
The Organization of African Unity in regard to the Congo

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Enough has happened in 1964 to make that year one of great division, of the disintegration of the OAU because of the Congo crisis and the Security Council debate on US-Belgian aggression in Stanleyville. The members of the Council of the OAU, met in New York to condemn this aggression, split: only the efforts of the Secretary-General Diallo Telli and of his second-in-command, the Algerian Sahnun, succeeded in obtaining, at the time of voting, twenty votes against ten abstentions and four absences. Thus the OAU passed a hard test.

However, the organization still faces danger in the future. This was clearly shown in Nouakchott at the end of the meeting of the French-speaking former members of the UAM (now transformed into the Joint African and Malagasy Organization). Since then, the future of the OAU has become more and more problematical.

Therefore, we must ask this question: "Why was the OAU founded?" To materialize African aspirations for complete liberation, unity and progress? Or to serve the interest of neocolonialism which, using the organization as a shield, hoped to consolidate its existing positions and extend the rule of the monopolies and the exploitation of African countries?

It is on this question that the test of the Congo can be considered as the basic factor in clarifying this problem, by making the OAU appear as it really is: as an organization serving the African people or as one serving imperialism.

The question was raised from the moment that the Organization Charter was proclaimed in May 1963, since article III of the documents stipulates the principles which the members of the Organization pledge themselves "to respect scrupulously":

- "non-interference in the internal affairs of states";
- "condemnation, without reservation, of political assassination and the subversive activities of neighboring states or of any other states."

These principles are evidently so open to interpretation as to be able to even contradict the objectives of the Charter as expressly stated in article II: "the liquidation of colonialism in all its forms in Africa."

Now then, if we knew that at the moment of the OAU's creation the member states had different degrees of independence, we also knew that the vanguard role played in the Organization by progressive states, such as the UAR, Algeria, Guinea, Ghana, Mali and Tanganyika, would not allow these principles to be interpreted in favor of the desires of imperialism.

The popular organizations in power in these countries, and with them the national liberation movements, understand in effect that the struggle against imperialism is a long battle that will be continued even under peaceful coexistence with states artificially created by neocolonialism in the African continent. It has been, therefore, necessary to coordinate this long-range strategic line with the policies to be followed within the OAU which includes countries still in the process of liberating themselves from political and/or economic dependence.

As in the case of all revolutions, the national liberation movements on the African continent do not always follow a uniform line: they are compelled to use means and methods which range from pacifism to violence, according to the enemy's plans and techniques. This is easier to do when we know the characteristics and peculiarities of the enemy which has taken on new aspects in the formally independent countries.

The first deep analysis of neocolonialism was made on occasion of the African People's Conference held in Cairo in March 1961, that is, nearly two years before the proclamation of the OAU Charter.

On the other hand, from the beginning, the organization has shown a certain vacillation in its attitude to neocolonial activities which have tried to hide behind the principles of the organization itself, either by compelling the organization to recognize artificial situations born of imperialist design, a recognition requested in the name of "the principles of non-interference in internal affairs," or by using the organization as an instrument to stifle any revolutionary change arising as the product of popular explosion, in the name of "the condemnation of political assassination and subversive activities."

Even in the struggle that must be waged against traditional colonialism, the National Liberation Committee, called the Committee of Nine, a child of the OAU, has come up against obstacles of different types created by some of its members in the course of fulfilling its duties; for example, delay of the struggle of the national liberation movements; the imposition on the movements of the condition of an unattainable unity in countries with many organizations, unattainable because of the natural differences of these organizations, some being genuinely revolutionary and others being prefabricated and guided from abroad.

Thus, the fear, ours as well of the revolutionary movements, that the organization will become an instrument more amenable to reactionary currents than to progressive leadership. The contradiction appeared during the Second Conference held in Cairo in June 1964 when the time came for electing the secretary-general of the organization; however, the delegates from Guinea and Algeria were chosen

by the conference to occupy the important posts of the Secretariat.

The tension existing between both trends was manifested once more when the question of the Congo was brought up days after Tshombe's return to power. The currents of national liberation chalked up a victory when they prevented the admission of Tshombe. Nevertheless, let us listen to Tsiranana, president of the Republic of Madagascar, as he defended his friend:

"...Every country is free to choose its system of government and its leaders. It was Congo-Leopoldville, and it alone, that made Tshombe, a political exile, return. It was Congo-Leopoldville, and it alone, that placed him at the head of government. And here we are, foreigners, rejecting the man whom the people have chosen. We are committing an error. We are acting against African unity.

"...We have all deplored the events in the Congo. We have all deplored the death of our colleague Lumumba. We have all deplored the death of Congolese from the Right and Left. But, does this give us the right to intervene in the affairs of the Congo? Therefore, my dear friends, examine your own hearts. Isn't there any opposition?

"...What we are doing is not exactly helping to consolidate the OAU. Here is a place that is empty because of our own fault, because we want to interfere in the affairs of the Congo.

"And if this continues, the OAU will not last long. This empty place could be your own tomorrow. And finally, there will be no more OAU."

Thus began the test of the OAU. The problem of the Congo and the imperialist defiance, headed by Tshombe in particular, has been converted into a test-case to show the world the true face of this organization. Because of this, there has been a series of meetings in the last few months and a real flow of exchange between the African liberation movement and the elements moved by imperialist interests.

Imperialist machinations nearly succeeded for the first time when the organization met in Addis Ababa in September 1964 to study the question of the Congo. Tshombe managed to enter the meeting hall and occupy a place along with the other members. It was expected that the

leaders of the Congolese revolutionary movement would participate on the same level of equality, but they could express their views only in the press conferences held outside of the meeting.

Today we can reveal a factor that has not been made public before, a factor that has led to this meeting. We are referring to the Belgian Foreign Relations Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak, who called into his office the accredited ambassadors of the African countries in Brussels, the day after Tshombe's return to power and insisted that a meeting of the OAU Council take place as soon as possible to examine the new situation. We understand now that his aim was to guarantee the new government of Leopoldville, established by an imperialist intrigue; or more accurately, to obtain a decision in favor of sending African forces to replace US and European mercenaries who were combating the Congolese Revolution.

Colonialism had to put on its most arrogant face in its attempt to utilize the Council meeting in Addis Ababa for its own purpose: to detain the course of the OAU. Reaction was unanimous and firm during the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations held in Cairo one month after the world's solemn condemnation of Moise Tshombe.

Colonialism, fearing to see itself unmasked in other countries besides the Congo, has adopted as its own the arguments of the pseudologists, as expressed by the President of the Republic of Madagascar:

- "Why does Tshombe monopolize this unjust opinion?"
- "Is it because his situation is less constitutional than that of other members?"
- "Is he the only one who has benefited from arms or military aid provided by non-African countries?"
- "Does not opposition—violent or pacific—exist in other places besides the Congo?"

We can find such defense-attorney questions literally in the speeches of Adlai Stevenson, US delegate to the UN Security Council, during the debate on the Congo crisis at the end of last December.

More explicitly, this line of argumentation means: if the progressive forces of Africa have admitted the facts

as consummated and accept peaceful coexistence within the OAU in regard to the situations created by neocolonialism, why, then, don't they accept, in the name of the same realistic outlook, the situation in the Congo?

The truth is that the Tshombe problem has put Africa's revolutionary leaders—in or out of power—before a problem of conscience requiring them to re-evaluate their attitudes towards the neocolonial regimes.

We can find the real definition of neocolonialism by examining the resolutions of the Third Conference of African Peoples held in Cairo in March 1961 and those adopted by the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Council in April of the same year.

We see that imperialism had to resort to extremes when the recognition of a colony's independence became inevitable. Excluding the independence consists in the establishment of regimes which benefit a group of nationals who inherit colonial authority and its privileges in return for preserving colonial interests: political, economic, military, technical and cultural, either partially or completely, according to the degree of revolutionary consciousness attained by the country in question. This is done by making an abstraction of the formal manner in which the transfer of power is realized, whether it be installation by means of the authority of new governments, or by constitutional forms, prefabricating nominal political parties or by organizing fraudulent elections.

Up to what point is coexistence possible within the OAU between completely independent government and neocolonial structures, without affecting the development of a revolutionary movement on the African continent?

We find a frank answer to this question in the speech of the Algerian President, Ahmed Ben Bella, in the Second Congress of the Organization:

"...One of the conditions for the survival of our Organization is that we accept each other as we are. We have obtained independence under different conditions.

"...Algeria understands that other countries have their own problems, that they may choose other roads.

We have paid dearly for the lesson of learning that other countries also have problems and that we cannot ignore them. We believe that above and beyond the diversity of regimes there should be a single constant factor to govern our actions: that of always remaining united in everything and against everything, since we are being menaced from the outside. It is my duty to tell you that just like Algeria, other states should also accept us as we are, with different systems.

"...We should understand that our enemy is the same one: imperialism and neocolonialism, and that this enemy will attack us with whatever point of the Charter that he esteems most vulnerable."

While we are convinced of the inevitability of change in neocolonial structures—with which we accept to coexist—as part of the process of attaining complete independence, and while we are also convinced of the efficacy of revolutionary action now taking place—whether it be peaceful or violent in different countries—we are no less convinced that the limit of this coexistence is Tshombe himself, since Tshombe, as President Ben Bella has said, "is the museum, the reincarnation of all the ingredients of neocolonialism." There is no doubt that the slightest coexistence with him means the pure and simple betrayal of the African liberation movement which is struggling against traditional colonialism and all the forms of neocolonialism.

Before Tshombe, the Adoula government had already belonged to the family of neocolonial phenomena. Adoula, nevertheless, was forced not to oppose—and even to aid—the national liberation government of Angola, then struggling against Portuguese rule. However, since Tshombe has returned to power, Portuguese paratroopers have attacked the Angolese resistance camp in Congolese territory itself, without any protests coming from the Leopoldville government, on the contrary, it probably instigated and contributed to this aggression. Therefore, coexistence with the Leopoldville regime is impossible.

It is important to emphasize some truths that will refute the false arguments used by the imperialists to defend the cause of their agent Tshombe. These are truths

which justify us in condemning Tshombe, whose imposition on the Congolese people can be considered as the application of the colonialist experience of Katanga to all the Congo:

1) Tshombe's return to power was a well-prepared operation, in which the Congolese people did not play any role at all. The machinations of his return were prepared six months before, during the course of a secret meeting held in a US military base in Spain with the participation of two special CIA agents and delegates from the Union Miniere de Katanga.

2) In order to prepare Tshombe's return, a press campaign was launched, after the meeting took place, in the Belgian weekly *Pourquoi Pas*. The campaign's aim was to paint Tshombe as innocent of the assassination of the martyr Lumumba though his guilt was universally accepted, without any doubt. Different circles were contacted, particularly progressive groups with the object of foisting the colonialist plan under the pretext of a national reconciliation. During this time, the special services of US, British, French and Belgian colonialists had been mobilized to assure the success of the operation.

3) It would be sheer deception to compare the technical and military aid that the really sovereign African countries obtain from equal trade and international cooperation with the situation based on an army manufactured entirely by the foreign intelligence services after 1960, with the aid of an African general from the command of UN forces in the Congo. The situation has grown worse since the return of Tshombe with the use of mercenary adventurers and US military airplanes piloted by Cuban traitors under the orders of the CIA.

4) It is paradoxical to put a popular explosion against the usurpers of power in Leopoldville on the same level with a foreign-inspired counter-revolutionary action against a genuinely national regime.

It was, therefore, the duty of the OAU Conference of the non-aligned nations, the duty of all the anti-imperialist forces, to show their vigilance and end the insolent defiance

of colonialism in the Congo and to oust Tshombe from power, together with his acolytes, Munongo and Nendaka, to mention only two. It is also its duty, according to the declarations of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, to support the revolutionary movement which is struggling not only against Tshombe's power, but also against those behind him: the colonial interests as represented in the different countries supplying the mercenaries and their war materials.

This colonialist coalition shows that the Congolese struggle is the struggle of the entire African continent. This is evident because of the strategic situation of this country in the middle of the continent, standing like an immense fortress against all the colonial-fascist regimes in the vicinity.

Colonialism is gripped in the claws of fear because of the national liberation movements' determination to side with the Congolese revolution, especially after the fall of that other neocolonialist bulwark, the Sudan, where colonialism had great hopes of upsetting the revolutionary process. It is no secret that the negative —not to say treacherous— attitude of the Abboud government when it prohibited all aid, even medical, to the Gizenga government in Stanleyville, was one of the causes of the latter's defeat.

It is no accident that the US-Belgian aggression against Stanleyville took place less than one month after the fall of Abboud, who was placed in Khartoum by the imperialists in 1958.

This aggression marks a milestone in the history of the OAU, which is facing a decisive test. Imperialist intervention can no longer find justification in the pretext of stopping Communist infiltration. The struggle that is going on in the Congo is clearly a conflict between the coalition of international imperialism, on one hand, and the solidarity of the African revolutionary forces on the other.

The conflict is likewise a reason for the national liberation movements to understand the formidable stimulus of this act of solidarity of the revolutionary forces which were paralyzed before because they were sometimes pushed into the cold war. It was painful, in this respect, to read in the organs of the Belgian communist newspapers, about

the polemics and defamatory accusations among the leaders of the Congolose revolution, precisely when these leaders needed efficacious aid and unity.

This conflict, finally, will serve to reveal each African state, especially those countries still on the road to complete liberation, in its true light. According to the attitude they adopt, the revolutionary forces will be able to determine to what degree they can coexist with it...