

## THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY AND THE PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSALITY OF MEMBERSHIP

(Commentary on *The Organisation of African Unity and the Freedom Struggle* A Document presented by the Government of Tanzania at the O.A.U. Summit Conference at Addis Ababa, June 1971)

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For a long time Tanzania has been pursuing a dual strategy within the Organisation of African Unity. On the one hand, she has been working for the building of a revolutionary wing of the OAU to deal with the problem of the liberation of Southern Africa, and on the other, she has been trying to coexist in the OAU with members who are anything but revolutionary. Tanzania has the headquarters of the OAU Liberation Committee as well as of many liberation movements in her capital; she has provided the services of one of her nationals as the Administrative Secretary of the Committee, has been regular in paying her dues to the Liberation Fund, was one of the major creators of the radical Mulungushi Club of which Kaunda's Zambia, and Obote's Uganda were the other partners, and has consistently taken the vanguard position among the radicals in Africa. And yet for a long time Tanzania resisted the idea of challenging the universality of the OAU's membership. In the building of a revolutionary club, it is necessary sometimes to expurgate those who would hold back the forces of revolution. But it has been difficult to expel from the OAU those states which have not been loyal to some of its fundamental principles, particularly the principles of anti-racialism and anti-colonialism which are enshrined in its Charter. It was difficult to expurgate the OAU primarily because it is the only visible expression of pan-African Unity. To break the OAU would be to provide one more piece of evidence to the outside world that Africa was incapable of united action. Therefore, whatever the domestic policies of African states and whatever their diplomatic relations

with the outside world, nobody in the OAU questioned the continued presence of any particular member state in the Organisation.

Sometimes, however, there have been private reservations expressed against the continued presence in the OAU of 'neo-colonial' dependent regimes; states such as Malawi, Lesotho and Ivory Coast have been mentioned in this connection. But hitherto there has been no *official* support from any country for removing such states from the OAU. The only official action that the Organisation itself has taken against Malawi and other states that have diplomatic relations with Portugal and the regimes of Pretoria and Salisbury is to prevent them from getting access to documents concerning the activities of the liberation movements lest these should fall into enemy hands.<sup>1</sup> The only other state that once came under some doubt was the Republic of Congo (Kinshasa) during Moise Tshombe's regime. But even here there was never any question of removing the Congo from the OAU, only of debarring Tshombe from representing the Congo. The continental universality of OAU membership was thus an unchallenged principle of the Organisation. Only South Africa, because she is the very negation of all that the OAU stands for, is barred from it. For the rest of Africa, it has been a sufficient condition for membership that the state concerned is within the continent of Africa, is legally independent, has a reasonably defined territory and population, and has an African Government in effective control of the territory.

Therefore it was for the first time in the OAU's history of the last eight years, that the principle of the universality of its membership was attacked at the 1971 Summit. Why Tanzania decided to raise the issue at this time, and not earlier, can perhaps be explained by two factors influencing Tanzania's calculations. The first concerns the entire dialogue issue with South Africa that had built up an enormous momentum ever since Ivory Coast's Houphouet Boigny came out in favour of it.<sup>2</sup> Before that, the only adherents to the dialogue strategy had been states like Malawi, Lesotho, and Madagascar, which have been in the minority in the OAU and therefore regarded as deviants who could not pose a major threat to the essential strategy of confrontation with South Africa which the majority of states in the Organisation had accepted. However, Houphouet Boigny's vigorous espousal of the dialogue strategy had opened up the possibility that many more states in Africa, particularly the francophone states and Ghana, might join in. Indeed, it did look as though the time had come when the OAU might have to face squarely the prospect of a major division between those who favoured the dialogue stra-

1. See OAU Resolution, CM/Res. 175-XII, para 2, Addis Ababa, February 1969.

2. The first declaration of support from the Ivory Coast for the dialogue strategy came in November 1970. But the most dramatic expression of it came at the famous press conference that Houphouet Boigny called at Abidjan on 28 April 1971, which was described by John Warrall of the *Rand Daily Mail* as 'the most extraordinary news conference I have ever attended.' Hundreds of foreign ambassadors, cabinet ministers and some 200 overseas journalists were invited to hear Boigny make his 'peace offensive' towards South Africa. There was talk at the time of a secret collusion between Boigny and South Africa's Vorster, for immediately after Boigny's diplomatic debut on the South African question came the dramatic revelation by Vorster of his correspondence with Kaunda of Zambia in an attempt to discredit him.

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tegy and those who were still in favour of the confrontation strategy. This was a formidable challenge to Nyerere's efforts to create a revolutionary society out of the Organisation of African Unity. The choice as he saw it probably was between staying within an Organisation that was sharply divided on a matter of fundamental principle, getting out of the OAU himself, or seeking to throw out those members of the Organisation which contradicted the basic objectives of the OAU with regard to colonialism. Tanzania decided on the third course.

The second factor that provoked Tanzania to challenge the principle of the Universality of membership of the OAU was the Uganda issue. Obote, an ideological ally of Nyerere and a member of the Mulungushi Club, was ousted by a coup on 25 January 1971. The regime which took power then declared itself in favour of Britain selling arms to South Africa, an issue against which Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, among others, had been fighting vigorously only a few days before at the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore. Nyerere refused to compromise with the new regime in Uganda headed by General Idi Amin, and decided to continue to regard Obote as the President of the country. He, among others, later prevented the seating of the Amin Delegation at the 16th Session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU in February. By June, however, it was difficult to deny the Amin delegation a seat at the Summit, although Uganda chose not to avail itself of the opportunity. Nonetheless, Tanzania decided that she must question the continued membership of Uganda in the OAU on the grounds that the new regime had changed its policy with regards to the British sale of arms to South Africa.

Tanzania's challenge is contained in a document, in which Tanzania argues that there should be a change in the established practice regarding membership of the Organisation of African Unity. So far the OAU has been acting as if once a state is accepted as a member it acquires an automatic right to remain a member for ever, regardless of its policies. Tanzania argues that a certain additional qualification for membership must be considered: that members should be in opposition to South African racialism and Portuguese colonialism.

Two interrelated arguments are presented in defence of this additional qualification for membership. First, that anti-colonialism and anti-racialism are among the reasons for the very existence of the OAU. The OAU, the document argues, '... should concern itself with the question of whether a government advocates cooperation with South African racialism and Portuguese colonialism. It must care about this, or it is meaningless.' Second, the present practice of the OAU with regard to membership leads to the invidious situation that whereas '... those sons of Africa who are leading their people in a bitter struggle against colonialism and racialism are only supplicants to the OAU,' a person who might well be a tool of South African policy '... has an automatic right to sit in the OAU Councils, provided only that his country is independent, and that he can demonstrate physical control over it.' In theory, therefore, South Africa could engineer successful coups in a number of African states and put into power puppet regimes which would then advocate a policy of co-

operation with South Africa in the Organisation of African Unity. Such a situation would totally undermine the very purpose of the Organisation. If a puppet of South Africa should be allowed to be a member of the OAU, why then should South Africa be excluded? 'Is there any logic or any morality in accepting a known tool of South Africa, but excluding the wielder of the tool?'

The document, however, goes beyond the proposition that members who accept the doctrine of compromise with South Africa should be thrown out of the Organisation. It proposes in addition that the OAU, '... should be willing, and able, to oppose, within each of the separate member states, forces which advocate such treachery to Africa, and to support forces which assist the fight against racialism and colonialism.' It is not enough, in other words, simply to throw 'treacherous' states out of the OAU, for such states would continue to remain South Africa's proteges and collaborate with her to undermine the OAU. To be really effective as an instrument of combat against colonialism and racialism, the OAU should be able to fight against elements, even if these are within independent African states, that compromise with these two evils in Africa.

A number of objections could be raised against the above suggestions by Tanzania for a change in the OAU's practice regarding its membership. First, if the OAU or its members were to concern themselves with the internal affairs of other member states, would that not be a violation of the sovereignty of states which forms one of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the OAU?<sup>3</sup> Is it not the prerogative of each member state of the Organisation to work out its own domestic and foreign policy? Would not the OAU begin to crumble if members were to take it upon themselves to direct the formulation of each other's foreign policies?

A second objection that could be raised against the Tanzanian proposal for a modification of the universality principle is that its acceptance could easily open a Pandora's box. What would prevent other states from advocating further reasons for throwing members out of the OAU? If Tanzania's case were accepted today for the expulsion of a member who advocated cooperation with South Africa and Portugal, then tomorrow some other member state might propose that any state that is not socialist must be expelled, or that any state that has abandoned the policy of non-alignment, which member states are expected to adhere to under article III para. 7 of the Charter must be expelled. There are other reservations that could be made about Tanzania's suggestion, but let us first see how the document attempts to answer the above two objections.

To the first objection, based on the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, the document has two answers. One is that there are certain matters which concern the whole of Africa, on which individual member states are obliged to formulate their foreign policy only on the basis of consultation with other member states; that the question of relationship with, for example, South Africa is such an issue. Therefore, in intervening in a par-

3. See Article III, para 3 of the OAU Charter.



particular African country's foreign policy on the South African issue, one is not intervening in its internal affairs but in pan-African affairs. The second answer is based on a distinction made by the document between what individual states can do and what the OAU can do as an organisation. Thus, independent African states may not have the right to intervene in the affairs of another sovereign African state, even presumably on the question of its relations with South Africa, but the OAU as an organisation can collectively intervene in the affairs of such a state. The document thus argues for the doctrine of *collective intervention* by the OAU on pan-African matters, whereas the doctrine of *individual non-intervention* will still continue to apply. It might be argued, in defence of Tanzania, that the OAU Charter does technically support such a distinction. Article II prohibits member states, not the Organisation itself, from interfering in the internal affairs of other states.

As for the second objection that an acceptance of Tanzania's suggestion will open a Pandora's box in the future which could lead member states of the OAU to try to get each other out of the Organisation on one pretext or another, the document does not have a convincing rebuttal. Its main defence is that the issue of racialism and colonialism is so fundamental to the existence of the OAU that it would be impossible to conceive of the Organisation without a strict loyalty of the members on this issue. All other issues appear from the Tanzanian point of view to be of secondary importance. An ideological commitment of a member state to either capitalism or socialism, for example, cannot be a reason for expelling it from the OAU. 'Whether a member state is socialist or capitalist, or anything in between, is, and should be, irrelevant to the OAU.'

This nonetheless, is not an adequate answer. Why should the demands of a revolution in Africa stop at a common declaration of loyalty to anti-colonialism and anti-racialism only? After all, it could be argued, the root of the Southern Africa problem lies not just within Africa, but in the support that the regime in Southern Africa gets from capitalist states in the West. Therefore, if the OAU is serious about its objective of liberating Africa, it must begin to liberate the continent not only from colonial and racial powers but also from capitalism. Unless this is done, it could be argued, there can be no chance of eliminating the hold of the capitalist western world on Southern Africa and therefore of eliminating racialism and colonialism from that part of the continent.

The point is, of course, that while Tanzania now may not regard it as necessary that members should go beyond a common declaration in support of anti-racialism and anti-colonialism, it is quite conceivable that in future some other state, or perhaps even Tanzania, might argue in favour of a common ideological creed for the whole continent, and an expulsion from the Organisation of those members which do not accept the creed. Thus, although it is fair to argue at the moment that the struggle against colonial and racial forces in Southern Africa forms a more fundamental issue for the Organisation of African Unity than any other, yet it cannot be denied that once members of the OAU were to be expelled on the basis of their disloyalty to one cause,

they could also in future be expelled on the basis of their disloyalty to some other cause. Once opened, the Pandora's box may be difficult to close.

There are some more serious flaws in the suggestion by Tanzania that those members of the OAU which advocate cooperation with South Africa and Portugal must have their membership reconsidered. A serious practical problem is that of deciding how a particular state can be said to have violated the basic precept against racialism and colonialism. Indeed, the document itself provides an escape valve for those member states of the OAU which disagree with the policy of apartheid, but which are prepared to make a tactical and temporary compromise with the existence of the South African power on grounds of expediency; for the document argues at one point:

In urging that there should be a change in current practice on this matter, the Tanzanian Government is not referring to arguments about how the fight should be waged—whether by violent or non-violent action, or a combination of both. Questions of *how* can be a matter for discussion within the OAU. But members must not allow the development of a situation where there could be a discussion about *whether* to fight those evils, for the fighting of them was, and is a major purpose of the OAU.

By introducing this allowance permitting differences of opinion on matters of tactics and the means of struggle against colonialism, the Tanzania Government has put itself in a quandary. At no stage have states such as Malawi and the Ivory Coast, presumably the states against whom the new practice advocated by Tanzania might be applied, declared themselves in favour of perpetuating colonialism and racialism in South Africa. All they have argued is that they have tactical differences with radical states like Tanzania and Zambia on how the problem might be tackled. They disagree with the policy of violent confrontation on the grounds that violence is not likely to change the Southern African situation, since South Africa is simply too powerful to combat. They argue, furthermore, that the best way to change the situation might well be to have a dialogue with South Africa in the hope that this might reduce the perverse inflexibility of South Africa and Portugal, which is based, they argue, on a certain amount of fear of what might happen to them if power were to pass into the hands of the majority of Africans, and partly on a misunderstanding of the ability of Africans to rule themselves.<sup>4</sup> One may or may not agree with the arguments presented by Malawi or the Ivory Coast. Nonetheless, in terms of the Tanzania document, it could legitimately be argued that the differences of opinion that exist between Malawi and the Ivory Coast on the one hand and Tanzania and Zambia on the other are differences in the method of achieving a common goal rather than on the objective itself.

Indeed, it may be difficult to throw out of the OAU not only members like Malawi and the Ivory Coast, but also regimes that are put into power by South African subversion. Such regimes, after all, could always verbally denounce apartheid. It is not impossible to combine a rhetorical denunciation of apartheid with an acceptance of it in practice. By what criteria are we to judge whether an African country has in fact compromised with South Africa in principle?

4. See Y. Tandon and T. Shaw, 'Malawi and Tanzania: Contrasting Attitudes Towards Southern Africa', Universities Social Science Conference, Makerere, January 1969.



One answer is that since verbal statements may not be a sufficient indication of the posture of a member state towards South Africa, its position must be assessed on the basis of its behaviour. The document thus argues that the OAU:

... should question the membership of any government which, for example advocates the sale of arms to South Africa, or succeeds to power in a manner which undermines the struggle against the sale of arms to South Africa. And it means that each member government should be willing to be questioned about any continuing commercial or other relationships which its nation has with these enemies of Africa.

But what if a cooperative posture towards South Africa is forced by circumstances, such as the physical nearness to, or economic dependence on South Africa? The Tanzanian government is, of course, not unaware of this problem:

In practice, of course, it is obvious that absolute one hundred percent adherence to such resolutions is in some few cases inconsistent with the national survival of certain member states. Neither Zambia, nor Botswana, nor Swaziland could at present survive if they imposed a boycott on all relations with the countries of Southern Africa.

But if such an allowance should be made for those countries which are compelled by their circumstances to compromise with Southern Africa, then would there really remain any country which could legitimately be thrown out of the OAU on grounds of collaborating with the Southern African regimes? The test, the document argues, is whether such a country '... can give a convincing explanation of what it is doing and why it is the maximum, and how it plans to reduce its relationship still further in the future'. In other words, the difference between Zambia and Botswana on the one hand and Malawi and the Ivory Coast on the other is that whereas the first two collaborate with South Africa to the extent that it is impossible not to, and are prepared, if possible, to reduce such relations, the latter two not only fail to give a 'convincing explanation' as to why they should collaborate with South Africa, but actually go on to embrace the racist and colonialist regimes and (as in the case of Malawi) to extend diplomatic relations with South Africa when this was clearly avoidable. Malawi, by reason of his argument, is therefore a fit candidate for expulsion from the OAU whereas Zambia is not—not because Zambia has any less commercial relationship with South Africa than Malawi, but because Malawi deliberately encourages such a relationship.

The above is a convincing argument. Nonetheless, the imperative of national economic survival is only one possible 'explanation' for maintaining a cooperative relationship with South Africa. There could be other explanations for such behaviour. It could be argued, as indeed Kamuzu Banda does, that certain actions which ostensibly appear to be cooperative towards South Africa are in fact in the long run a subtle means of undermining the racist basis of the regime. Once again, one may or may not agree with the assumptions contained in this explanation. One may argue that Banda is wrong in assuming that a conciliatory relationship with South Africa will change the regime. Nonetheless, the question is whether Malawi should not be allowed to test the validity of her strategy? It is at least an arguable point between a person who thinks he can change his opponent by means of words, and the person

who thinks that in some circumstances only blows, not words, can alter the character of the opponent. Yet, once it is agreed that it is a difference of opinion on the means used, and that the contenders agree on the basic objective, in this case the objective of eliminating the practice of racialism in South Africa, it then becomes difficult to argue that the difference of opinion on the means adopted should become the basis for expelling one of them from the Club.

There is, finally, yet one more hornet's nest that the Tanzania government has raised in this document. This is contained in the statement:

At a time when all Commonwealth African states, except Malawi and Lesotho, were engaged in a desperate struggle to prevent Britain from joining France in this activity, (namely, the sale of arms to South Africa) the leader of a coup in Uganda announced a change of policy on this matter, to the great joy of the British Government. Is that not a matter for consideration in relation to Uganda's continued membership of the OAU? Tanzania is arguing that it should be.

The trouble with this suggestion is that it can open up yet another kind of Pandora's box with possibly calamitous consequences for Africa, for it could introduce the dangerous practice of questioning the credentials of every regime that newly assumes power in Africa. Logically, this could apply not only to regimes that come to power through violent means, that is by means of a coup, but, since democratically elected regimes can also reverse the policies of their predecessors, even those regimes that come to power by legitimate constitutional means. It is quite possible, for example, for power to change hands in Zambia by means of elections which bring in a regime that believes in opening a dialogue with South Africa, unless one were prepared to argue, and to provide the evidence to show, that such a regime was propelled into power by the machinations of South Africa herself. Given the fluidity of the African political scene, one must expect very frequent changes in the regimes of many states in Africa, and also frequent changes in the policies that they adopt. If every change of policy with regard to South Africa should become a matter for consideration by the Organisation of African Unity, then one obvious consequence of this would be to introduce endless debates in the OAU in a mutual soul-searching exercise, and the annual Summit meeting could easily degenerate into a purgatory. A constant search for saints and sinners in a club of sovereign states the size of the OAU could easily become a full-time job for everybody concerned, to the detriment of the rest of the activities of the Organisation.

There is one final argument against the practice of introducing a more restrictionist membership concept of the OAU. This is the doubt one has about the wisdom of throwing the sinner out in the cold, as against the wisdom of letting him stay within the club in the hope that he may be brought to confess his sins and perhaps to a repentance and possible conversion. Throwing a country like Malawi out of the OAU does not necessarily help the OAU or Malawi. It could only probably drive Malawi further into the hands of South Africa.

There may well be good arguments for creating a tightly organised group of revolutionary states within Africa which would undertake the task of liberating the countries which are now under the control of racist or



colonialist governments. But such a revolutionary club, preferably outside the OAU rather than inside, must be prepared occasionally to get into conflict, sometimes violent, with other independent African states which do not share their revolutionary zeal. The closest parallel would be the present situation in the Middle East which is a perpetual battleground of internecine violent conflicts among the Arabs themselves.

Perhaps Africa is moving in a similar direction anyway with respect to the Southern African problem, so that in a few years from now states in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa may begin to fight against each other, as the Arabs are doing in the Middle East, rather than against the common enemy. A decision to implement Tanzania's proposal outlined in the document might help to bring such a day nearer. Whether this is inevitable, and therefore should be expedited on the grounds that history progresses dialectically, is a debatable issue. But prudence would dictate that we first fully understand the implications of altering the universalist membership principle of the OAU in favour of the restrictionist one before plunging into it. There may be wisdom in avoiding internecine quarrels among African states, until at least a large segment of Africa is ripe for revolution, which it is not yet.

## TANZANIAN UJAMAA AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

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This article attempts to identify Tanzanian *Ujamaa* with Scientific Socialism in certain ideological essentials. It is an exercise in theory, bearing in mind that historically the theory of socialism preceded the establishment of socialism as a system in any part of the globe. Scientific Socialism (or Marxism, if you like) is an explicit world-view which contemplates every conceivable phenomenon from protein to literature, in terms of a methodology applicable to nature and society. Therefore, the comparison with Tanzanian *Ujamaa* is not completely analogous, since the latter is neither explicit nor all-embracing. However, the same kind of reservation could probably be expressed for any ideological variant other than Scientific Socialism. One must, in most cases, seek ideology in human actions, combined to greater or lesser extent with statements of principle or policy. The Tanzanian political process has produced over the last decade several noteworthy declarations of principle and sufficient actions which give meaning to the said declarations. The word '*Ujamaa*' has already been popularised in two contexts: firstly, as referring to the extended family of African communalism; secondly, with reference to the creation of agricultural collectives known as *Ujamaa* villages. The relation between the two is that the *Ujamaa* villages seek to recapture the principles of joint production, egalitarian distribution and the universal obligation to work which were found within African communalism. In the present discussion the word '*Ujamaa*' incorporates both of these meanings, and includes also the implications of several policy documents and public plans.

A necessary piece of ground-clearing must be performed by advancing the negative proposition that Tanzanian *Ujamaa* is not 'African Socialism'. Such a disclaimer may appear curious and even presumptuous in view of the fact that in 1962 Mwalimu Nyerere referred to *Ujamaa* as 'the basis of African Socialism'. But, there are several reasons for keeping the two concepts widely apart. When 'African Socialism' was in vogue early in the 1960s, it comprised a variety of interpretations ranging from a wish to see a socialist society in Africa to a desire to maintain the status quo of neo-colonialism.

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