

Tributes to *Mwalimu* J K Nyerere

'A Symbol that Cannot be Substituted': The Role of *Mwalimu* J K Nyerere in the Liberation of Southern Africa, 1955-1990

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Mwalimu Nyerere, the first President of Tanzania, passed away on 14 October 1999. He fought for the liberation of Tanzania from British colonialism and fought tirelessly against colonialism, racism, injustice and to preserve human dignity not only in Africa, but also throughout the Third World. He was well known for his uncompromising support for the liberation movement and his untiring work to ensure their victory. He was not only Father of the Tanzanian nation but also a mentor of the birth of other nations in the region. This essay is a brief appreciation of his work, a memory to his warmth and his love for humanity.

Early Support for the Liberation of Southern Africa

From the mid-1950s Mwalimu led the struggle for Tanganyika's independence which was achieved in 1961. He considered Tanganyika's (later Tanzania) independence to be meaningless if it was not accompanied by the independence of other colonies in Africa. Before independence, he co-ordinated, with other leaders of the anti-colonial movements in Eastern and Central Africa, the formation of the Pan African Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) in 1958, later to be expanded to include liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia. He worked for a unity of action and the formulation of principles to guide the struggle. The regional pan-African movement opposed apartheid, the so-called 'partnership' of the colonial Central African Federation, and called for majority rule but in which there would be no segregation based on race, colour, or religion.

In 1959, Mwalimu wrote a letter to the editor of a South African magazine, *Africa South* (October-December 1959), and expressed a strong moral conviction against apartheid. He appealed for world solidarity to destroy the apartheid regime by imposing economic sanctions against it. In a very fitting analogy to his personal moral conviction, he recounted how as a schoolboy, a friend offered to buy him a pair of shorts which he badly needed. Upon discovering that his friend had obtained the money by devious means, he immediately returned the shorts because, as he put it, 'I could not approve of the manner in which the money had been obtained and still enjoy what the money had bought for me.'

He applied that moral with an appeal to boycott South African goods. It was not good enough to condemn the racist regime with resolutions while continuing to buy goods produced under 'semi-slave conditions under which our brothers and sisters in South

Africa live'. Could anyone enjoy such goods 'with a clear conscience'? If governments could not take action, then customer power could force change. As he put it,

Each one of us can remove his individual prop to the South African system by refusing to buy South African goods ... I feel it is only in this way that we can give meaning to our abhorrence of the system, and give encouragement to sympathetic governments of the world to act.

The racist regime could feel 'the sharp effect of the boycott ... when every person in the whole world who disapproves of the South African system withdraws his support of it by withdrawing his contribution to its upkeep ... its running expenses'. He argued; that since there were alternative sources of such goods, people across the world could take such action. 'Let every man and woman who disapproves of the South African system', he continued, 'search his or her conscience, and decide to support or not to support the racials'.

This approach to popular resistance was informed by the experience of anti-colonial struggle. As a leader of an anti-colonial movement, the Tanganyika African National Union, he understood the significance of that approach in the struggle against British colonialism. He sought to apply this method to mobilise world opinion against colonial oppression and apartheid. It is fitting that he, with Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, among others, was a founder of the British based Anti-Apartheid Movement. The choice of Britain for such a movement was clear. It was South Africa's largest trading partner and the largest investor in that country.

Mwalimu, African Unity & the Liberation Movement

Mwalimu Nyerere was one of the founding Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. At the Summit Conference in Addis Ababa, he committed Tanganyika to the total liberation of Africa.

We in Tanganyika are prepared to die a little for the final removal of the humiliation of colonialism from the face of Africa ... the humiliating truth is that Africa is not free and therefore it is Africa which should take the necessary collective measures to free Africa. This is the clear and serious message that should go from this conference to the Security Council (Freedom and Unity, pp. 215-216).

He believed, like Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure and others, that Africa was not free until colonialism and apartheid were removed and that it was through unity, real unity, that Africa could effectively free herself. He encouraged the formation of liberation movements such as the Mozambican Liberation Front (Frelimo) and offered them secure rear bases to train and prepare for armed struggle. He consolidated Tanzanian national defence forces to secure those rear bases and national frontiers. Refugees escaping persecution from colonial and racist oppression in Mozambique, Angola, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia were welcome and their security guaranteed. He actively supported the struggle of the Vietnamese people against US imperialist aggression, and accorded diplomatic recognition to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. He gave refuge to African American freedom fighters who faced persecution in the United States. He opposed US aggression in Central America. He supported the struggle of the Palestinian people for self determination, and supported the POLISARIO against Moroccan annexation of Western Sahara. In that context, he actively campaigned for the recognition of the Sahrawi Democratic Republic and its subsequent membership of the OAU. His key

role in the liberation of Uganda in the late 1970s from fascism and the tremendous sacrifices Tanzania suffered to secure that liberation are well known to replicate here. His thought and commitment inspired those struggling for freedom and significantly influenced the development of an internationalist political culture among the Tanzanian people. The Tanzanian people came to regard those struggles as their own. Mwalimu was a pan Africanist, an internationalist, a selfless, fearless and valiant fighter against oppression.

It was Tanzania's active support for the liberation struggle that influenced the founding and location of headquarters of the OAU Liberation Committee in Dar es Salaam. The Committee must have worked closely with Mwalimu. He was clear that the liberation of Southern Africa and the Portuguese West African colonies of Guinea Bissau, Cabo Verde, and Sao Tome e Principe could be liberated by their people. Africa could offer them material and political support. In an extensive interview with a London based *Africa* magazine (21 May 1973), he considered the idea of an African Military High Command absurd because a precondition for such a command was an African Political High Command. He noted that Nkrumah's vision was misunderstood because he, Nkrumah, did not separate the two and 'indeed it is possible that part of his urge for political unity was a recognition that it was an essential part of Africa's military strength'. Mwalimu argued against that proposition because:

it can be an alibi for doing nothing about the liberation of our continent ... You can all too easily say 'ah, if we had an African Military High Command, we could liberate Southern Africa' – and then do nothing about the liberation struggle that is now taking place.

He noted that there was no evidence that independent Africa was 'able and willing' to provide such an army. Most of Africa had failed the liberation struggle. How could it, he asked, mount such an army when 'it is not even very active in supporting the OAU Liberation Committee with funds and materials?' He emphasised that the people of Southern Africa were their own liberators. What they needed from independent Africa was

not dreams about what we might do, but the material support which we are quite capable of giving. They want ... the arms, the food, the clothing, medical supplies, etc., without which their struggle cannot succeed in the modern world ... it is not necessary to have an African Military High Command to see that they get these things. All that is necessary is a real, serious, and genuine commitment by independent Africa to the total liberation of this continent (Africa, 21 May 1973).

He argued that Africa should take seriously the *really fighting* and *effective* liberation movements rather than 'talking a lot, passing lots of resolutions'. They should be given material aid and be treated 'as heroes and warriors' rather than as 'beggars' (Ibid.). Mwalimu argued against the idea of liberation movements forming governments-in-exile. Such a move would not gain them international prestige. Prestige could only be gained 'on the battlefield, not from offices away from the fighting fronts.' He added,

The liberation movements which have success to show on the battlefield do not waste time talking about the establishment of governments-in-exile. For they are concerned about liberation, and they know how disruptive such talk would be to the struggle itself. They know also that when the time comes for establishing governments, these will not be 'governments-in-exile', but governments firmly based in the liberated areas of their respective countries – that is, effective governments (Ibid.).

Indeed Mwalimu was giving force to what the liberation movements had been asking independent Africa. At the OAU Summit in Algiers in September 1968, the ANC of South Africa, SWAPO, FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC had reiterated the significance of independent Africa's material support. But they emphasised that such support should be given to 'real movements that are effective and have the support of the masses'. The criterion for determining which were real and effective movements should be 'disciplined movements, with a single military command and capable of ensuring proper security of operations'. Africa's limited resources should not be wasted on ineffective movements which were 'sponsored by imperialism' (Tambo, 1987). *Real* and *effective* movements were central to Mwalimu's role in the liberation struggle. We shall expand on this theme with Mwalimu's support for FRELIMO and the MPLA. But first,

Dialogue or Confrontation? Mwalimu against African Disunity

In 1969, thirteen Heads of State of East and Central Africa signed the Lusaka Manifesto by which they underlined preference for peaceful means to end violence against human dignity in Southern Africa. But they warned that should the racist regimes continue blocking the peaceful alternative, they had 'no choice but to give the people of these territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggle against their oppressors'. They appealed to the West not to see the liberation movements in terms of the cold war. Their aim was 'freedom' and not 'capitalism' or 'communism' (Shamuyarira, 1969). Mwalimu warned the West of future alternatives:

If the West accepts the South African and Portuguese argument that they are fighting on behalf of the 'free world' against 'communism', then I believe that in time this interpretation will become defensible – at least as regards their enemies. For if the West supports these racist and fascist states, the freedom struggle will in reality become a part of the world ideological conflict. For Africa, the West will be on opposite sides of the barricades (Ibid., p. 26).

Some African like Houphouet Boigny of the Ivory Coast, Banda of Malawi, and Tsiranana of Madagascar, preferred the Western interpretation and therefore the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Africa. Vorster visited Malawi to be followed by the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Houphouet Boigny was concerned with the so-called Chinese influence in Tanzania. He argued against pressure on South Africa 'because it was rich and strong' and launched what he called a 'Peace Offensive' and called for dialogue to achieve change (Tandon, 1971). According to Tandon, there was, in 1971, a possibility of seventeen other OAU member states joining the 'dialogue' group (Ibid., pp.6-7).

The damage done to African unity could not be underestimated. The West and especially the United States, could exploit the disunity in the ranks of the OAU to justify their opposition to Tanzania's friendship with China which had demonstrated a genuine friendship towards Tanzania and Zambia by building the TANZAM Railway. This would assist Zambia's to reduce her economic dependence on the racist regimes. Tanzania was, after all, a safe haven for the liberation movements and Chinese influence among them would grow. They could not forget what Chou En Lai, the Chinese Prime Minister said on an official visit to Tanzania in 1965: 'Africa is ripe for Revolution'. Western governments could, under the pretext of halting 'communist expansion', advocate 'dialogue', openly trade with South Africa and even supply it with arms. That is what they had been doing with Portugal, a fellow member of

NATO. The apartheid regime was therefore provided with an opportunity for a diplomatic offensive in independent Africa.

Some African leaders fell for this approach. Tanzania and other states like Guinea opposed this line and for a time kept a low profile. Tandon notes that it was Nigeria's President Gowon who made a diplomatic whirlwind to Ethiopia and Kenya to arrest the danger. The dialoguists were isolated and the anti-dialogue states carried the day. Mwalimu maintained opposition to any compromise with colonialism and racism. The Tanzanian Government openly challenged the dialoguists. In a document entitled *The Organization of African Unity and the Freedom Struggle*, it firmly stood by the principles of anti-racism and anti-colonialism enshrined in the OAU Charter. It argued that those who violated those principles should have their membership reconsidered (Ibid., p. 9). Tanzania did not follow this up because as Tandon correctly argues, the anti-dialogue states had achieved diplomatic victory and 'insistence on a consideration of its document might have looked like flogging a dead horse' (Ibid.). These states were not real supporters of the liberation movements and the serious struggle should continue regardless of their position. In a statement clearly directed at the dialoguists and their supporters, the Tanzania Foreign Ministry noted, 'the freedom of millions of African people in South Africa is not subject to bargaining' (*Tanzania Standard*, 30 April 1971).

The victory over the dialoguists was strengthened at the Summit Conference of the East and Central African States in Mogadishu in 1971. In the Mogadishu Declaration, the Heads of State reaffirmed their opposition to compromises with the racist regimes:

We therefore declare that there is no way left to the liberation of Southern Africa except armed struggle to which we already give and will increasingly continue to give our fullest support; that the policy of dialogue advanced by a small group of African leaders which has already been rejected by the OAU is again rejected because it is a play to hood-wink the African people (Quoted in Tandon, ii., p.10).

Mwalimu was later to clarify the significance and difference between the Lusaka Manifesto and the Mogadishu Declaration:

The Lusaka Manifesto was a statement of principles. It was not an outline of strategy. It said, if independence can be won peacefully then people should not die unnecessarily; and further, if independence cannot be achieved peacefully, the people concerned must use violence rather than accept permanent domination.

He added, that when racist and colonial regimes and their backers ignored the Lusaka Manifesto, 'we issued the Mogadishu Declaration and intensified the armed struggle' (*Africa*, 1975:15).

The context of Tanzania's militant stand must be established. The liberation movement, especially in the Portuguese colonies, was gaining much ground. The colonial army panicked especially in Mozambique where FRELIMO opened new theatres of combat in Tete, Zambézia, and Manica e Sofala Provinces. For months the colonial army, under Kaulza de Arriaga, launched a vicious offensive known as the Gordian Knot in Cabo Delgado to eliminate FRELIMO; FRELIMO defeated the enemy. This was 'a strategic victory, a decisive victory for the balance of forces, a victory which led to the disintegration of the colonial army'. Thereafter, enemy action was rendered ineffective. (FRELIMO, 1977:12-13). It was during that period and after,

that the Portuguese colonial army constantly violated Tanzanian territory, bombed and killed Tanzanian civilians at the Kitaya Ujamaa Village. Portuguese military aircraft were downed by Tanzanian forces and popular militia. She was not to be bullied into giving up support for the liberation movement; if anything, it strengthened her commitment. There was popular mobilisation in the border areas and air defences were consolidated. As Second Vice President Rashid Kawawa put it,

The struggle for the liberation of colonised countries was Tanzania's struggle as well, and Tanzania would continue to give moral and material support to various freedom movements ... [The enemy's plans would fail] because the war of liberation in Mozambique was also our war and we must see that it triumphs (Tanzania Standard, 8 February 1972; 17 April 1972).

He warned the enemy that 'We shall not allow any nation in the world to play with us. We want the whole of Africa to be independent' (*Zambia Daily Mail*, 8 June 1972). Let us consider that commitment with respect to Mozambique a bit further.

Mwalimu & the Liberation Struggle in Mozambique

Mozambique shares a common frontier with Tanzania. It was in Tanzania that the Mozambique Liberation Front, FRELIMO, was founded in 1961. Mwalimu, provided the necessary assistance that Tanzania could afford to enable FRELIMO to carry out the armed liberation struggle. If there was a liberation movement that was closer to the Tanzanian people, it was FRELIMO. Mwalimu's friendship and brotherhood with the FRELIMO leadership was very close.

All liberation movements waged struggle within their ranks in order to prevent enemy infiltration, to strengthen unity and, through practice and experience on the battlefield and in the liberated zones, to clarify the strategic objectives of the struggle. Revolutionary leaders were the target of assassination. The progressive world remembers with profound sorrow, the assassination in 1969 in Dar es Salaam of the first President of FRELIMO, Dr Eduardo Mondlane, and in 1973 in Conakry, of Amilcar Cabral, the leader of PAIGC. There were many other revolutionaries who suffered the same fate at the hands of the agents of Portuguese colonialism. The assassination of Dr Eduardo Mondlane was preceded and followed by a struggle to defeat counter-revolutionary elements in the FRELIMO leadership. Those elements sought to sow disunity, adopt adventurist positions, oppose collective forms of production in the liberated zones, oppose the liberation of women, etc. They wanted privilege rather than service to the popular masses. They adopted the weapon of assassination against the leadership. They sought to close the border with Tanzania in order to prevent the movement of supplies to the fighters. They even occupied part of Tanzanian territory to carry this out. There were, therefore, grave dangers for FRELIMO as a real effective fighting movement and for Tanzania too.

At a meeting convened by FRELIMO and the Tanganyika African National Union Executive Committee, the counter-revolutionaries condemned the revolutionary line and declared the secession of Cabo Delgado Province from Mozambique. Their attempt to install one of their leaders, Simango, as President of FRELIMO was defeated. Had the counter-revolutionaries succeeded, FRELIMO would have disintegrated and would have given Portuguese colonialism an upper hand. (Frelimo Central Committee, 1977). It would also have carried grave implications for Tanzanian security and the future of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. It is

clear that Mwalimu could not allow this situation to escalate. There is no doubt that he, TANU, the Tanzanian state structures, the revolutionary leadership and members of FRELIMO and the Mozambican masses in the liberated zones defeated the counter revolution. On the occasion of Mwalimu's retirement as President of Tanzania in 1985, President Samora Machel gave a moving tribute in which he remembered Mwalimu's key role in assisting FRELIMO during trying times:

I remember the days after the assassination of President Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane and the subsequent treason of some members of the FRELIMO leadership. President Nyerere received me and in a long conversation sought to know in detail the situation of our struggle. His wise observations and his advice were an important contribution for a strategy that led us to victory (Samora Machel, 1985).

It is important that Mwalimu called upon Samora Machel rather than Simango, one of the leaders of the counter revolution. Mwalimu followed the crisis in detail and by calling on Samora Machel who was at the time Chief of the FRELIMO armed forces, he had recognised the most principled leadership in FRELIMO. As President Samora recalled,

I remember too, with emotion, the stimulating words and encouragement that he gave us in all difficult moments. Nyerere followed our war and understood our victory. It is this dimension that gave us meaningful and profound consciousness of militant solidarity and the sacred value of African liberation ... All that reflect the most profound personal convictions, the coherence of action, the courage, the combativity, the lucid politics and the great love to the cause of liberty, of peace, of justice and of progress which characterise the life and work of our dear brother, our comrade in arms, President Julius Kambarage Nyerere (Ibid.).

The victory of the Mozambican people and its independence in 1975 was also a victory for Tanzania, a victory for Zambia which was another rear base. President Samora was deeply grateful to both countries. 'By joining hands with the Mozambican people and participating in the liberation of Mozambique', he noted, 'they had extended the base of the African Revolution. All small pockets of colonialism which have resisted up to now will be destroyed' (*Mozambique Revolution*, 1975). He saw Mwalimu as the symbol of that victory:

When in Mozambique we speak of Nyerere, we remember the names that are landmarks of our history. When we invoke the name of Julius Nyerere, we remember Kongwa, the military camp where we trained the guerrillas that purified the liberation struggle; we remember Tunduru, where our children learned a new life that we are building; we remember Bagamoyo, our education centre that prepared the cadres for victory which we knew was certain; we remember Mtwara, our rearguard hospital, where we treated our war wounded, and where we formed new cadres for our health services. With the name of Nyerere we remember with profound emotion, Nachingwea, the laboratory of our struggle, the camp where we trained our best soldiers and where, in our day to day work, a New Man was constructed. With President Nyerere, we live moments that can never be extinguished from our memory (Ibid.).

The Struggle for Angolan Independence

In 1973, Portuguese colonialism was in an acute crisis. The liberation movements (PAIGC in Guine-Bissau, MPLA in Angola, and FRELIMO in Mozambique) had inflicted heavy defeats on the colonial armed forces. The PAIGC had declared independence for Guine-Bissau and African states and progressive states all over the world had recognised Guine-Bissau's independence. The Portuguese fascist regime was in a terminal state. Unlike Mozambique and Guine, Angola did not have one movement but three: MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA. It is well known that the FNLA and UNITA were opposed to the MPLA and that very often they fought against it. UNITA under Jonas Savimbi frequently collaborated with the Portuguese colonial forces against the MPLA. This presented the OAU and the Front Line states with an urgency to create a united front among the three movements. The danger of an all out war between the three would be exploited by the colonial forces and other external forces. Under the aegis of the OAU Liberation Committee in 1972, the MPLA and the FNLA signed an accord under which they agreed to establish a Supreme Liberation Council. Under that accord, the two movements would create a unified military command, co-ordinate recruitment, training, logistics, operations and intelligence.

It was Mwalimu Nyerere who co-ordinated the attempts to maintain a coherent political line among the Front Line states. This would include Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire whose support for the FNLA and later UNITA was well known. After a meeting held in Lubumbashi and attended by Mwalimu, and Presidents Kaunda and Mobutu (and probably Holden Roberto, the leader of the FNLA), Mwalimu invited Holden Roberto to Tanzania and arrived with him in Dar es Salaam. At a press conference, Tanzania's Foreign Minister, John Malecela, said the three Presidents had discussed 'good neighbourliness' and the struggle for liberation. He added they had stressed the importance of African unity and 'brotherly co-operation'. The leaders of the liberation movements were, he maintained, 'counterparts' of the Heads of State (*Sunday News*, 1973). In a subsequent meeting, held in the Tanzanian city of Mwanza, the three Presidents were joined by Dr Agostinho Neto, President of the MPLA, and FNLA's Holden Roberto. The two leaders briefed the Presidents on the struggle but no details about unity were given. At that meeting, the Presidents were unexpectedly joined by an uninvited President Amin of Uganda (*Daily News*, 1973). His presence was not commented on but it was probably at the instigation of his friend Mobutu. Amin's anti-MPLA position was well known. That notwithstanding, it is safe to argue that Mwalimu Nyerere's conciliatory line towards Mobutu and Holden Roberto was a diplomatic move to keep the two in line rather than an approval of their political line on Angola. It was important to keep informed about what Mobutu's plans were. He could not be ignored since Zaire shared a common frontier with Angola. Political conditions within the OAU at the time were not conducive to a confrontation with Mobutu or the FNLA. Tanzania, as the headquarters of the OAU Liberation Committee, and a staunch believer in African unity, could not be seen taking sides. It did not make diplomatic and political sense at the time and would have greatly undermined the position of the MPLA. This we shall come to later in our discussion on American and apartheid South Africa's aggression in Angola.

With the support of the OAU, the MPLA, UNITA and Portugal as the colonial power, signed an accord in December 1974 to establish a common platform for a transitional government. This would also involve the FNLA and would encompass military and political cooperation (*Daily News*, 1974). The concept of transitionality was central to Mwalimu's position on the progress to complete independence. Transitionality would enable the liberation movement to consolidate itself. In January 1975, an

Interim government was formed between the MPLA, FNLA, UNITA, and Portugal. The four parties shared ministerial portfolios (*Daily News*, 1975). This was a very fragile arrangement because the FNLA and UNITA had their own ambitions and utilised their presence in the interim government to prepare for a seizure of power and because the political situation in Portugal was unstable with the Spínolista conservative forces and the progressive Armed Forces Movement in the armed forces contending for state power. President Neto of the MPLA was critical of those in the other two movements who were predicting civil war. He warned of a creeping American aggression, of a 'silent invasion'. He reiterated the necessity of 'understanding between the three organisations'. 'We speak of the necessity of a common front, but not of civil war', he emphasised (*Sempre Fixe*, 1975).

What President Neto had been warning about unfolded itself in the months prior to independence in November 1975. Western powers, particularly the United States, France, and others increased arms supplies to the FNLA through Mobutu's Zaire. Mwalimu Nyerere's position on this was clear. During a state visit to Belgium and the Netherlands in September 1975, he warned the West to stop meddling in Angola. The West, he noted, 'was trying to gain control of Angola and to make it a puppet state which they can exploit for their own benefit ... War in Angola is no longer a conflict between Angolans'. Without foreign intervention, he argued, 'Angolans would, with the help of Africa, be able to solve their own problems more quickly and with much less suffering' (*Daily News*, 1975).

South African & US Intervention in Angola

It was the South African invasion of Angola and its all out support for UNITA and FNLA and the tacit approval and involvement of the United States in that aggression that provided favourable political conditions for Mwalimu to throw a challenge to those OAU member states who wavered over which organisation to support in the Angola conflict. He called on all member states to bury their differences. 'Despite our differences', he added, 'it should be possible for many African countries to speak with one voice against the involvement of South Africa. Even those countries which were hesitating in their condemnation of foreign intervention can now take a position'. He told Africa that FNLA and UNITA did not deserve support because of their collusion with the enemy. His support for the MPLA was unequivocal: 'We would not hesitate to pass arms to the MPLA to fight South Africa. It would still be proper for the Government of Angola to ask for help'. It did not matter where that help came from so long as it was directed at defeating South Africa and he expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would support the MPLA (*Ibid.*, 1975).

Mwalimu's challenge to the OAU member states and his emphasis on the South African factor and US intervention was within the remit of the OAU Charter and the remit of its Liberation Committee which was based in Dar es Salaam. The South African apartheid regime was the enemy of African dignity and humanity. Its aggression against an independent African state had to be taken as aggression against all Africa. No compromise with it was justified. In an article he wrote in the *London Guardian* (13 January 1976), he reminded the waverers that:

South Africa wants a client state in Angola now that it has no Portuguese ally in that country. It wants it so as to strengthen its hold on Namibia – for South Africa itself has no border with Angola. And it wants it so as to weaken Africa's united approach to its opposition to its internal racialism and exploitation.

This was a powerful argument which no self respecting Head of State could fault. But Mwalimu faced those who were more preoccupied with the tedious tune that the Soviet Union was the principal enemy and that the MPLA was a tool of Soviet expansion. These states included Mobutu's Zaire, Amin's Uganda, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo. They held on to the thesis of a government of national unity for Angola regardless of the South African aggression and US complicity in it. Interestingly, the then leadership of the People's Republic of China, for reasons that are well known, held a similar position. In a message to Idi Amin, the then Chairman of the OAU, the then leaders of People's China, praised Amin's efforts 'in promoting the unity of the three organisations in Angola, maintaining the African unity and dignity of the OAU and opposing the interference of the Soviet Union in Angola and African issues'. We cannot guess what Mwalimu thought of such analyses and what he may have told the then leaders of People's China. Neither can we guess what he thought of the position of Zambia, a front line state. In *The Times* of London (19 February 1976), Rupiah Banda, the then Zambian Foreign Minister maintained that while Zambia 'acknowledged' Angola as a sovereign state, it did not recognise its government. The strategic implications of this position for MPLA's struggle against UNITA in particular is difficult to ascertain. But this was a very unhelpful line to adopt given that other Front Line states, particularly Mozambique and Tanzania supported the MPLA unconditionally.

Tanzania continued to remind Africa about what was at stake in Angola. A Radio Tanzania commentary of 18 November 1975, stressed that the western powers were interested in installing a puppet regime in Angola in order to exploit its resources:

Angola is so rich in natural resources. A great deal of capitalist high-handedness to pave the way for the kind of administration that sings the capitalist tune was to be expected. The MPLA which now rules the former Portuguese colony is the only truly national liberation movement. The FNLA and UNITA are capitalist puppets.

When Cuba sent internationalist military support to the MPLA in order to safeguard Angola's sovereignty and independence, the United States President Gerald Ford dispatched a letter to the African Heads of State declaring that it would not 'stand idly by' if Soviet and Cuban support for the MPLA continued. He sent Assistant Secretary of State William Schaufele to emphasise his position. The choice of countries that he visited is very revealing because it was the then governments of these states which toed the US line and supported the anti-MPLA alliance. Ford's letter was very offensive. Mwalimu, while on a visit to India, described it as 'arrogant and uncalled for' and reminded Ford that 'if my country is attacked by South Africa, I will call for foreign aid, including troops. That is nothing new' (*Daily News*, 19 January 1976). But the fissures within the ranks of the OAU were widening. Mwalimu Nyerere, with other Heads of State who supported the MPLA, maintained their position. The old thesis of a united front of the three Angolan movements was no longer tenable. Mwalimu argued that the crisis in Angola was the continuation of the liberation struggle which began in 1961. The struggle continued because:

those who supported Portugal have sought out and found others to act in their interests. Some of these others are Angolans who are confused, some are Angolans who are traitors to the reality of independence, and some are Angolan supporters of racialism – both black and white. The MPLA is the movement which bore the brunt of the anti-colonial struggle. UNITA did little fighting sometimes, although at others it fought the MPLA. The FNLA existed in exile. It did little more (Guardian, 13 January 1976).

Mwalimu was particularly incensed by US and Western insistence that the Angolan struggle was a struggle between 'Communists and anti-Communists'. Rather, he insisted that it was a 'fight for real independence, and against racist South Africa'. He was particularly nauseated by Western patronising Africa as a 'victim' of a mythical Soviet expansion, and by implication that we Africans cannot think for ourselves. This provided the West with a pretext of intervening to 'protect' Africa from the Soviet Union. He tolerated no fools, no bullies, and those who showed no respect to humanity. It did not matter how powerful they might be. He berated them for their 'arrogance' and their hypocrisy because even in diplomatic negotiations, they 'say one thing in public and another in private'. He told the United States that they were 'simply not thinking' and that their intervention in Angola was 'self-defeating and dangerous for world peace'. He reminded them to remember the lessons of Vietnam: 'It is still within America's power to get out of Angola, to save itself from another Vietnam' (Ibid.; see also *Daily News*, 29 September 1976).

Mwalimu defended the right of the MPLA to seek military assistance from anywhere and that Africa 'must welcome' such assistance to fight against South Africa. He highly appreciated Soviet and Cuban assistance to MPLA (*Guardian*, 13 January 1976). He was critical of those African leaders like Mobutu who actively participated and offered their territory as a bridgehead in aggression against Angola. The diplomatic characterisation of such leaders as 'brothers' no longer served any purpose so long as they sided with the enemies of African liberation, of humanity. Thus when Mobutu faced an internal rebellion in Shaba which threatened his regime, he alleged that Angola, the Soviet Union and Cuba were behind the rebellion and sought to internationalise the crisis by calling in American, French and Moroccan troops. Mwalimu rejected Mobutu's request for a reconciliation meeting with President Neto. Instead, Mwalimu saw the US Ambassador and advised the United States not to internationalise Zairian and other African internal conflicts. It was not a snub on Mobutu. Rather it was an informed acknowledgement that Mobutu was a puppet of those who were the principal destabilisers of the region. Mwalimu defended Cuban internationalist assistance and on a visit to the United States in 1977, he objected to US insistence that Cuban troops should withdraw from Angola: 'We do not want them to leave until we are sure that both the Western countries and South Africa are not entertaining the idea of overthrowing the government of the MPLA' (*International Herald Tribune*, 8 August 1977).

It is without doubt that Mwalimu understood the strategic importance of Angolan independence in the ultimate liberation of the whole of Southern Africa. The defeat of the apartheid South African troops by Cuban, Angolan, and SWAPO troops paved the way for the liberation of South Africa itself. Giving in to Western demands would give South Africa greater leeway to install client regimes, to bantustanise the region. The Holden Robertos, the Savimbis, the Mobutus fell into that scheme.

Tanzania was committed to defeating such schemes because they posed great danger to her independence. In that connection, Mwalimu always strongly maintained that:

Tanzania's independence is linked with the independence of the other Front Line states. We have never in the past had our people participate directly in the liberation wars. But aggression against an independent state is a very different thing. I am saying Tanzanian troops will be used if the independence of Mozambique, Zambia, etc., is threatened (Daily News, 29 September 1976).

That was a reaffirmation of supporting the liberation movement even more because Angola and Mozambique had gained independence and had become rear bases for the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. They with other Front Line States were therefore targets to destabilisation by the racist regimes.

The massive destabilisation campaigns by South Africa and the Smith regime against Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana and Lesotho are well known. In the case of Mozambique, they created puppet groups whom they supported militarily, causing terrible suffering. Mwalimu committed Tanzania's solidarity with the Mozambican people. True to his word, he deployed troops in Mozambique against the aggressors and their local hirelings. The Tanzanian people mobilised material support. This was accentuated in the wake of the death of President Samora in an air disaster that was clearly planned and executed by the apartheid South African military. The profundity of the sorrow which Mwalimu and the Tanzanian people expressed was indicative of the brotherhood which was born in the common struggle which both peoples waged. A Mozambique Assistance Fund was created under the auspices of the CCM (*Chama Cha Mapinduzi*) – the ruling party of which Mwalimu was President. Mass organisations mobilised the collection of financial and other material support. The media dedicated much coverage to the struggle, and many Tanzanians offered to enlist to fight. It demonstrated the depth of a selfless political culture that was characteristic of Mwalimu (Mavie, 1987).

A popular song in Kiswahili by a Tanzanian band, Afro 70, encapsulated that political culture:

Mozambique, Mozambique
O Mozambique
Mozambique, Mozambique
Presidente Samora, Marcelino dos Santos, Joaquim Chissano
Muito obrigado
Oho Oho Oho!
Muito obrigado
Oh Mocambicana
Oh Mocambicano

Tanzania and Mozambique let us stand strong
Like stars let us shine and consolidate our unity
Let us maintain vigilance and defend our frontiers
Nyerere and Samora strengthen our unity
Let us not be lax lest we be weaklings
With hard work and knowledge let us develop our nations
Tanzania and Mozambique are now one nation.
(*Source: Radio Moçambique gravações, 1977*).

After Angola and Mozambique: Zimbabwe and Namibia

With the defeat Portuguese colonialism in 1975, Mwalimu convened an extraordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers in Dar es Salaam. It was an historic meeting in that it identified Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Namibia as priorities. It issued the Dar es Salaam Declaration by which it demanded the withdrawal of South African military and economic support for the Smith regime. It called on South Africa to abide by the United Nations Security Council resolutions to end its occupation of Namibia. It called for the intensification of support for the liberation movement.

In an analysis of the Dar es Salaam Declaration, Mwalimu identified South Africa as 'the effective authority' in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Namibia and South Africa itself. Britain was the colonial power in Rhodesia, but he qualified this by emphasising that:

the only external influence which could have any real effect is held in South Africa. Thus Africa's confrontation in Southern Africa now is basically with South Africa. That is, South Africa as a colonial power in Namibia and – to all intents and purposes – in Rhodesia; and as a racist regime in South Africa itself. [The Dar es Salaam Declaration was not] about so-called Dialogue or Detente with South Africa ... [It] is about the liberation of Southern Africa: its purpose is to make sure in our own minds about how we should proceed now, after the successes of the freedom fighters in Angola and Mozambique.

Mwalimu declared that was ready Africa having talks about decolonisation with South Africa if the latter was ready likewise. But he warned against complacency. Africa and the liberation movement must strengthen their armed forces in order to talk from a position of strength (*Africa*, 1975:20).

Thereafter, with his Front Line and other OAU colleagues, he worked tirelessly to ensure unity among the liberation movements in Zimbabwe. The Smith regime, like South Africa in Namibia, sought to reach accommodation with puppet movements in order to blunt the effectiveness of the liberation movement. Unity was therefore a priority. The creation of the Patriotic Front comprising of ZANU and ZAPU, the support of SWAPO against the South African supported Turnhalle Alliance, were essential to secure victory. The defeat of Portuguese colonialism, the defeat of South African aggression in Angola with the support of Cuban internationalist forces, and of the racist regime in Zimbabwe, greatly encouraged the intensification of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Mwalimu must have been very proud to witness the end of apartheid.

As President Samora noted in 1985, 'to speak of Nyerere is to speak of the liberation of Africa'. He 'is a symbol that cannot be substituted' (Machel, 1985). He will remain the source of inspiration in the struggles for justice equality and human dignity for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the entire world. *Ahsante sana Mwalimu.*

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