending rivals in the Congo in order to save the white hostages. But at the time they were asking Mr. Kenyatta to do this, they were already prepared to land the troops in Stanleyville. Therefore, to the Africans, it appears that this thing was intended, that it was planned—to give the white mercenaries in the Congo a cover in order to take Stanleyville. The African countries feel that this should not be allowed to stand as a precedent because once it is allowed to become a precedent, no African country will be safe.

GINWALA: Granting your point, Mr. Kambona, what would you have the United Nations do about the Congo?

KAMBONA: What the African countries are saying is that they would like all foreign governments which are not members of the Organisation of African Unity to keep their hands off. They don't want them to undermine the work which has been done by the Organisation of African Unity. We believe ourselves that if this was left to the O.A.U., an African solution would be found to the problem of the Congo.

GINWALA: What African solution can you envisage?

KAMBONA: Well, when we met at Addis Ababa—when the Ministers of Foreign Affairs from Africa met at Addis Ababa—they passed a resolution. One of its terms is, to me, very important. It is an appeal to all the contending factions in the Congo to cease fire. And, once we obtain a cease-fire, we would like to take all the Congolese leaders to a round-table conference so that the Congolese themselves should negotiate who should lead their government and who should be in that government. It is not for Tanzania or Kenya, or for the United States or Belgium for that matter, to find the leaders for the Congolese in the Congo.

GINWALA: When you say all the Congolese leaders, do you include in this the leaders of what the Belgians and Mr. Tshombe call the rebellious forces?

KAMBONA: Well, it is very difficult to find out who is a rebel in the Congo because Mr. Tshombe himself was once a rebel. And if we went into the Congo and simply found out who is not a rebel we would not solve the problem of the Congo. As you may know, the survival of the United Nations itself is in question at the moment, and who started it all? It was Mr. Tshombe himself. Therefore, I do not agree with Mr. Tshombe that the others will be the rebels. If we talk about rebels, if we talk about legalities, Mr. Tshombe himself should be tried, because he was once responsible for the murder of the Prime Minister of the Congo. But we do not want to look into the past, we want to look into the future. This is why we feel that all the Congolese leaders must come to a round table.

GINWALA: A conference of the type you suggest would be proposed by the O.A.U.?

KAMBONA: Yes. We feel that it should be organised by the O.A.U.

GINWALA: And what if Mr. Tshombe, as he has said, would not attend such a conference. What do you then suggest?

KAMBONA: Personally, I do not think that Mr. Tshombe will refuse to come to the conference. If he does not come to the conference, it means that his masters have asked him not to attend the conference. But I am sure now that the masters see the wisdom of leaving the whole thing to the O.A.U. Therefore, I believe personally that the masters would ask Mr. Tshombe to attend the conference.

GINWALA: One more general question about the United Nations, Mr. Kambona. The liberation of Africa is regarded as one of the prime stages in the development of most countries. What rôle do you think the United Nations should play in this liberation?

KAMBONA: Well, as you may remember, the African countries, with the support of all the peace-loving countries in the world, passed a resolution which really, to us, was one of the most historic declarations of the United Nations—about granting independence to the whole of

Africa. We feel that the United Nations must put pressure of the remaining colonial powers, which are Portugal, now, and South Africa, to abide by the resolution which was passed in 1960 by the United Nations. They cannot become members of the United Nations and then flout the decisions of the United Nations.

GINWALA: Do you think the United Nations has a vital rôle to play in the liberation?

KAMBONA: Very, very vital indeed. This is one reason why the African and the Afro-Asian countries at New York are working very hard to see that the U.N. survives.

GINWALA: You, personally: are you pleased at the increase in the membership of the Security Council and the Economic Commission?

KAMBONA: Well, definitely. I was a party to those countries who were demanding this increase, because we feel that when the U.N. was set up, Africa was completely under the colonial powers and it

was the colonial powers who had organised the membership of these organs. Now, as Africa has about one-third of the membership of the U.N., we feel that Africa must be represented in all the organs of the United Nations if that organisation is going to be effective.

GINWALA: Taking your point further, do you feel that Africa, then, should have one-third of the seats in the U.N. organs?

KAMBONA: Not necessarily, no. But what we feel is that Africa must be adequately represented. I feel that this can be arranged by gentlemen's agreement as they did in the past.

GINWALA: You wouldn't hazard any suggestions as to the sort of African representation?

KAMBONA: Well, we have put some suggestions and these suggestions are being considered by all the members of the U.N. at present. It is very important, we feel, that Africa and Asia must be represented in all the organs of the U.N.

Apartheid and the Novel

Desperation and stoicism in a situation which frustrates

MARTIN STANILAND

LIONEL TRILLING POINTED OUT in his essay "Manners, Morals, and the Novel" in *The Liberal Imagination* that the development of the novel has been stimulated by an observation of the difference in manners and attitudes which is generated by a difference in social status and pretensions. In short, "the novel is born in response to snobbery" and its "characteristic work . . . is to record the illusion that snobbery generates and to try to penetrate to the truth which, as the novel assumes, lies hidden beneath all false appearances". In the sense that he seeks to

distinguish fundamental values and to illuminate the basis of all others in social pretension and in the relative unreality which such pretension embodies, the novelist has a moral purpose: he is "an agent of the moral imagination".

Moreover, in the sense that the novelist is concerned in his moral perception with social variety and mobility, it is natural that he should be attracted to those situations where variety is richest and mobility most marked. Hence, in West African writing the scrambling diversity of Lagos society and the dilemma of the Europeanised African have provided the themes of most novelists. In South Africa the determination of attitudes and manners by wealth alone would be stark enough; but the situation is further dramatised by an all-embracing system of status based upon race. South African novelists are not simply concerned with snobbery and the social implications of wealth: they are concerned further with the obstacle to sympathy and the anaesthetic to conscience that the colour-bar introduces. Elsewhere in Africa the comedy of manners may be appropriate: men achieve dignity in so far as they realise themselves and

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