

NOTES ON ADDRESS AT CORNELL
UNIVERSITY, ITHICA, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATIVE
ACTIVITIES TO MARK THE
SHARPVILLE MASSACRE

Topic of my lecture: The Situation in Southern Africa

At : Goldwin Smith, D. Lecture Hall,
Cornell University, Ithica, New York

Invited by : The South African Liberation Committee
and the African Studies and Research
Centre (Black studies programme) of
Cornell University.

Introduction:

Thank the Chairman of the Southern African
Liberation Committee at Cornell University
Brother Mwapa & Organizers of the Sharpville
Memorial activities.

(1) The Significance of the Commemoration

- Sharpville in perspectives
- The actual massacre in 1960-69 people killed and
over two hundred injured
peaceful unarmed africans including women and
children were among the victims.
 - their crime: to demonstrate against the humiliating
pass laws in response to a call by the Pan
African Congress.

(2) What were the lessons of Sharpville:

- (i) to the Africans in South Africa the end of an
illusion that peaceful change was possible in
the apartheid republic
- (ii) to the international community--the massacred
enraged them--such was the shock to the conscience
of mankind that the Security Council made a
demand to the ending of apartheid--mention also
that March 21 is observed as the international
day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
following a General Assembly proclaim action
in 19...

(3) The Current situation in South Africa:

- (a) 12 years after Sharpville--the oppressive
apartheid machinery in South Africa is more
consolidated.
- (b) the apartheidisation of the whole of Southern
Africa--Narrate South Africa's aggressive and

expansionist policies in Southern Africa.

(4) A brief expose of the present explosive situation in Southern Africa:

- (i) Zimbabwe--the illegal Smith regime, British duplicity and the liberation struggle.
- (ii) the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique--Portuguese fascist myths.
- (iii) the international territory of Namibia, the revocation of the mandate in 1966 the advisory opinion of the ICJ (1971) -the intransigent policies of the illegal occupationists.

(5) The issues involved in Southern Africa:

The struggle for freedom & human dignity.

Can one acquiesce to his own degradation and dehumanisation?

The liberation movements have already made their decision: Despite formidable odds people have taken up arms to defend their dignity of manhood.

(6) The negative role of the Western Powers:

- (i) the direct or indirect support rendered to the colonial and racist regimes do these powers share the same concept advocated of the Portuguese and allies that they are perpetrating their crimes in the service of christianity and civilisation.
- (ii) the significance of the massive economic and military support that some of the Western powers render to these regimes NATO and the defence of 'democracy' in S.A.

(7) The level of the liberation struggle:

A brief outline of the status, achievements and problems of the liberation movements.

The odds: the unholy trinity--Lisbon, Salisbury, Pretoria Axis
Peaceful or violent or changes is there really an alternative.

The Lusaka Manifesto: Its significance

What has been the reaction of the racist regimes--an arrogant rejection-- & of their friends the Western Powers

- a cynical approach - manifestations of understanding a & sympathy for African position--but a practical continued support for the forces of tyranny and oppression e.g.

- (i) the continued supply of arms to South Africa by France and violation of arms embargo by Britain
- (ii) the US support to Portugal--the Nixon/Caetano Agreement in the Azores
- (iii) the US as a law breaker--importation of Chrome ore violating the mandatory imposed by the UN Security Council
- (iv) Such collusion is coupled by the hypocritical sermons on the virtues of non-violence while turning complete blind eye to the horrifying violence perpetrated by the racist colonialists against the Africans. To such preachers we can only express our scorn and contempt for their role.

The choice before the liberation movements

Faced with the intransigency of the regimes and the apathy of the West--who can influence these regimes--the liberation movements have had no alternative but 'armed struggle'.

The role of free Africa

- (i) the validity of the Nkrumah dictum--that independent African states cannot really be free for as long as certain parts of the continent are under colonial subjugation--recite President Kaunda's recent declaration that Zambia's freedom and security will always be in jeopardy for as long as Zimbabwe etc. are under colonial domination.
- (ii) the OAU and Coordinating Committee--its role in support of the liberation struggle.

Conclusion

- (a) A comparative analysis of the sources of serious tension & potential for international conflict--Middle East, Vietnam as related to Southern Africa.
 - The danger of a most serious conflagration with racial overtones.
- (b) The war has started in that part of the world but at this late hour it is possible though meaningful international action to prevent its deteriorating into an all out conflagration.

- (i) Ideally the Western governments have the means of the capacity to "influence" the situation--by siding on the right of justice.
- (ii) But since it is utopian to expect some of these governments to do so--here then lies the challenge of peoples and institutions like yours--mobilisation on a national and international level in support of the liberation struggle should be the clarion call.

I should like to conclude by reiterating that for an African both in independent and the unliberated areas of our continent--the path is clear. We have to support the struggle for the freedom of the continent. We have to end racial tyranny in the continent no matter the sacrifice involved. We cannot do otherwise and retain the right to call ourselves as free men. We like to believe that when the chips are down, the overwhelming majority of mankind, blacks, whites, brown and yellow will be with us against those who have committed the most atrocious crimes in our continent--aggression against our very humanity.

The fact that Sharpsville is commemorated in different parts of the globe by people of different walks of life gives us some hope in the dignity and goodness of mankind and the inevitable of right over wrong, justice over injustice, freedom over tyranny.

I thank you all, ladies and gentlemen.