

AFRICA MUST UNITE!

An imperative of our Time



Oliver Tambo chatting with President Kaunda of Zambia and President Nyerere of Tanzania as the leaders depart from the Dar Es Salaam Summit

I believe that the fundamental question we must consider, critically, as we celebrate the OAU@50, is - what have we done over half-a-century to advance towards the achievement of the objective of African unity?

By Thabo Mbeki

This year, 2013, Africa celebrates 50 years of the existence of the very first Organisation in the entirety of the existence of our Continent, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), established to assert and pursue the unity of Africa among and despite its immensely diverse nationalities, cultures, languages and religious beliefs, and imposed national boundaries.

Thus must we understand that the historic effort to achieve practically the unity of Africa, expressed through the establishment of the OAU, is only 50 years old, and is therefore in its infancy.

In this context we must take into account the first historic task the OAU correctly set itself at its foundation. This was to unite in the ultimately successful but otherwise complex and protracted struggle to ensure the total liberation of Africa from colonialism and white minority rule. This objective was only achieved in 1994, 31 years after the establishment of the OAU, with the liberation of South Africa.

African historical reality

During the millennia before the colonisation of our Continent, we did indeed have a few Kingdoms as established state formations, many of them with ill-defined jurisdictions in terms of territory and sovereignty over distinct ethnic groups.

The fact is that largely, as Africans, we did not have the hard borders of individual "nation states", even in the Sudan, Egyptian and Carthaginian antiquity. These were imposed on the Continent as a result of the infamous 1885 Berlin Conference, which carved up Africa into geographically defined territories owned by the various European colonial powers. These boundaries largely serve as Africa's current State borders.

Over the millennia the Africans migrated freely and widely across our Continent, effectively treating our Continent as a common patrimony and matrimony.

This is the reason that even today large swathes of our Continent, across and without regard to the many colonially imposed boundaries, share the same languages and cultures, and

therefore a common African identity.

It is because of this common African identity that we find that the various languages, such as Hausa in Nigeria, the indigenous languages in Southern Africa, and kiSwahili in East Africa, to some extent, share some common words, proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

Indeed, in antiquity, some Africans, part of the very first members of the species homo sapiens, the global modern humanity, migrated out of Africa, not bound by any physical or political boundaries, to constitute the founding base of today's diverse world community of peoples, in all Continents.

In effect, by the time of the Berlin Conference, the Africans had established the fact in practice, through the millennia, that they were bound

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together by a common identity, not defined by any borders or boundaries.

The periods of slavery and colonialism obliged the then African leadership, certainly during the 19th Century, to recall and evoke the fact of this historical common African identity. Accordingly it called for the unity of all Africans to defend themselves against the predations of the foreign colonising powers.

Early African resistance to Colonialism

For instance, when the Sudan Mahdist forces were about to invade Ethiopia, Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia sent this prescient message to the Mahdist leader, Hamdan Abu Anja,

in 1888:

“We as well as you are of the Kush tribe. We are African brothers. In addition we are close neighbours, as a result of which we ought to be united and fight back and stand together against the European colonialists...”

Abu Anja rejected this proposal on grounds that continue to play a role in Africa's efforts to unite. He wrote to the Emperor:

“As for your request for peace while you remain (a Christian) infidel this is impossible. There is nothing between you and us, the Italians and the Europeans. Your safety is in Islam and your destruction in your disbelief.”

However, early in the 1890s Mahdist Sudan came into conflict with the Italian forces that had occupied Eritrea. Among others this resulted in the defeat of the Sudanese forces by the Italians in a battle in eastern Sudan, at Kassala, in 1894.

The following year, as Ethiopia prepared to confront the Italian colonial forces, Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II wrote to the ruler of Sudan, Khalifa Abdullahi, suggesting the same cooperation between Ethiopia and Sudan against European colonialism which Emperor Yohannes IV had proposed.

In his letter sent in April 1895, Menelik wrote:

“When you were at war against Emperor Yohannes, I was also fighting against him; there has never been a war between us, (Sudan and the Ethiopian regional Shoa Kingdom)...Now, we are confronted by an enemy worse than ever. The (European) enemy has come to enslave both of us. We are of the same colour. Therefore, we must co-operate to get rid of our common enemy.”

This time, eight days before, and subsequently, during the historic Battle of Adwa, at which the Ethiopians defeated the Italians, ensuring the independence of Ethiopia, the Sudanese forces engaged the Italians in a number of battles in eastern Sudan, but were defeated.

However, despite their temporary victories, the Italians were obliged to maintain significant forces at Kassala during the period of the Battle of Adwa, to ensure that Khalifa Abdullahi's

Sudan forces did not attack the Italians from the rear. Thus, by reducing the size of the forces the Italians could commit at Adwa, Sudan contributed to the Ethiopian victory at Adwa.

These interactions between the then two independent African States of Ethiopia and Sudan, towards the end of the 19th Century, especially in the context of the colonisation of Africa, tell an important story which I believe still holds important lessons for Africa as we continue to address the challenge of achieving the unity of Africa.

With regard to our own country, South Africa, many of us who were brought up politically by the ANC have always known that the goal of African unity has stood out as one of the central objectives of our national liberation movement. This is because of what we learnt from our history, from the period of the establishment of the 'Ethiopian Church' in our country - a Church independent of the colonial European Church towards the end of the 19th Century - and even earlier, to the moment of the establishment of the ANC.

What emphasised this for us was that the ANC was established with one of its specifically expressed objectives being "*to bury the demon of tribalism*" - the tribalism which had created the African disunity that resulted in the victory of the European project (which was disastrous for us as Africans), to colonise our Continent!

What Mwalimu Julius Nyerere said

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere captured the all-Africa sentiment for African unity when he addressed the World Assembly of Youth in Dar-es-Salaam in 1961.

On this occasion he said:

"I am a firm advocate of African unity. I am convinced that, just as unity was necessary for the achievement of the independence of Tanganyika, or in any other nation, unity is necessary for the whole of Africa, to achieve and maintain her independence.

"I believe that the phase from which we are now emerging successfully is the phase of the First Scramble for Africa, and Africa's reaction to it. We are now entering a new phase - the phase of the Second Scramble for Africa. And

just as, in the First Scramble for Africa, one tribe was divided against another to make the division of Africa easier, in the Second Scramble for Africa one nation is going to be divided against another nation to make it easier to control Africa by making her weak and divided against herself...

"African Nationalism is meaningless, is anachronistic, and is dangerous, if it is not at the same time Pan Africanism."

In the same speech Mwalimu Nyerere reflected on capitalism. This was to discuss the development path which independent and united Africa would have to pursue, in Mwalimu's view, taking care to refuse to be dominated by either the Western or the then Socialist countries.

Mwalimu said:

"To my mind, capitalism went wrong when it divorced Wealth from its true purpose. The true purpose of Wealth is to satisfy very simple needs: the need for food, the need for shelter, the need for education and so on. In other words, the end of Wealth is the banishment of Poverty; and Wealth is to Poverty what Light is to Darkness...

"There is enough Wealth in every state for every individual to satisfy these basic needs. But the moment any individuals in a single state begin to use Wealth, not for the satisfaction of those needs, not for the abolition of poverty, but for the purpose of acquiring power and prestige, then there is not enough (Wealth). Then Wealth tolerates Poverty; then Wealth is not to Poverty what Light is to Darkness.

"There is not enough Wealth in any nation to satisfy the desire for power and prestige of every individual, so what happens? There is then ruthless competition between individuals...to seize enough Wealth to give themselves more power, more prestige than their fellows. That is, Wealth which exceeds their real need and which will enable them to dominate other individuals."

Mwalimu Nyerere saw African unity as being of decisive importance to all African countries with regard to three matters, especially during the period of the Cold War. These were:

- the successful defence of Africa's hard-won independence;
- the use of that independence to chart an independent path of

development, to achieve the socio-economic transformation of our Continent in favour of the ordinary African masses; and

- the building of a system of politics and governance on our Continent not dominated by domestic and international private capital, which capital would produce politicians interested in self-enrichment, rather than the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment for the benefit of the working people.

What Emperor Haile Selassie said

Two years after Mwalimu Nyerere delivered the speech we have cited, on May 23, 1963, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I delivered his historic Opening Address to begin the proceedings of the Conference of Independent African States which established the Organisation of African Unity - the OAU.

This seminal speech was fully consistent with what Mwalimu Nyerere had said. In fact it defined in greater detail what should be done to give content to the shared aspiration for the unity of Africa.

It might be that some readers of this article may be surprised and amazed that I will refer so insistently to what was said by a feudal African monarch, Emperor Haile Selassie I.

In this regard I would humbly advise these to bear in mind that this feudal monarch represented a millennia-old African Kingdom. During the period of colonialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries, like the rest of our indigenous traditional African state formations, throughout Africa, it occupied the front trenches in the struggle to defend the independence of the peoples of Africa.

In this context, specifically, inspired especially by the historic victory at Adwa during which the Ethiopian masses were led by his preceding Emperor, Haile Selassie had to lead the resistance to the brutal Italian occupation of Ethiopia during the period of the Second World War. This process began with the Italian colonial war in Ethiopia in 1935, and ultimately led to the recovery of Ethiopia's independence from Italian colonialism in 1941.

In this struggle, Haile Selassie led

his people and country inspired by everything his predecessors, particularly Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu, had done to defend the independence of Ethiopia, including during the Battle of Adwa, which resulted in the defeat of colonising Italy in the aftermath of the Berlin Conference.

This Italian invasion and occupation in the 20th Century sought to reverse the humiliating defeat which imperialist Italy had suffered in the previous Century, in 1896, at Adwa.

Thus it was that Ethiopia was one of the three African countries which participated in the establishment of the United Nations Organisation (UN) at the end of the Second World War, these being Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa.

What Haile Selassie said 50 years ago, at the founding Conference of the OAU, remains, to this day, a defining statement in terms of what Africa must do to realise her hopes. This includes the achievement of her unity, the defence of her independence, the implementation of an independent development programme, and constructing a polity in favour of the emancipation of the ordinary African people from poverty and underdevelopment.

Having laid out a very clear roadmap, the Emperor sounded a warning and a call which must surely be at the centre of our reflections as we celebrate the OAU@50.

He said:

"A century hence, when future generations study the pages of history, seeking to follow and fathom the growth and development of the African continent, what will they find of this Conference?

"Will it be remembered as an occasion on which the leaders of a liberated Africa, acting boldly and with determination, bent events to their will and shaped the future destinies of the African people?

"Will this meeting be memorialised for its solid achievements, for the intelligence and maturity which marked the decisions taken here?

"Or will it be recalled for its failure, for the inability of Africa's leaders to transcend local prejudice and individual differences, for the

disappointment and disillusionment which followed in its train?"

We are half-a-century hence after the establishment of the OAU. We must respond to the questions and challenges which Emperor Haile Selassie posed on the very eve of the establishment of our Continental Organisation.

What has been done to achieve African unity?

I believe that the fundamental question we must consider, critically, as we celebrate the OAU@50, is - what have we done over half-a-century to advance towards the achievement of the objective of African unity?

“What Haile Selassie said 50 years ago, at the founding Conference of the OAU, remains, to this day, a defining statement in terms of what Africa must do to realise her hopes.”

This is particularly important because I believe that the perspective advanced by Mwalimu Nyerere and Emperor Haile Selassie, so many decades ago, and even as early as the 19th Century by other African patriots is true and correct - that as Africans we cannot achieve our all-round liberation and renaissance unless we act in unity.

This means that none of our countries can achieve its individual fundamental objectives, to guarantee its independence and to determine its own independent path of socio-economic development, acting on its own, outside the context of united African action.

It is for this reason that I am convinced that the task to reflect on the challenges and opportunities to realise the objective of meaningful African unity must stand at the centre of our celebration of the OAU@50.

In this context, in the Address at the Conference which established the

OAU we have cited, Haile Selassie made important comments which remain relevant to this day.

In fact, these served as the Agenda of the critical *“Grand Debate on the Union Government of Africa”*, the theme of the AU Summit Meeting held in Accra, Ghana in 2007, which also celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the independence of Ghana.

In the 1963 Address by Emperor Haile Selassie we have cited, he said:

"While we agree that the ultimate destiny of this Continent lies in political Union, we must at the same time recognise that the obstacles to be overcome in its achievement are at once numerous and formidable.

"Africa's people did not emerge into liberty under uniform conditions. Africans maintain different political systems. Our economies are diverse. Our social orders are rooted in differing cultures and traditions.

"Further, no clear consensus exists on the "how" and the "what" of this Union. Is it to be, in form, federal, confederal or unitary? Is the sovereignty of individual states to be reduced, and if so, by how much, and in what areas?

"On these and other questions there is no agreement, and if we wait for agreed answers generations hence, matters will be little advanced, while the debate still rages.

"We should, therefore, not be concerned that complete Union is not attained from one day to the next. The Union which we seek can only come gradually, as the day-to-day progress which we achieve carries us slowly but inexorably along this course...When a solid foundation is laid, if the mason is able and his materials good, a strong house can be built...

"Through all that has been said and written and done (on our Continent)..., there runs a common theme. Unity is the accepted goal.

"We argue about means. We discuss alternative paths to the same objectives. We engage in debates about techniques and tactics.

"But when semantics are stripped away, there is little argument among us. We are determined to create a Union of Africans.

"In a very real sense, our continent is unmade. It still awaits its creation

and its creators.

"It is our duty and privilege to rouse the slumbering giant of Africa, not to the nationalism of Europe in the Nineteenth Century, not to regional consciousness, but to the vision of a single African brotherhood bending its united efforts toward the achievement of a greater and nobler goal."

What Kwame Nkrumah said

For his part, and at the same founding Conference of the OAU in 1963, the outstanding African patriot, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, said:

"We are fast learning that political independence is not enough to rid us of the consequences of colonial rule. The movement of the masses of the people of Africa for freedom from that kind of rule was not only a revolt against the conditions which it imposed.

"Our people supported us in our fight for independence because they believed that African governments could cure the ills of the past in a way which could never be accomplished under colonial rule...

"It is said, of course, that we have no capital, no industrial skill, no communications and no internal markets, and that we cannot even agree among ourselves how best to utilise our resources for our own social needs. Yet all stock exchanges in the world are pre-occupied with Africa's gold, diamonds, uranium, platinum, copper and iron ore.

"Our capital flows out in streams to irrigate the whole system of Western economy. Fifty-two per cent of the gold in Fort Knox at this moment, where the USA stores its bullion, is believed to have originated from our shores...

"No independent African state today by itself has a chance to follow an independent course of economic development, and many of us who have tried to do this have been almost ruined or have had to return to the fold of the former colonial rulers. This position will not change unless we have a unified policy working at the Continental level...

"What need is there for us to remain hewers of wood and drawers of water for the industrialised areas of the world?..."

"We cannot afford to pace our needs, our development, our security,



Samora Machel

to the gait of camels and donkeys. We cannot afford not to cut down the overgrown bush of outmoded attitudes that obstruct our path to the modern open road of the widest and earlier achievement of economic independence and the raising up of the lives of our people to the highest level...

"Even for other continents lacking the resources of Africa, this is the age that sees the end of human want. For us, it is a simple matter of grasping with certainty our heritage by using the political might of unity. All we need to do is to develop with our united strength the enormous resources of our continent..."

"African unity is above all, a political kingdom which can only be gained by political means. The social and economic development of Africa will come only within the political kingdom, not the other way round. Is it not unity alone that can weld us into an effective force, capable of creating our own progress and making our valuable contribution to world peace?..."

"So many blessings flow from our unity; so many disasters must follow on our continued disunity. The hour of history which has brought us to this Assembly is a revolutionary hour. It is the hour of decision. The masses of the people of Africa are crying for unity. The people of Africa call for the breaking down of the boundaries that keep them apart..."

"This Conference should mark the end of our various groupings and regional blocs..."

"But if we fail and let this grand and historic opportunity slip by, then we shall give way to greater dissension and division among us for which the people of Africa will never forgive us. And the popular and progressive forces and movement within Africa will condemn us..."

"Africa must unite!"

Africa unmade!

To answer the vital and historic question - *what is to be done?* - concerning the challenge to achieve the unity of Africa, so vital to the future of our Continent, we will have to respond honestly and frankly to the stark summary of our condition which Emperor Haile Selassie described when he said:

"In a very real sense, our Continent is unmade. It still awaits its creation and its creators."

I am convinced that the Centuries-long period of the violent seizure and export of African slaves to the Americas and Arabia, and the European imperialist and colonial domination of Africa, *'unmade Africa'*.

Accordingly, our striving to achieve the Renaissance of Africa must focus on the *'remaking'* of Africa!

That *'remaking'* must aim to achieve exactly the objectives which Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Emperor Haile Selassie and Kwame Nkrumah set before and during the establishment of the OAU.

Some of the central questions we will have to answer in this regard, as we celebrate the OAU@50, to respond to the challenges posed by Emperor Haile Selassie, are:

- of what should this *remaking* of Africa (and *re-creation*) consist?; and
- who will be the *creators*?

Kwame Nkrumah answered the second of these questions when he said at Addis Ababa in 1963, *"the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa will condemn us...(if we disappoint) "the (call of the) people of Africa...for the breaking down of the boundaries that keep them apart..."*

As I have said, these boundaries were imposed on Africa as a consequence of the Berlin Conference and were therefore themselves part of the colonial legacy which anti-colonial

and anti-imperialist Africa had to address!

In reality, the 'boundary' that Kwame Nkrumah was talking about was the divide between "the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa" on one hand, and the opposed tendency on the other, which had coalesced as the 'Monrovia' and 'Casablanca' groups, prior to the 1963 founding Conference of the OAU.

In this regard, in a lecture delivered in Tripoli, Libya, on September 23, 2002, one Abdalla Bujra said:

"Indeed two ideologically opposed blocks of countries, the Casablanca and Monrovia blocks, emerged - one stood for development based on social planning and the other for market driven development. The two blocks also had different approaches to external relations - delinking and re-linking as opposed to strengthening inherited colonial links. Hence at the time the atmosphere throughout the Continent was militantly and passionately discussing these issues. And the militancy and passion over these issues expressed themselves fully during the debates at the founding of the OAU."

In this regard, whatever the merits of his broadly correct characterisation and argument, we must of course also take into account the impact on Bujra's views of the simplistic and militant views about African unity which were consistently advanced by the then Libyan leader, the late Colonel Gaddafi.

Nevertheless, the hard reality is that, if indeed African unity is a fundamental condition for the Renaissance of Africa, then we must ask the critical questions -

- what indigenous forces in Africa will serve as the vanguard (organising) movement to lead the African masses to engage in struggle to achieve this unity; and
- around what specific objectives would this movement coalesce which would define the content and purposes of this unity?

What African unity?

Our objective reality is that in fact and in practice, we have not achieved the objective of African unity.

In a sense, to put this matter broadly,

we can say that we have not succeeded in bridging the divide between the 'Monrovia' and 'Casablanca' groups. This is necessary to build the African political coalition which would lead the sustained offensive for genuine and durable African unity, bearing in mind the African reality which Haile Selassie detailed.

In this regard I would like to quote a famous observation made by Karl Marx in his treatise, "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte". He wrote:

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they

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do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."

As Africans we have had the obligation to make our own history.

In the speech we have cited, Haile Selassie made the dramatic statement:

"The task on which we have embarked, the making of Africa, will not wait. We must act, to shape and mould the future and leave our imprint

on events as they pass into history."

The fact however is that, as Marx had said, the African leaders gathered in Addis Ababa in 1963 did not have the liberty, as Nyerere and Nkrumah had argued, indeed from different perspectives, freely to "mould the future (of Africa)", as they pleased.

Centrally, our collective African history over the last 57 years since the independence of Sudan, communicates the unequivocal message that we have failed to build the cohesive and critical Pan African movement to which Kwame Nkrumah referred when he spoke about "the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa".

Practically, objectively and in strategic terms, it is not possible to achieve the strategic goal of meaningful African unity, and therefore the Continent-wide transformation of Africa, its Renaissance, in the absence of, and without the leadership of these forces and movements.

However, we must understand that objective reality, bearing in mind what Marx said, will bear heavily on Africa's ability to develop and sustain these popular and progressive forces.

In this regard, on the face of it, we had the advantage that much of our political leadership, especially in the immediate aftermath of the victory of the anti-colonial struggles, had been steeled in these struggles to understand and be inspired by the imperatives of what would make for the Renaissance of Africa.

Nevertheless, great theoreticians of the African Revolution, among them Frantz Fanon, had warned us about what might go wrong.

Among others, Fanon warned that because of "circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past", the very same militant African fighters against imperialism and colonialism might very well be recaptured by this past, willingly or otherwise obliged "to return to the fold of the former colonial rulers", in Nkrumah's words.

As we celebrate the OAU@50, we must ponder the correctness or otherwise of this prediction, which emerged from the profound reflections, researches and practical experience on

our Continent of a brilliant mind. These came to all of us, as Africans, through African Algeria, but originally from the African Diaspora in Martinique in the Caribbean, home both to Fanon and also the celebrated poet and Pan Africanist, Aimé Césaire.

Fanon warned us that it was possible that the African Revolution might be betrayed during the period of what Mwalimu Julius Nyerere described as the Second Scramble for Africa, against the objectives which Haile Selassie and Kwame Nkrumah detailed. Thus would we have to contend with the possible defeat of the objective to achieve African unity, and its use to realise the Renaissance of Africa.

It will take another article to discuss all the obstacles to the achievement of the unity of Africa towards which all Africans aspire.

A rent-seeking leadership

The late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, revolutionary inheritor of the sentiments conveyed in the 19th Century by Emperors Yohannes IV and Menelik II, pointed to a fundamental factor in this regard.

In 2002, speaking about the generality of the predatory ruling groups on our Continent, he said:

“African states have been given names such as neo-patrimonial, prebendial (paying financial tribute to a State religious autocracy), vampire and various other exotic names. The underlying fact is that African states are systems of patronage and are closely associated with rent-seeking activities.

“Their external relationship is designed to generate funds that oil this network of patronage. Their trading system is designed to collect revenue to oil the system. Much of the productive activity is mired in a system of irrational licenses and protection that is designed to augment the possibilities of rent collection.

“Much of the private sector on the Continent is an active and central element of this network of patronage and rent-seeking activity.

“A large part of the NGO community and civil society organisations constitutes a parallel network of patronage and rent-seeking activity that

coincides and diverges from the State network depending on circumstances.

“Just as in the case of the State network the NGO and civil society organisations network is also oiled by funds and guidelines from abroad. Leadership positions in such organisations are used for personal enrichment and for the establishment of patronage networks.

“It is this structure that is fundamentally inimical to the establishment of an effective and strong (African) State... (and is therefore supportive of) the imposition of the Washington Consensus from outside. It is this structure which inhibits the establishment of developmental States in Africa that are able to adapt the rational elements of the neo-liberal paradigm to their specific circumstances and design others to supplement it.”

The “rent-seeking” of which Meles Zenawi spoke, describes the parasitic abuse of power, of whatever kind, to extract wealth from society for personal benefit, self-enrichment. Thus would individuals in positions of power personally benefit from wealth that had been created by others, and therefore adopt all measures to hold on to power.

He was saying that in many instances our African post-colonial States had become predatory States. Our ruling elites in these countries had turned into self-enriching thieves exercising State power, who are grabbing as much wealth as they could, which wealth others had created.

In reality, Meles Zenawi was addressing the consequences for us of what Mwalimu Nyerere had raised when he spoke about the inherent nature of capitalism, relating to the uses and abuses of Wealth.

Clearly, we must consider very seriously what Meles Zenawi said, seeking to characterise many who sit at the helm of State in many of our countries, many of them ‘democratically elected’. If his assertion is correct, Africa would have no choice but, objectively, to bid farewell to the goal to achieve the African unity that is fundamental to the realisation of the objective of Africa’s Renaissance.

Meles Zenawi spoke on the basis of his familiarity with actual African experience, effectively to substantiate what Frantz Fanon had foreseen very early during the period of the comprehensive defeat of colonialism in Africa.

He spoke about the emergence of a parasitic and craven leadership and ruling elites on our Continent all of whom do not care ‘two hoots’ about the genuine and sustained welfare of the billion African working people in our urban and rural areas.

These are those who have willingly been absorbed into the globalised system of personal wealth acquisition, in their personal interest and at all costs, as venal, junior, subsidiary and dependent partners effectively of the global capitalist system.

What is to be done?

The challenging question that faces all of us as we celebrate the OAU@50 is – what is to be done to defeat this entrenched elite, and thus re-open the road towards the genuine unity of Africa and the realisation of its purposes?

What shall we do genuinely to pursue the future visualised by such outstanding African patriots as Julius Nyerere, Haile Selassie, Kwame Nkrumah, Modibo Keita of Mali, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Abdul Gamal Nasser of Egypt, Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria, Mohamed V of Morocco, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Seewoosagur Ramgoolam of Mauritius, Albert Luthuli of South Africa, and others?

In the end, whatever the challenges in this regard, to realise the objective that ‘Africa Must Unite’, and thus create the conditions for the Renaissance of Africa, we must work to re-build and activate “the popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa” of which Kwame Nkrumah spoke during the historic moment of the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity.

Indeed, in our collective interest as Africans, as well as our salute to the OAU@50, and the AU@10, we must act together to realise the objective - Africa Must Unite! ■