

- Q. You were appointed spokesman of all the liberation movements at the OAU's 10th Assembly of Heads of State and Government. In this capacity, can you give us your opinion on the results of this session as regards the problems of the liberation struggle in Africa?
- A. I think that the time when this conference is being held, that is ten years after the creation of the OAU, not only required of African countries an analysis of the work done but also justified the solemn celebration of this date to mark the successes achieved in this period. Some heads of state, like Kwame Nkrumah, Sékou Touré, Nasser and yet others have made an important contribution to the cause of African unity, and in a number of countries liberation movements have embarked upon serious and unyielding struggles for the liberation of the parts of the continent which are still dominated. It is in this spirit that we came to Addis Ababa and have sought to make the maximum contribution to this conference. We attended the Council of Ministers and we approved or recommended certain decisions we should like to see <sup>endorsed</sup> ~~xxxxxxx~~ by the Assembly of Heads of State. However, the liberation movements are not ~~xxxxxxx~~ entirely satisfied. One can note a difference as compared with what happened last year in Rabat. Without wishing to speak precisely of a step backwards, this difference was noted in such material details as the fact that there were no places reserved for us in the conference hall, that the seats assigned to us were not equipped with earphones, that no translation was made available to us, and that we had difficulties in addressing the conference, all of which was a handicap to our participation. All this is indicative of a certain attitude towards the liberation movements.

As regards the decisions taken at this stage of the conference (i.e. before their adoption by the Heads of State), we think they are excellent. For example, during the debate on armed struggle we were able to adopt a resolution which gives first place to armed struggle as the chief form of action for liberation.

I was also very glad to see Africa's preoccupation with economic problems. For it is in the economic sphere that Europe and the United States are continuing to dominate Africa in the form of neo-colonialism. The time has come for African countries to make an analysis of the situation. The economic division of Africa into blocs which, whether by accident or not, coincide with the regional blocs constituted by France, Great Britain, the United States and other countries, leads to the division of African countries into economic groupings which operate more or less harmoniously but virtually separately. African unity must be not only political but also economic. The idea of an African Common Market which

some countries have suggested here is a good idea in this respect. This would facilitate the development of Africa, the opening up of trade and industrialisation. The problem of trade, however, is closely bound up with currency problems. So long as Africa remains financially dependent on Europe it will not be able to develop its market and impose its terms on the external market.

We also welcome all the promises of financial and military aid which have been made. In short, the African liberation movements' contribution to this conference, to the extent that it has been permitted, has been good. I should also like to stress another important aspect of this conference. Africa, which sometimes shows a tendency to isolate itself, has taken a stand, both here and in Rabat, in favour of solidarity with the other fighting peoples, in Indochina and Palestine. I think a resolution will be adopted supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people and the rights of Egypt, an African country part of whose territory is occupied. This shows the internationalisation of Africa, the fact that it is becoming open to the problems of the rest of the world.

- Q. Now that there is talk of the need to restructure the Liberation Committee, what suggestions would you put forward?
- A. In the Liberation Committee, as in all things, there are two aspects, the good and the bad. I think it is a useful body for the liberation movements. Taking our own experience, it has often helped us to solve problems which would not have been solved without it. It is useful and it must be maintained, so that the liberation movements, especially in the southern part of Africa, should be properly aided. Maintaining the autonomy of the Liberation Committee is an absolute necessity. Otherwise the liberation movements will find themselves trapped in the OAU's bureaucratic meshes. We prefer to maintain a body which, operationally speaking, is capable of solving problems.
- Q. The Liberation Committee tends to monopolise the re-allocation and distribution of aid to the liberation movements. What is your opinion on the problem of multilateral and bilateral aid?
- A. One always comes up against the same problems. There are liberation movements which are effectively contributing to the liberation of their countries. Others, on the other hand, are failing in their duty and are content to remain established abroad. The criteria adopted by the OAU make it possible for movements with no activity to continue to receive aid which is not used for the struggle. Despite the efforts of the Liberation Committee, which has already undertaken a number of missions in Africa and Europe, I think bilateral relations will be maintained. I have observed in Europe that in each country a detailed

analysis is made of the problems of the liberation movements. I have not seen this in Africa, where things often remain at the superficial stage. According to the MPLA's experience of bilateral relations, we see that there is a greater possibility of making each country understand a situation and thus getting over the costs represented by certain OAU decisions. Bilateral relations enable us to work out a better strategy for liberation, based on different concepts, and to understand our own problems better.

Contrary to a widely held view, the liberation movements are not seeking only money. It is important for us to exchange ideas and not only speeches. We wish, therefore, to maintain contact with all countries, both left and right, north and south. We are prepared to do so.

Q. How can the results of the Oslo Conference take on concrete form?

A. It is a good thing that the Council of Ministers recommended the adoption of the Oslo Programme by the OAU. As you know, the absence of the United States, Great Britain and France at Oslo was a real defeat for those countries. The conference was transformed into a conference of the liberation movements. Its aims were greatly surpassed, since our views were accepted unreservedly. We are going to use this new factor at the next meeting of the Decolonisation Committee. As for the implementation of the Oslo decisions, this will depend on the dynamism of African countries. Whereas it can be foreseen that the Oslo Programme will be accepted by the Committee of 24, it will certainly be more difficult in the UN General Assembly and Security Council. But as always, it is mass action that counts. Popular pressure and the peoples' moral condemnation always carry more weight than decisions which are never implemented.

Q. How would you characterise the present situation in Angola?

A. When one speaks of the situation in Angola, one thinks first of the military situation, of the action of the guerrillas, of their successes and defeats, of the progress achieved in the liberated areas. The situation is good in the eastern part, ~~xxx~~ where we control four districts. It is less so in the northern part, that is, in the Luanda region and Cabinda, where we have tremendous logistic difficulties. For instance, one has to walk for two months to reach the front situated 500 km from the Zambian border. The fact ~~is~~ that up to now the MPLA does not have the right to supply the front from Zaire obliges us to transport our material through Dar es Salaam port, which is 3,000 km from Zambian border. In the liberated areas, however, we are continuing our work in political and military organisation, education and medical care. There is a serious food problem because of the Portuguese army's use of herbicides and defoliants and the destruction of many thousands of kilometres of cassava crops. As regards combat, we are continuing to

attack ~~px~~ positions of the Portuguese, who recently had to evacuate a number of barracks in Cabinda as well as on the Eastern Front.

Of course, in ten years the Portuguese have learnt a few things. We have to watch the new situation closely and we regret that it is not always well understood by some African countries. The pursuit of the war has led Portugal to introduce certain reforms in the structures governing its relations with the colonies. The new Overseas Law grants political and financial autonomy to the colonies, which have been endowed with a Legislative Assembly and a consultative body (Junta consultativa), and rigged out with <sup>the</sup> titles 'States within the Portuguese Republic'. All this is nothing but a facade, at both the political and economic levels. But the war has also led the settlers to veer more and more towards a Rhodesianisation of the problem, that is, the establishment of a white minority government. There are two problems here. On the one hand, the settlers are counting increasingly on South Africa's support and, on the other, they feel exploited by the metropole. Portugal has introduced reforms for these two reasons. At the same time, it is trying to increase the white population with projects like the Cunene scheme, to give an impression of development by seeking new investments (almost all African countries are involved in this) for the exploitation of iron, petroleum and diamonds. All this gives an air of prosperity which astounds foreigners. The Angola of 1973 is no longer that of 1961. Angolan functionaries are being promoted and they are better paid. Part of the population has thus been demobilised. Some African countries might also be duped by these measures and go along with the idea of compromise with Portugal and a negotiated solution which would put an end to our struggle. This is a very real danger, and if we do not exert every effort a situation may be reached where compromise - accepted by some Angolans and some African countries - might ~~xxx~~ jeopardise everything we have defended up to now. We are worried, for instance, by the relations certain African countries have with Brazil. They believe Brazil can have an influence on Portugal, whereas it is in fact the other way round.

Our answer to all this is that it is only through armed struggle and perseverance in armed combat that one can win. Negotiation is but a result of combat. It is never offered by the colonialists as a gift. Our people are not fooled. They are used to the machinations Portugal resorts to whenever it finds itself in a difficult position.

Q. What is the situation with the unification of the Angolan nationalist movement? Some think it impossible, while ~~xxxx~~ for others it has already been achieved. I think it would be useful to enlighten African opinion on this matter.

A. I shall not give any details on the negotiations because we have agreed not to provide the press with any explanations while the negotiations are still taking place. The division of the nationalist movement between the MPLA and the FNLA is a phenomenon resulting from differing concepts of the struggle. We have been fighting separately for nearly 13 years. We have had differences, but we recently decided to unify the two movements. ~~Full~~ Unification cannot be achieved overnight, precisely because of these differences of concept and of methods of struggle. We have not discussed sufficiently up to now. The opinions of the experts (for there are experts on all things, including Angolan questions) are not satisfactory. Those who say that unity is not possible because of ideological differences are mistaken. The distance between us is not such as to prevent unity in the struggle for independence.

Those who say that unity has been achieved are also mistaken, since we have not yet drawn up regulations to guide the work of the bodies we have established: the Supreme Council of the Struggle, the Political Council and the Unified Military Command.

The problem is a complex one, because not only Angolans are discussing this problem. There is also the presence of our neighbours, the African countries which, while helping us, nevertheless influence the course of the negotiations on cooperation.

Personally, I am sure that neither the MPLA nor the FNLA can go back on the agreement we reached on 13 December 1972. And this for two reasons. We are responsible before the African peoples, who expect of us sufficient maturity to enable us to overcome our problems and differences and coordinate our efforts for liberation. But especially because our people will no longer be able to accept the division between the MPLA, on the one hand, and the FNLA on the other. Our people are aware that without unity we cannot achieve total victory over the colonialists. It is impossible for us to go back on this. We must work together. For the MPLA, this is our greatest desire.

interview by J. Fanon.