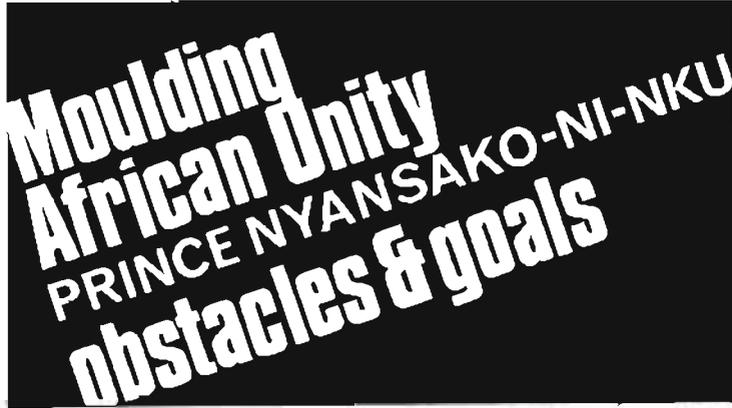


ionary dog.

At this stage and perhaps for a long time to come, no one can pretend to know all the answers to the very great problems involved in the struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa. Their magnitude calls for humility on the part of all concerned. The mutually destructive attacks that are going on betray lack of appreciation of

the stupendous tasks that lie ahead.

The OAU's Liberation Committee, is uniquely placed to influence the course of events. It could rise to the occasion by at once enforcing a moratorium and setting up machinery for dialogue among the various liberation organisations. It could imbue the liberation movement with a dynamic sense of purpose and direction.



"... He that gathereth not with me scattereth."

—Christ

In the first place what do we mean by African Unity? The term is not far from being ambiguous today. It had been used to advocate a continental organic Union. The civilian government of Ghana was among others the chief exponent of this form. Hence the now suspended republican constitution of Ghana states that Ghana is prepared at any time to surrender her sovereignty, in whole or in part in the interest of a Union of African States. But others like the civil Federal Government of Nigeria seemed opposed to this view and used the term to refer to a loose association or confederation of African States. But I am going to treat the obstacles of African Union having these two forms in view. The obstacles of African Unity in my view are constituted under two major groups. There are the external forces and the internal factors. And I will begin with the former.

1. The External Factors,

I sit on a man's back, choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means—except by getting off his back.

—Tolstoy

Since it was the colonialists who held the blackmen under by keeping them divided, it is a very natural course that the major obstacle of African Unity should be Africa's former colonial masters. It is very interesting to note how the big powers are divided among themselves but how unified they become when they face (black) Africans. Also note the attitude of these same powers in the United Nations. Always when an African issue comes across the table and one of them is affected she with one other is likely to abstain in order to block the matter.

These big powers or more specifically Europe and America are still exercising a great influence in Africa. Africa is the arena of the Cold War and this has its devastating effects on her. Julius Nyerere

of Tanzania has beautifully summarised it as "the second scramble". He rightly notes that Africa is successfully emerging from the phase of the First Scramble for Africa and that she is entering a new phase The Second Scramble. As in the First Scamble he points, tribes were torn from each other in order to make the division of Africa easier, in the Second Scramble for Africa one nation is being divided against another so as to make the control of Africa easier by making her weak and divided against herself. So it seems that the aim of these big powers is to keep Africa forever balkanised so that the idea of African Unity should ever remain remote. And we remember the admonition that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Neo-colonialism is one of the most destructive elements of African Unity. Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia defines it as "the attempt made by great powers to undermine the sovereignty of an African State by the use of subtle economic and political tools to replace the physical domination of the old colonialists..." As long as the diabolic interests of the colonial nations remain undivorced in Africa many African countries would remain client-states through which the embers of division would be fanned. It is time African States should begin to question their membership in those associations where their former colonial masters remain heads. Many African States are still bound with apron strings to either France, Britain or America. Hence some former French African colonies are in many cases closely linked to France as independent states than they were as dependent territories. So that through France they have all gained associate membership in the European Common Market, (Fred G. Burke, 'Africa's Quest for Order'). Britain continues to treat her former colonies in many respects with spite and contempt.

The external economic assistance to Africa also requires examination. In many quarters external assistance to Africa is regarded as "aid". But how much of this bulk of aid comes without strings attached? Sometimes money is loaned to African States in the guise of aid at very high interest rates that on the long run the aid is transformed to a burden from which the recipient cannot escape. The only resort becomes to buy their goods at highly imposed prices. The effect is that Africa continues to be under economic slavery. And under such circumstances Africa remains unfree to determine her destiny. Africa must look before she leaps!

Let me now turn to the delicate issue of Africa's foreign policy. To this African states have repeatedly offered non-alignment and positive neutralism. This policy is supposed to represent freedom of decision and choice on international issues. It means that Africa must exercise her influence over both sides namely, East and West, in order to achieve universal peace. But to what extent has Africa remained on these principles? Some have succumbed to one of these power blocks or the other. No wonder Julius Nyerere has said Africa is in a mess. He said that the Organisation of African Unity has demonstrated that Britain and France had more power (in Africa) than the whole Africa put together.

There are two examples to prove this. When a call was made that African states which had any relationship with France should sever them due to her frequent bomb tests in the Sahara how many responded? Only one—Nigeria. And recently in 1966 when the OAU

called on her members to break off diplomatic links with Britain over the Rhodesian issue how many complied? Not more than ten out of the great lot. This only helps to promote misunderstanding among African states. Now let me turn to the internal factors.

2. The Internal Factors

... if Africa is to be united, the African States . . . must display understanding and tolerance for one another. -Ahmadou Ahidjo

Let me begin with the obstacle created by the complexity of the composition of the African Continent. Africa today is composed of three groups each with distinct culture, religion and racial traits. there are the indigenous black Africans, Africans of Asian origin and Africans of European origin. Akin to this is the problem of communication and human understanding, due to the existence of various linguistic groups in Africa. (In his book 'My Plan For Africa' Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe has treated the problem at large.) The problem now lies in blending all these groups to a harmonious organism. At the same time the nations north of the Sahara are more interested in their Arab Unity than African Unity. I call evidence from their chief spokesman, Nasser of Egypt. Hear him: "By military solidarity and by voluntary co-operation in economics, culture, and foreign policy, the Arab nations can grow strong in their own right".

Some of our African leaders themselves are also a towering pillar blocking the attainment of African Unity. They do so by the animosity, the antagonism and the distrust that their behaviour arouses in their colleagues. Some of them also obstruct unity by their reluctance to surrender sovereignty. When the Charter establishing African Unity and Solidarity was signed in May 1963 in Addis Ababa a resolution was taken that all existing groups and associations should be dissolved in order to facilitate African unity. But since then what has happened? Almost thirteen of those who signed that Charter have been dethroned by force. On the contrary to the resolution more groups have come into being. The next year 1964 the Afro-Malagasy Common Organisation was formed. Others including the Sahara River States, the Central African Customs and Economic Union have been founded. Some argue that these sub-groupings are meant to pave the way for Continental Unity. But I have my doubts because already contemporary events indicate that those involved in these associations are more interested in their regional groupings than All-African Unity. I leave the rest of the judgement to you but I wish to echo the words of Jesus again that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Yes some African leaders have very little regard for their colleagues and African affairs as a whole. In 1967 Kamuzu

Banda of Malawi gave it a straight left in the face in favour of association with Apartheid South Africa.

At the inauguration of the OAU the African Development Bank was also formed with a view to create the basis of an African Common Market. But instead of rendering it support zonal Economic Communities are springing up. The East African Economic Community was launched with great pomp and that of West Africa is also on the way.

And if African Unity is to be a reality there must first exist a peaceful atmosphere among African States themselves. But we realise the hard fact that relationship between some African Countries is or has fallen to zero. Ethiopia and Kenya had border disputes with Somalia until recently. Between Malawi and Tanzania there is a wide gulf. The Gabon is not on good terms with Congo (Brazzaville), neither is Chad with the Sudan. Algeria is against the monarchy of Morocco. And just recently it was announced that Uganda and the Sudan have broken off diplomatic ties . . . How then can we talk and hope for Unity in such a muddle?.. It is a sad thing that even among the Liberation Movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) there are warring factions. In this light there would not exist any basis for Unity even after independence has been achieved for the tensions would still be there to threaten it.

"Charity begins at home" goes the saying. Today many African States are plagued with serious internal crises. In many countries the bullet has replaced the ballot in determining government; in some cases political opponents evaporate to no trace; the press has been muzzled and peoples' rights have been suppressed with all cruelty. This creates unrest and distrust.

In conclusion I would like to say that African Unity needs more than eloquent speakers—such speakers who would speak so convincingly, make such lofty promises and yet in the end do nothing. African Unity cannot be achieved if the respective member states of the OAU and their leaders are not willing to make it the undying purpose of their noblest creed; if they are not ready to sacrifice in greater proportions; if individual African countries are prepared to pledge their whole allegiance to African affairs rather than London, Paris, Washington, Moscow or Peking. The obstacles of African Unity would remain there if African States cannot make their choices, set their priorities, and determine their true interests.

Not merely to recount what has been
but to share in moulding what should be.

—Bernard Fonlon

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EZEKIEL MPHARILELE

Guest Editor

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