

PAN-AFRICANISM IN WORLD POLITICS

By

G. N. Uzoigwe

Mississippi State University, Starkville

gnu@ra.msstate.edu

INTRODUCTION

In May 1988 the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.), an offspring of the Pan-African Movement, celebrated its silver Jubilee with mixed feelings, indicating only modest success in dealing with Africa's continental problems and conspicuous impotence in dealing with the external affairs of the continent. And just recently the O.A.U. was renamed the African Union (A.U.), a new continental body modeled apparently on the European Union (E.U.). This change will, most certainly, impact the Pan-African ideology that has a long historical pedigree. Will this new body be better equipped than its predecessor in solving Africa's continental and external problems? Only time will tell. I see very few signs of optimism, however. The aim of this paper is not to speculate about the future but to review the dilemma of Pan-Africanism and its role in African liberation in the context of world politics in an historical perspective.

The Berlin West Africa Conference and the New Pan-Africanism

One of the important results of the Berlin West Conference is the modern notion

of Pan-Africanism.ⁱ The concept of Africa as a geographical entity was not, of course, a creation of late 19th century European imperialism. Africa's existence as a continental entity was well known by ancient, medieval, and modern writers. What was not clear, at any rate, before the so-called Age of Discovery in Europe, was its limits. And what the Berlin Conference and consequent furious scrambling for African lands and souls did was to persuade a few prospective black intellectuals of the African diaspora to come together and ponder about the future of the black race. These intellectuals were convinced that historical movements in the preceding three centuries were working toward the extinction of that race.

African Americans, in particular, having survived the unspeakable atrocities of the slave trade and slavery and, having experienced the comparatively delectable euphoria of self-assertion following the Civil War,ⁱⁱ were back, as it were, to square one after a decade or so. What followed was a generation of resolute white government and truculent racism which were intended to keep the blacks in their places. These acts were accomplished through “apartheid-type” legislation which sailed through the state legislatures in spite of the so-called emancipation proclamation that, in part, led to the Civil War.ⁱⁱⁱ At a time, therefore, that African Americans were undergoing a new type of slavery without the name at the hand of European elements, and Afro-Caribbeans were choking under the ruthless stranglehold of European colonialism, Africans in their cradle land were being killed, conquered and ruled by other groups of Europeans in the lofty name of “Civilization, Commerce, and Christianity.”

That, at any rate, was how some African-Caribbean and African-American Diaspora interpreted the purposive historical movement of the second half of the 19th

century that appeared to them headed toward the extinction of African peoples. It is understandable, therefore, why these diasporan Africans were concerned about the future of their race. The Berlin West Africa Conference (November 1884–February 1885) that ended up working out the broad modalities for the European conquest, partition, and occupation of Africa^{iv} confirmed their worst fears. These fears may not have been purely altruistic. Shackled by white state power in the Americas and faced with the reality that their homeland was being systematically appropriated at the same time by the same white elements, peoples of the African diaspora naturally saw themselves trapped and, like Jonathan Swift, destined “to die in a range like a poisoned rat in a hole.” However, unlike that fatalistic Irishman with the gift of the pen, they were no fatalists. They decided to do something about the danger facing their race. The result was the first **Pan-African Conference** called in London in 1900. The conference’s organizer was a London-based West Indian lawyer called Sylvester Williams.^v This conference marks not only the beginning of the modern history of Pan-Africanism as Immanuel Geis rightly points out, but it also marks the modern history of African liberation. Unlike the secondary resistance movements within the African continent itself, however, Pan-Africanism’s theatre of operation was the international arena. After World War I, the Pan-African idea caught on among African diasporan intellectuals and revolutionaries all over the world. The conference idea soon evolved into a series of Pan-African Congresses that met periodically in response to international developments that impacted the future of African peoples. Thus, the first Pan-African **Congress** met in Paris in 1919 to present African and black concerns to the peace makers at the French capital. These self-appointed representatives of Africa were refused a hearing. Between 1919 and 1974

a total of six Pan-African Congresses have been held in response to international situations. Their achievements and short-comings have been competently analyzed in several studies.^{vi} Sandwiched between these Congresses were the First Conference of Independent African States held in Accra, Ghana, in December, 1958; and the Heads of African States and Governments Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in May 1963 at which the Organization of African Unity was born.

Definition of Terms

For this review and analysis to make sense, a working definition of terms is absolutely necessary. Let me, therefore, attempt a definition of African, Pan-Africanism, and World Politics.

Prima facie, one would have thought that an African is so distinctive a personality that he or she hardly needs defining. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is perhaps much easier to define a European, for example, than to define an African. There are, broadly, three conceptions of Africa. First, there are those who conceive Africa purely in terms of long-standing historical and geographical reality. According to this thinking Africa is not racially, linguistically, or culturally exclusive. An African, therefore, according to this concept, is one who by accident of history and the reality of geography is wedded to the African continent. A leading advocate of this concept was Kwame Nkrumah. Secondly, there are those who see Africa as essentially a geographical fiction. Their position has been well stated by Melville Herskovits thus: "It is [Africa] thought of as a separate entity and regarded as a unit to the degree that the map is invested with an authority imposed on it by the map makers."^{vii} This unashamedly

ahistorical view to which, surprisingly, Ali Mazrui in his more youthful and zestful years bestowed some credulity,^{viii} means simply that those who inhabit the African continent have little in common except the tyranny of geography. Viewed historically, such a conception of Africa is incorrect. Africa is a true continent, much more so than Europe or Asia. And it was not created by Herskovits' "map makers" but by natural volcanic activities and palaeo-climatic perturbations millions of years ago. Exponents of Herskovits' view are comfortable with such concepts as "Tropical Africa," or "Sub-Saharan Africa," or "Black Africa," or "Arab Africa." All of the above are really a round about ways of saying that an African is someone who is physically black. Pressed, of course, to draw a racial boundary that makes sense between "Sub-Saharan Africa" or the other Africa (which, by implication, is not really Africa!) or between "Tropical Africa" and the other Africa which suffers from the same incoherence, exponents of this concept become studiously non-committal. Their dilemma is clear: A Nigerian is black even if he is a fair-skinned Fulani with sharp features and he is conveniently classified as a "Sub-Saharan" or "Black" or "Tropical" African; a Libyan may be decidedly black in all aspects and he is classified as belonging to the other Africa that is not really Africa! What of an African from Cape Town? Is he a tropical African too? Bernard Lewis' ingenious device of extending his "Arab" Africa steadily southward has already grabbed Somalia, Sudan, Mauritania, and to some extent, Niger and Chad. Will he also grab Ethiopia and Nigeria? It is astonishing that many African scholars have, willy nilly, decided to brook this second partition of Africa under whatever guise. The argument which Lewis has also advanced with respect to both Turks^{ix} and Arabs,^x namely, that an Arab or a Turk is someone who simply thinks himself to be so has been used by Arabic-

speaking Africans to think of themselves simply as Arabs and not as Africans. Thus, a Nigerian Muslim or a Tanzanian Muslim may, if he chooses, decide to be an Arab, a European or an American! The reality is that, tyranny of geography or not, the Arabic-speaking African cannot eat his cake and at the same time have it! Thus, Gamel Abdel Nasser's famous words, "We ourselves [meaning Arabs] are in Africa" and, by implication, not of Africa,^{xi} was emphatically countered by Nkrumah's equally famous words: "We are all Africans."^{xii} To compound the dilemma of our second school of thought, in my view, and to strengthen their position, it would seem, in their view, is the conviction of the black nationalist as well as that of the ordinary black African in-the-street that an African is someone who is decidedly black in appearance. It is a dilemma because while the latter would logically accept a black Libyan as an African by virtue of his color, the former could not logically do the same. The third conception of Africa sees Africa as expanding beyond the boundaries of continental Africa to encompass the African Diaspora all over the world. These are the Pan-Negroists among whom the late Marcus Garvey was a great champion.^{xiii} The obvious dilemma of this school which was conveniently ignored was clearly exposed by the Charter of the Organization of African Unity^{xiv} which conceived Africa in the context of those who inhabit the African continent. For the purposes of our analysis, therefore, an African is someone who inhabits the African continent or is descended from immigrants from Africa or to Africa and has no other home but Africa.

The above analysis is crucial if the concept of Pan-Africanism, notorious for its indefinability, is to make sense. Ali Mazrui has delineated five dimensions of Pan-Africanism – "Sub-Saharan" (black Africa!); "trans-Saharan" (Arab Africa); "trans-

Atlantic” (African Diaspora in the Americas); “West Hemispheric” (descendants of enslaved Africans in the Western hemisphere); and “global” which, he says, “brings together all these centres of black pressure in the world, and adds the new black enclaves in Britain, France and other European countries, which have come partly from the Caribbean and partly from the African continent itself.”^{xv}

What Mazrui does not say is what his diffuse classification of Pan-Africanism actually has in common. Surely, it is not black solidarity because his “trans-Saharan” Pan-Africanists do not conceive themselves as black and value Arab solidarity more than African, let alone black, solidarity. The “trans-Atlantic” Pan-Africanists are essentially Pan-Negroists for whom the continental and political conception of Pan-Africanism pose great problems. And except for black solidarity the “West Hemispheric” and the “global” Pan-Africanists do not have very much in common. Worried by Mazrui’s classification, Kwame Nantamba writes: “The problem inherent in Mazrui’s (1977) micro analysis of Pan-Africanism is that it perpetuates the European divide-and-conquer maneuver; it not only deleted the vital revolutionary variable in the struggle but, more important, it also disintegrates the Pan-African Movement.”^{xvi} For Pan-Africanism to play a meaningful role in world politics especially in the context of African liberation, the need to define Pan-Africanism was long felt. Garvey’s ingenious attempt to equate Pan-Negroism with Pan-Africanism had a brief span of success until it waned under the reality of world politics. The more politically oriented Pan-Africanism typified by George Padmore^{xvii} and W.E.B. DuBois^{xviii} clearly achieved more success because it took into account the reality of world affairs. But even so, it could not dispense with Pan-Negroism with its cultural evocation. It was left to the O.A.U. Charter to deal with the difficulty of

marrying the political concept of Pan-Africanism to its cultural and racial content. It failed woefully to do so. And when it could not handle the dichotomy, it quietly jettisoned the African diaspora and clung on to the political and territorial concept of Pan-Africanism that is not racially and culturally exclusive. An appreciation of the difficulty faced by African leaders may be gleaned from this statement by Nnamdi Azikiwe in his

The Future of Pan-Africanism:

When we speak of Pan-Africanism, what do we exactly mean? . . . To some people, Pan-Africanism denotes the search for an African personality. To others, it implies negritude. Whilst to many it connotes a situation which finds the whole continent of Africa free from the shackles of foreign domination with its leaders free to plan for the orderly progress and welfare of its inhabitants . . . unless we accept a broad definition of terms, there can be no worthy future of Pan-Africanism. That being the case, I would like to speak of the people of Africa in general terms to include all the races inhabiting that continent and embracing all the linguistic and cultural groups who are domiciled therein . . .

. . . It would be useless to define “Pan-Africanism” exclusively in racial or linguistic terms, since the obvious solution would be parochial.^{xix}

I define Pan-Africanism, therefore, as essentially a political movement initiated by peoples of African descent in the Americas, and later taken over by continental Africans, which aims to liberate all Africans and people of African descent from the shackles of political, economic, cultural, and intellectual domination.

By world politics I refer particularly to those developments in international affairs which originated outside of the African continent but which had, and some have continued to have, repercussions for Africa. These include colonialism, Marxism, political and economic neo-colonialism, the Cold War, and post-Cold War geopolitical imperatives.

Pan-Africanism in World Politics: The Colonial Period

Just as the Berlin West Africa conference and the consequent conquest of Africa inspired the modern concept of Pan-Africanism, their most fundamental result was the formalization of European colonial rule in Africa. The early Pan-Africanists, led by W.E.B. DuBois, championed the black and African cause under the new dispensation. Side by side with the DuBois movement was a parallel movement dedicated to a similar cause led by the flamboyant Marcus Garvey, the so-called “Black Moses.” The ill-feeling that existed between the two leaders made it impossible for the Pan-African movement to exert maximum impact on world politics.

While it may be argued that both DuBois and Garvey sought black and African solidarity in their fight against racist oppression of blacks and for colonial amelioration, their methods differed considerably. Garvey formed his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and dreamed dreams of leading diasporan blacks in the Americas back to Africa. He also founded the Black Star Line Shipping Company which would expatriate willing blacks to Africa. The UNIA established branches throughout the Americas and parts of colonized Africa where oppressed blacks readily identified with the calls for racial solidarity. Accused and convicted of mail fraud in connection with this company, Garvey was confined to the Atlantic penitentiary on February 8, 1925. With his confinement his movement gradually lost momentum and declined.^{xx}

DuBois’s Pan-African movement fared no better in spite of the incarceration of his foe and rival. The boom that followed the end of World War I was short-lived. The subsequent depression in global economic activity was the major movement in international affairs during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Such ideas as Pan-

Africanism, however noble and desirable, took a back seat. Black liberation suffered a setback. The rise of Communism and Fascism posed for the West more serious dangers than the self-righteous vituperations of urbane, but aggrieved, blacks of the African Diaspora in the West. Benignly ignored by both the white leadership and the black masses, Pan-Africanism experienced lean times. After the 1927 Congress the movement did not meet again until the 1945 Manchester Congress. The growing force of Communism, the rise of Hitler and of Nazism, and the Second World War dominated international affairs in the 1930s and 1940s. In the face of these momentous developments, Pan-Africanism practically disintegrated as a force in world politics.

The end of the war in 1945 revived its fortunes. Just as the early Pan-Africanists had met in Paris in 1919 to take advantage, albeit unsuccessfully, of the peace conference, the later Pan-Africanists decided to meet, under new leadership, not at Potsdam, but at Manchester in England. What distinguished the Manchester Congress from the earlier Congresses were its radical posture, the rise of a new leadership influenced by the socialist ideas of George Padmore and Nkrumah, the open and formal conversion of the venerable DuBois to the Marxist cause, and the domination of the congress movement for the first time by continental African intellectuals, radicals, and workers. This dominating African presence in a Pan-African movement was a turning point in the movement's history. Henceforth, the black intellectuals of the African Diaspora, sensing a fresh wind of change in African liberation, decided to flow with what was developing into an irresistible historical current. The brain behind the Manchester Congress and the intellectual leader of a rejuvenated Pan-African movement, Padmore turned his attention away from the Americas and Europe to Africa. Pan-Africanism was

well on its way to coming home, so to speak. And the leaders of the African Diaspora in the West were soon to find themselves as peripheral observers of a great movement that they founded and nurtured through difficult times.

Throughout the colonial period, Pan-Africanism was operating from an extremely weak position. It had no permanent territorial base. It was supported by no government. The colonial governments in the Caribbean and in Africa were openly hostile to it. Successive American administrations hardly paid any attention to it. Nor did European governments. It did, however, receive some ideological support from a few advanced European radicals and liberals. But this support did not amount to much. Torn by ideological dissensions as typified by the DuBois-Garvey controversy; the DuBois-Padmore controversy; the differences between the black radicals and the black moderates; and always short of funds, it is surprising that the movement survived the colonial period at all. It survived because the white governments that dominated international affairs did not perceive it as much of a threat. It was not, indeed, until 1945 that the movement's leaders dared to expose their radical teeth. For the most part, Pan-Africanism, in this period, was a moderate movement led by black intellectuals nurtured in the accepted tradition of Western dissent. The black masses in the West, and in Africa, either never heard of it or seemingly did not understand what it was all about if ever they knew of its existence. It was essentially an elitist movement. That was why its impact on international affairs at this time was, at best, marginal. Had the message of the Pan-Africanists been able to rouse the black masses from passivism to activism, just as African nationalism and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States were to do later on, the impact of the movement in world politics would have been substantial.

Pan-Africanism and World Politics Since Independence

I noted that one of the aims of the Pan-African movement was the liberation of Africa from colonial rule. Ghana's achievement of independence in 1957 was an important milestone in the long journey from colonialism to independence. It is interesting to note that the independence of Egypt (1952) and of the Sudan (1956), for example, did not seem to have received equal importance in the eyes of the Pan-Africanists. This was partly because these countries emphasized their Arab connection rather than their African connection and partly because the black equation was still central to the ideals of Pan-Africanism.

Ghana's independence, therefore, marks a major turning-point in the history of Pan-Africanism both in terms of the redefinition of the movement and in terms of its international dimension. Ghana provided the movement with a territorial base. Padmore moved to Accra to underscore this point. Henceforth, "Pan-Africanism moved," as Vincent Thompson puts it, "from the realm of idealism and romanticism to that of practical politics."^{xxi} He continues:

Liberation movements began to challenge the dependent states of the African continent, and this challenge was expressed both nationally and internationally . . . [And], for the first time, with hopes of colonial liquidation raised, Africans began to address themselves to the real implications of unity. The goal of Pan-Africanism, namely, the crystallization of a United States of Africa, became a more serious preoccupation than it had been.^{xxii}

Arising from this preoccupation Kwame Nkrumah summoned the First Conference of independent African States in Accra in April 1958. All the eight independent African states in 1958 attended this conference. Of these only Ghana (host),

Ethiopia, and Liberia are black states; the rest—the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria), Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Sudan—are Arabic-speaking states and largely non-black. Significantly missing were representatives of the African Diaspora in the West. This was the first concrete evidence that the cultural and social dimensions of Pan-Africanism have given way to the larger political aim of continental unity. At last, the world began to take serious notice of the movement. A united Africa—the goal of Pan-Africanism—surely would be a major force in world politics! Predictably, the Western countries began to work against the realization of such a goal. They began to orchestrate the propaganda, couched in hard-headed analysis, that the goal of African unity was an euphoric, noble dream that could not be realized. “Arab Africa,” it was stressed, had little in common with “Sub-Saharan Africa”; on the contrary, it was argued—and it is still argued—it has a lot in common with the “Middle East” and even with Southern Europe. Mischievously, but to the delight of those North Africans who love to be regarded as white, the appellation of “white Africans” began to assume a consistent currency in Western writings in the description of them. The ideological cleavage between the African states was also emphasized. And not to be outdone by the West, the Communist bloc began to lend support to those states that professed to be socialist and radical. Thus, Africa was “partitioned” into two blocs—the Capitalist (“moderate”) and the socialist (“radical”); and into “Sub-Saharan Africa” and “Arab Africa.” At last, Pan-Africanism had received the international attention that it so desperately sought, but could not receive, in the colonial period. But its success was achieved at a terrible cost—the sacrifice of an idealistic unity for the practical demands of *real politik*. Africa has been drawn into the Cold War.^{xxiii}

Whatever the April conference may have been, it was certainly not representative either of black Africans or of blacks in general. Racial purists among Pan-Africanists would not even regard the Accra meeting as a Pan-African affair. Thus, Nkrumah summoned the First All-African People's Conference to meet in Accra in December 1958. This conference differed from the April variety in that the attainment of statehood was not a qualification for participation in it. It was as a continuation of the Manchester Congress. Indeed, the participants toyed with the idea—later abandoned—of regarding it as the sixth Pan-African Congress. It was agreed that the December meeting should mark a new era in the Pan-African movement.^{xxiv} Among the stated aims of this conference were: “To accelerate the liberation of Africa from Imperialism and Colonialism;” “To mobilize world opinion against the denial of political rights and fundamental human rights to Africans;” and “To develop the feeling of one community among the peoples of Africa with the object of enhancing the emergence of a United States of Africa.”^{xxv}

In January 1960, the Second All African People's Conference held in Tunis restated the ideals of the Accra Conference. However, the Tunis conference emphasized the dangers of “neo-colonialism;” the fear of the “balkanisation” of Africa as a result of foreign interference; and the projecting of an “African Personality” in international affairs. It also called for the “mobilization of World opinion in support of African liberation.”^{xxvi} The two conferences had important repercussions continentally and internationally. Within the continent, they encouraged nationalist movements and gave impetus to the liberation of Africa. This, itself, had implications for Africa's international relations. And by setting up the All-African People's Congress Secretariat in Accra and the Africa Bureau, Accra, the post-1958 African leadership created a

propaganda base for disseminating Pan-African ideas both continentally and internationally.

The impending Congo independence crisis posed the first major international problem for Pan-Africanism in the new era. Unable to persuade the Congolese nationalists to settle their problems peacefully, the Addis Ababa Conference of Independent African states and representatives from seven dependent African countries which met in early 1960, professed weakly their disinclination to interfere “in the domestic affairs of other states.” In June the government of the newly independent state of the Congo (Leopoldville) collapsed. African leaders looked helplessly on. The United Nations, nevertheless, did the Independent African states the honor of inviting them to supply the first batch of the peace-keeping force in the Congo. But this proved to be an assignment beyond their capacity. For some two years, the Congo crisis degenerated into anarchy in spite of the U.N. presence. The African states, disorganized and confused, contented themselves by thundering implacable condemnation of both the U.N. and Western “Imperialists” and their lackeys. Such a sentiment had been expressed in their meetings in Cairo (March 1960) and now at Casablanca (January 1961).^{xxvii}

Earlier, a meeting of the independent African States, summoned by Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, had met in Leopoldville (25-31 August, 1960). But the delegates ended up handing over responsibility for the Congo to the U.N. and appealed to the leaders of the West and East to keep the Cold War out of Africa. In the midst of the Congo crisis, the newly independent French-speaking African states decided to form the so-called “moderate” and pro-French African bloc known as the “Brazzaville Group.” The emergence of this group, said to be under the thumb of France, deepened African

disunity. And Pan-Africanism suffered a major setback. Harassed by the West, and let down by the impotent African leaders, Lumumba formally appealed to the Russians for help. And the Cold War had formally been introduced to Africa. Pan-Africanism was in utter disarray. Lumumba's desperate move was to lead directly to his death at the hands of the West in January 1961. African states were powerless to save his life.^{xxviii}

In the same month a group of African Heads of State met at Casablanca to consider the Congo crisis. Represented at this conference, among others, were Morocco, Mali, Guinea, Algeria, and Libya. Thus was born the so-called Casablanca Group of "radical" African states who were implacably opposed to the Brazzaville "moderates." The Third All African People's Conference which met in Cairo in March, 1961 is noteworthy for Nasser's truculent denunciation of imperialists and their African stooges.^{xxix} The radical statements of the Casablanca Group apparently frightened such opponents of a United African states concept as Prime Ministers Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria^{xxx} and Milton Margai of Sierra Leone.^{xxxi} It was, in the main, individual leaders of this persuasion who formed in May 1961 the Monrovia Group of "moderate" African states whose ideology resembled that of the Brazzaville Group. The Monrovia Group comprised the bulk of African states. Divided into two ideological groups, and manipulated from outside, the Pan-African movement, far from accomplishing its main task of African unity, degenerated into name-calling. Self-proclaimed moderates dismissed self-proclaimed radicals as "Communists," "militants," or "dictators;" the radicals dismissed the moderates as "sluggards," "traditionalists," "feudalists," "stooges," or "agents of imperialism."

In addition to the Congo crisis, such new developments in international affairs as

the European Common Market and the concept of non-alignment which had emerged at the deliberation of “Third World” leaders in Bandung in Indonesia (1955) sharpened further the cleavage between the leaders of the Pan-African movement. To prevent the movement from disintegrating completely and thus throwing Africa into chaos, the leaders of the thirty-two independent African states decided to meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to resolve their differences. This was a landmark decision. The leaders met in the Ethiopian capital from May 22-26, 1963. Thus was born the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.). The declarations, resolutions, and so forth of the conference formed the O.A.U. Charter that, since then, has guided the relationship between African states and between them and the rest of the world.

The O.A.U., indeed, has been, so to speak, a journey to reality. It is a journey that started, interestingly enough, as we saw, not from African soil, but from the African diaspora in the Americas. The O.A.U. Charter is, inevitably, a tame document. Given the prevailing cleavages among African states it could not have been otherwise. It is, in fact, almost a carbon copy of the United Nations Charter. If the charter had tried to give the organization some teeth, the Addis Ababa deliberations would have come to nothing. The Charter, then, is a compromise between conflicting African nationalisms and the Pan-African ideal. And the O.A.U. itself was yet another step, although an inevitably inhibiting step, toward the realization of the Pan-African ideal.

From May 1963 the O.A.U. became the champion of Pan-Africanism in world politics. But it has not always maintained a united front in this enterprise. Handcuffed by their neo-colonial relationships with the West especially in economic matters, torn apart by conflicting ideologies, drawn helplessly by outside forces into the Cold War, and

unable to maintain a consistent line with respect to the non-alignment doctrine proclaimed at Bandung and restated time and time again, African states found themselves mired in the morass of foreign policy inconsistency and confusion. This was why, when the rhetoric is removed from the realities of international relations, independent African states demonstrated a pathetic weakness in their dealing with the major international problems facing the African continent.

For example, foreign intervention more than the actions of the O.A.U., was responsible for the victory of the African nationalists over the Rhodesian front. In the Angolan Civil War, the United States was able to win about half of the African states to its side. In spite of the lugubrious vaticinations of the so-called “Front Line States,” the O.A.U. was unable to demonstrate its ability to solve the Namibian independence question in the face of Western intrigues. In South Africa itself, the O.A.U. failed to galvanize the international community into imposing mandatory economic sanctions against that racist regime. Internal developments in Portugal rather than the activities of the O.A.U. were the immediate cause for the independence of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. The Erythrean question, the Nigerian Civil War, the Sudanese Civil War, the civil war in Chad, and the Western Saharan question were all instances where the external relations of these countries influenced—and in the case of the Western Sahara continue to influence—the outcome of the conflicts more than the actions of the O.A.U. and the ideals of Pan-Africanism. It was no surprise that the 6th Pan-African Congress which met in Dar-es-Salaam in 1974 fared badly. So far, efforts made since then to revive the movement have not succeeded.^{xxxii} An interesting innovation of the New Pan-African Movement was its **Black Agenda** which was to be valid up to the year 2000.^{xxxiii}

Again, so far, the Black Agenda seems to have been largely ignored. Not even its extension of “right of citizenship in an African country” to “every Black person in the Diaspora” or the “right” of “every Black person in the Diaspora . . . to return and settle in the homeland, in any African country of their choice,” has attracted much attention. There are reasons for this lack of success. First, accommodation of these agendas would necessitate the willingness of African governments to change their constitutions. This seems unlikely. Second, it is unrealistic to expect a substantial number of diasporan Africans to emigrate to the continent, given Africa’s desperate economic situation, political instability, and social problems. Clearly, then, Pan-Africanism whether of the old or new variety faces a lot of problems. Unless these problems are resolved it is difficult to see what impact it will have in the future on world affairs.

The Dilemma of Pan-Africanism

It is fair to conclude that Pan-Africanism, because of its inherent contradictions, was singularly unable to impact decisively the major movements in world politics insofar as they impinged on Africa. In particular, its role in the economic, political and cultural liberation of Africa—essential if it is to influence meaningfully those movements—was not fundamental. Having said this much, it remains to explain why Pan-Africanism failed to realize its dreams of African unity and black solidarity. The reasons for this lack of success are broadly three.

The first dilemma revolves around the tensions between the ideal of continental unity and the demands of national independence. Reflecting on this dilemma Julius Nyerere wrote:

. . . I believe that a real dilemma faces the Pan-Africanist. On the one hand, is the fact that Pan-Africanism demands an African consciousness and an African loyalty; on the other hand, is the fact that each Pan-Africanist must also concern himself with the freedom and development of one of the nations of Africa. These things can conflict. Let us admit that they have already conflicted.^{xxxiv}

In short, the implication is that when an outward-looking ideology (Pan-Africanism) conflicts with an inward-looking ideology (national independence), the result is disunity, not unity. Given such a situation, it was difficult for Pan-Africanists to maintain a united front not only in the liberation of Africa but also in international affairs which were usually driven by the demands of geopolitical considerations. Thus, with a poor economic base, a weak military position which necessitated dependence on the Big Powers, the ideological divisions inherent in Cold War politics, and several national cleavages and conflicts, African states were unable to interfere in world politics meaningfully. In addition, the O.A.U.'s sacred canon of "no interference in the internal affairs of sister states," even when there is obvious evidence of serious violations of human rights and even of genocide is an obvious weakness which, thankfully, the new African Union, as I understand it, is prepared to revisit. Related to this is the other sacred canon, the sacrosanctity of the troublesome colonial boundaries which the O.A.U. believed should remain inviolate even when adjustments make sense in the light of current realities.

The second dilemma pertains to the meaning of Africa. The irony here is that while African leaders are trying to create a new continental body called the African Union, modeled as we saw, on the European Union, the rest of the world, led by the West, is determined to redefine for Africans what Africa is, a redefinition which many Africans—black and non-black—seem to accept as a *fait accompli* without seriously

considering the implications of such a redefinition. For example, is this redefinition intended to provide a better understanding and appreciation of African history? I think not because the focus is on the Arab factor in North Africa to the almost obliteration of that region's glorious past. It is, therefore, necessary to point out that the notion of an "Arab Africa" which is linked to what is called the "Middle East" is a relatively modern invention dictated essentially by religious, geopolitical and neo-colonial reasons. Pan-Africanism has failed to deal with this dilemma. It is hoped that the African Union must confront it and let it be made clear to the world what Africa means, that historically Africa, as a continent, has also always been home to millions of non-black elements.

The third dilemma concerns the global African diaspora. The formation of the O.A.U., as we saw, severely limited the influence of the Pan-African Movement, by willy nilly, de-essentializing race which has been the cornerstone of the movement's ideology. But it failed to create a new role in the movement for peoples of the African diaspora.

In the final analysis, then, the dilemma of the Pan-Africanist is how to eat his cake and still have it! And until Pan-Africanism can resolve this dilemma its impact on world affairs will remain marginal at best; and the new African Union will most likely exhibit impotence in world politics just as its predecessor had done.

REFERENCES

- i. For the beginnings of Proto-Pan-Africanism see Immanuel Geis, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa* translated by Ann Keys (New York: African Publishing Company, 1974), esp. chapter 3.
- ii. See Thomas Holt, *Black Over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina During Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

- iii. W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1935).
- iv. For the latest information on the Berlin Conference see Stig Forster, W. J. Mommsen, Ronald Robinson (eds.), *Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference, 1884-1885 and the Onset of the Partition* (London: O.U.P., 1988).
- v. See James R. Hooker, *Henry Sylvester Williams: Imperial Pan-Africanist*, (London: Collings, 1975).
- vi. See, for example, Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Historical Guide* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962); American Society of African Culture (ed.), *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of Cal. Press, 1962); George Shepperson, "The African Abroad or the African Diaspora" in T. O. Ranger (ed.), *Emerging Themes of African History* (London: Heinemann, 1968); Immanuel Geis, "Pan-Africanism," *Journal of Contemporary History* IV, 1 (January, 1969); *Idem*, *The Pan-African Movement, op.cit*; P. O. Esedebe, "Origins and Meanings of Pan-Africanism," *Presence Africaine*, 73 (First Quarter, 1970); J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); *Idem* (ed.), *Ideologies of Liberation in Black Africa 1856-1970: Documents on Modern African Political Thought From Colonial Times to the Present* (London: Rex Collings, 1979); Vincent Bakpetu Thompson, *Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism* (London: Longman, 1969); Ali A. Mazrui, *Towards A Pax-Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), especially chapters 3, 6, 9-12. Horace Campbell, *Pan-Africanism: The Struggle Against Imperialism and Neo-Colonialism, Documents of the Sixth Pan-African Congress* (Toronto, Afro-Cairo Publications, 1975).
- vii. Quoted in Mazrui, *Towards a Pax-Africana*, 43.
- viii. *ibid.* 42-58.
- ix. See his *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: O.U.P. 1961).
- x. *Ibid.*
- xii. See his *The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Buffalo: Economics, English Edition, 1959), 74.
- xiii. See his *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology* (New York: Praiger, 1951), XI.
- xiv. For a biography of Garvey see E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1955); Theodore Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (Berkeley: Rampart, 1971); Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and*

Organizational Structures of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Connecticut: Westview Press, 1976).

xv The text of this Charter and the first resolution of the O.A.U. are reproduced in Mazrui, *Towards a Pax Africana*, Appendices 1 & 2.

xvi. See his *Africa's International Relations: The Diplomacy of Dependency and Change* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967).

xvii. "Pan-Africanism Versus Pan-African Nationalism: An Afrocentric Analysis," *Journal of Black Studies*, 28, 5 (1998), 563.

xviii. For a Biography of Padmore See James Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967).

xix. See DuBois, *The World and Africa* (New York: Viking Press, 1947).

xx. Quoted in Langley (ed.), *Ideologies of Liberation*, 305-306.

xxi. Recent Scholarship has documented the vigorous campaign launched by the State Department to have Garvey incarcerated and/or deported from the U.S.A. See Tony Martin, *Race First*.

xxii. *African and Unity*, 126-127.

xxxii. *Idem*.

xxiv.. For an analysis of "Pan Africanism in the Cold War," see Mazrui, *Towards A Pax Africana*, 177-194.

xxv. Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, 130.

xxvi. Quoted in *Ibid*, 128.

xxvii. *Ibid.*, 135.

xxviii. *Idem*.

xxix. For a useful discussion of "The Congo in the context of Pan-Africanism" see Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, 142-149. For the role of the West in the death of Lumumba see David Caute, *The Decline of the West: A Novel* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

xxx. Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, 155.

xxxi. His views are quoted in *Ibid*, 158.

xxxii. See also *Idem*, 158 and *The Manchester Guardian*, 18th April 1960, for his views.

xxxiii. For details of these efforts see Naiwu Osahon, *God is Black* (Lagos: Heritage Books, 1993).

xxxiv. For the Black Agenda and the Constitution of the New Pan-African Movement, see also Osahon, *God is Black*, 191-230.

xxxv. "The Dilemma of the Pan-Africanist" in Langley (ed.), *Ideologies of Liberation*, 343.

i. For the beginnings of Proto-Pan-Africanism see Immanuel Geis, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa* translated by Ann Keys (New York: African Publishing Company, 1974), esp. chapter 3.

ii. See Thomas Holt, *Black Over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina During Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

iii. W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1935).

iv. For the latest information on the Berlin Conference see Stig Forster, W. J. Mommsen, Ronald Robinson (eds.), *Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference, 1884-1885 and the Onset of the Partition* (London: O.U.P., 1988).

v. See James R. Hooker, *Henry Sylvester Williams: Imperial Pan-Africanist*, (London: Collings, 1975).

vi. See, for example, Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Historical Guide* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962); American Society of African Culture (ed.), *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of Cal. Press, 1962); George Shepperson, "The African Abroad or the African Diaspora" in T. O. Ranger (ed.), *Emerging Themes of African History* (London: Heinemann, 1968); Immanuel Geis, "Pan-Africanism," *Journal of Contemporary History* IV, 1 (January, 1969); *Idem*, *The Pan-African Movement, op.cit*; P. O. Esedebe, "Origins and Meanings of Pan-Africanism," *Presence Africaine*, 73 (First Quarter, 1970); J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); *Idem* (ed.), *Ideologies of Liberation in Black Africa 1856-1970: Documents on Modern African Political Thought From Colonial Times to the Present* (London: Rex Collings, 1979); Vincent Bakpetu Thompson, *Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism* (London: Longman, 1969); Ali A. Mazrui, *Towards A Pax-Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), especially chapters 3, 6, 9-12. Horace Campbell, *Pan-Africanism: The Struggle Against Imperialism and Neo-Colonialism*,

Documents of the Sixth Pan-African Congress (Toronto, Afro-Cairo Publications, 1975).

vii. Quoted in Mazrui, *Towards a Pax-Africana*, 43.

viii. *Ibid.* 42-58.

ix. See his *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: O.U.P. 1961).

x. *Ibid.*

xi. See his *The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Buffalo: Economics, English Edition, 1959), 74.

xii. See his *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology* (New York: Praiger, 1951), XI.

xiii. For a biography of Garvey see E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1955); Theodore Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (Berkeley: Rampart, 1971); Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Structures of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Connecticut: Westview Press, 1976).

xiv. The text of this Charter and the first resolution of the O.A.U. are reproduced in Mazrui, *Towards a Pax Africana*, *Appendices 1 & 2*.

xv. See his *Africa's International Relations: The Diplomacy of Dependency and Change* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967).

xvi. "Pan-Africanism Versus Pan-African Nationalism: An Afrocentric Analysis," *Journal of Black Studies*, 28, 5 (1998), 563.

xvii. For a Biography of Padmore See James Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967).

xviii. See DuBois, *The World and Africa* (New York: Viking Press, 1947).

xix. Quoted in Langley (ed.), *Ideologies of Liberation*, 305-306.

xx. Recent Scholarship has documented the vigorous campaign launched by the State Department to have Garvey incarcerated and/or deported from the U.S.A. See Tony Martin, *Race First*.

xxi. *African and Unity*, 126-127.

xxii. *Idem.*

xxiii. For an analysis of “Pan Africanism in the Cold War,” see Mazrui, *Towards A Pax Africana*, 177-194.

xxiv. Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, 130.

xxv. Quoted in *Ibid*, 128.

xxvi. *Ibid.*, 135.

xxvii. *Idem*.

xxviii. For a useful discussion of “The Congo in the context of Pan-Africanism” see Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, 142-149. For the role of the West in the death of Lumumba see David Caute, *The Decline of the West: A Novel* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

xxix. Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, 155.

xxx. His views are quoted in *Ibid*, 158.

xxxi. See also *Idem*, 158 and *The Manchester Guardian*, 18th April 1960, for his views.

xxxii. For details of these efforts see Naiwu Osahon, *God is Black* (Lagos: Heritage Books, 1993).

xxxiii. For the Black Agenda and the Constitution of the New Pan-African Movement, see also Osahon, *God is Black*, 191-230.

xxxiv. “The Dilemma of the Pan-Africanist” in Langley (ed.), *Ideologies of Liberation*, 343.