



### EDITORIAL NOTES

# WHAT THE NKOMATI ACCORD MEANS FOR AFRICA

Once again we are reminded that the future cannot be foretold. Who could have studied the political developments of Southern Africa only one year ago, and foretold the events of the past months? Which analyst would have been bold enough to foretell that in April 1984, the Mozambican government, headed by the Frelimo party, would be deporting the cadres of the South African revolutionary movement from their country? Or raiding ANC homes and offices in Maputo, under the supervisory eye of a joint Mozambican-South African commission?

Yet these, and other actions of a similar kind, are all the consequences of South Africa's foreign policy, whose general lines were in evidence over a year ago but whose detailed working out is only now becoming apparent. The ANC presence in Mozambique has been reduced from a substantial working cadre to a "diplomatic mission" only of 10 approved members, with the President and one or two others having the right of entry. All other ANC cadres are being deported, or restricted to refugee camps to which the

ANC leadership will be denied access. And at the frontiers, Mozambique's troops ".. exercise ... rigorous control over elements proposing to carry out or plan" hostile actions against the apartheid state. The so-called Nkomati Accord, entered into between Mozambique and South Africa at the town of Komatipoort on 16th March this year, made provision for all this, and more.

In the propaganda gloss put upon this Accord by the South African and world press, there is constant reference to the liquidation of ANC and Umkhonto "armed bases"; but in fact, as South Africa well knows, there are not and have never been any such bases in Mozambique.

Yet the South African regime's propagandists — from Premier Botha to Defence Minister Magnus Malan and all their lick-spittle radio and press commentators — portray the Accord as a "triumph" over threats of armed ANC incursion into the country from across its borders. This travesty of the truth serves two purposes. It serves as a smokescreen to hide from South Africans themselves the patent fact that the growing Umkhonto armed and sabotage attacks within the country originate from within the country, far from its heavily patrolled borders. And it serves as a smokescreen to obscure the hostility of the Botha regime to the social and economic policies of what have become known as the frontline states.

### **Rough Treatment**

The real nature of that hostility lies heavily camouflaged by the apparently reciprocal nature of the Nkomati Accord. As quid-pro-quo for all that the Mozambican government has undertaken to do, South Africa reciprocally undertakes to prevent hostile broadcasting from its territories, and to end aid and assistance to anti-Frelimo armed forces in Mozambique. On paper, it all appears eminently equal and reasonable. But the test of the fairness and equality of such an Accord is not to be made on the paper it is written on, but on the ground of actual political operations.

Here already there are the gravest signals that all is not what it might seem on paper. Already since the Accord, there have been new and savage assaults launched inside Mozambique by counter-revolutionary mercenaries of the MNR, who everyone knows and admits to be the running dogs of South African foreign policy, trained, paid for, equipped and directed from South Africa. There is nothing in South Africa's past history of relations with its black neighbours to give any confidence that its post-Accord policy will be anything more than the continuation of the pre-Accord policy, only differently wrapped to suit a new advertising campaign.

What was the pre-Accord policy? We are told by the South African propaganda machine that its policy towards the frontline states generally is to seek friendly co-operation; that towards Mozambique particularly, it has been concerned only with attacks on ANC-Umkhonto camps and bases to prevent armed revolutionary incursions into South Africa from across its borders. If this is so, why did its MNR running dogs then not attack ANC personnel and positions, rather than the important Mozambican industrial, economic and transport installations which have been its main targets? The MNR was — perhaps still is — South Africa's surrogate in Mozambique. Its purposes and aims are South Africa's purposes and aims. And those purposes were never to counter the ANC's revolutionary efforts against apartheid, but always to undermine the Frelimo government and its efforts to reconstruct and develop Mozambique. Only the most naive will believe that because the ANC presence in Mozambique is now severely reduced the South African policy of undermining the Frelimo government's policy and future has been cancelled.

Such long-term considerations as these cannot be allowed to be glossed over in consideration only of the important but essentially short-term problems thrown up by the Nkomati Accord. Neither South African nor Mozambican policy can be accepted as short-term, temporary expedients, to cope with the imagined threat of the ANC incursion across the Mozambique-South Africa frontier. It can do no good for revolutionaries of either country to pretend that yesterday's running sore has been cured by agreement. Perhaps a sticking-plaster has been applied to the wound, but underneath the old sources of South African infection remain.

*South Africa's apartheid regime lies at the core of the cancer; it promotes discontent and revolutionary upheaval at home, which it seeks to contain by a combination of police-state terror and corruption of a black elite; it promotes conflict and upheaval outside in all the frontline states, to roll back the tide of independence and to reassert a new era of colonial-type economic and political dependence.*

The frontline states correctly understood their real situation when they created a *cordon sanitaire* of isolation around South Africa. The Nkomati Accord marks the breaking of that *cordon*. The Botha regime now feels more confident that it can spread the infection of apartheid and neo-colonialism more easily through Africa. The invitation to Premier Botha to visit a number of European states shows that his allies are of the same opinion.

### **The International Dimension**

The Nkomati Accord though ostensibly a Mozambican-South African affair, does not occur in isolation from the whole international dimension, which

includes repeated armed incursions into Angola, the attempted Muzorewa putsch and subsequent internal destabilisation of Zimbabwe, the suborning of the Swaziland ruling authority, military incursion and counter-revolutionary sabotage in Lesotho, military rapine and conscription of Namibia, and so on. All these many facets of South Africa's overt and covert operations in all the neighbouring territories constitute the reality of its consistent foreign policy and programme.

It is customary in South Africa, and elsewhere in the capitalist world, to present that policy as a native product of South Africa alone; and to present the Nkomati Accord as the greatest triumph of that South African policy, and a vindication of the so-called "new direction" in which P.W. Botha is said to be leading the apartheid state. The truth, however, is not that simple. The Nkomati Accord may have been hatched in Pretoria, but the strategy behind it has been produced in Washington.

Washington, before Reagan but more particularly since Reagan's presidency, has had a simplistic view of the world, and an equally simplistic view of Africa. In that simplistic view, every dispute or division in the world can be satisfactorily viewed as a conflict between 'good and evil' — or, in interchangeable terms of Washington-speak, as anti-Communist versus Communist. There are no shades in between.

Everywhere — but especially in Africa — every non-aligned state which does not concede knee-jerk obedience to US policy is seen from Washington as a "...puppet of Moscow." Every anti-imperialist and popular liberation movement is understood to be a "front for communism". Washington, as leader of the imperialist alliance of Western states, has devised what it deems an appropriate strategy for dealing with the world. It has been described by Reagan himself as "... rolling back the frontiers of communism."

That strategy has been followed relentlessly, world-wide. Every weapon in the American arsenal — money, control of world markets, leadership of international agencies for development — all have been allied to the world-wide network of CIA agents of subversion. In total, these weapons add up to international terrorism; its purposes are to strangle national economies of independent states, to disrupt their links with their allies and the rest of the world, to purchase internal subversion and sabotage, to arm counter-revolution, and finally — when all else fails — to set the scene for direct US military intervention against sovereign independent states. Internal terrorism has been let loose everywhere — to overthrow a disliked regime in Nicaragua, just as they had done previously in Guatemala and Chile; to finance wars as in Lebanon, Afghanistan and Kampuchea; to bolster

reactionary regimes and finance death squads as in El Salvador. It has supplanted international diplomacy as a way of dealing with nations, especially wherever peoples of the under-developed world choose to form their own governments and plan their own economic ways forward out of poverty.

Africa — and Southern Africa — are not exceptions to the global strategy. Where there are client states, pliable enough or venal enough to serve US aims — as in Botha's South Africa or Smith's Rhodesia — there has been US aid and support for regimes which maintain themselves through police-state terror and oppression of black majorities. UDI has been acceptable; illegal occupation and military dictatorship of Namibia have been acceptable; armed invasion of Angola and internal subversion by military means of Mozambique have been acceptable. All conform to the grand strategy of "rolling back the frontiers of communism" as seen from Washington, and recreating a continent which will once again be a docile cog in the world of free enterprise and the pursuit of private profit. The hand on the Nkomati Accord and in the many facets of destabilisation of the frontline states may be South African. But the policy and strategy are those of the US. Everywhere, in the recent events in Southern Africa, the shadowy figure of the US special agent Chester Crocker can be discerned as the controller, mostly offstage.

### **The Southern African Dimension**

US-led international terrorism has been in evidence in all the frontline states as their peoples seek desperately to break out of their colonial pasts, to throw off their shackles of former dependence and colonial-style poverty. Nowhere has terrorism operated as openly and fiercely as in Angola and Mozambique — the two countries of the area where the way forward has been proclaimed most clearly to be the building of socialist society. In many parts of Africa, and elsewhere, there has been lip-service paid to the aim of "socialism", often merely as a slogan. But here, in Angola and Mozambique, the perspective of socialism has been based on programmes of social reconstruction presented explicitly in terms of Marxist theory, headed by parties which declared their aim to mobilise according to Marxist doctrine to create their own destinies. These two countries were thus seen simultaneously as the main standard-bearers of socialism in Southern Africa, and in consequence the main targets of the US-led terror.

All the weapons of the arsenal have been used against them; economic isolation and strangulation; diplomatic isolation; fomenting of internal armed subversion, and mounting of external armed invasion. World

markets have been manipulated to produce rising prices of essential imports of machine-tools and manufactured goods at the same time as falling prices of vital exports of raw materials; 'development' aid has been slanted towards schemes based on capital-intensive processes and high technology which undermine the traditional economies and their accompanying social orders.

Yet despite it all — and despite the cruel circumstances of one of the worst and most prolonged droughts of recent times — despite it all, it must be remembered that neither Angola nor Mozambique have fallen, as Ghana's socialism under Nkrumah or Zaire's under Lumumba fell. For radicals and revolutionaries everywhere this is a most important aspect of the present time in the area — not that Mozambique has been brought by *force majeure* to sign a scarcely creditable Accord; but that its government has survived and is still proclaiming adherence to socialism.

It is argued forcibly by many of Frelimo's friends that the combined weight of drought and foreign terrorism had brought Mozambique to the point where the stark choice was between the Nkomati Accord and total collapse.

Perhaps so. But that is not a judgement that any of us in the South African liberation movement should seek to make on their behalf, any more than we could accept the right of others to make their own independent judgements about what is best for us in our own country. If our comrades in Frelimo judged their situation in their country in this way, we must take note of that judgement. If they concluded that *force majeure* had left them with no alternatives between the collapse of their revolution and a reduction of our facilities in their country, that too we have to take note of, much though we regret it.

But there are judgements of a different sort which arise from the Nkomati Accord which are not the province of our Frelimo comrades alone. It is being said in some quarters, for example, that now that the Nkomati Accord has been reached, the appetites of the US and South Africa in that part of the world have been satisfied; that therefore the international terrorist actions against Mozambique are at an end. And, by way of extrapolation from that: that if other frontline states also enter into similar — though regrettable — accords with South Africa, they too will have appeased their enemy and created peace for themselves in which to pursue their aims of national development and independence.

We do not agree. The harassment of the ANC, which is the ostensible centrepiece of the Nkomati Accord, is nothing more than a single piece in the whole global strategy of "rolling back" the frontiers of national independence and economic independence. Other and more severe

pressures will certainly follow — for Mozambique, for Angola, and for all others; the full terrorist arsenal will still be used, excluding nothing. The pressures will not end until either the South African government itself is overthrown, or the independent governments have been overthrown, and their people brought back into subservience with dependent economies tailored to fit the world-wide net of imperialist relations of inequality. The Nkomati Accord is not a peace signal for Africa. *It is, in our view, the fore-runner of worse pressures, worse aggressions to come, for all the frontline states. And it should be a warning to them all to prepare!*

### **The South African Dimension**

No one has felt the immediate post-Nkomati increase of imperialist and reactionary pressure more sharply than our own South African liberation movement, headed by the ANC and supported by all the main popular and patriotic forces and organisations at home and abroad, including this journal and the South African Communist Party. Our position in regard to the Nkomati Accord is unique, not directly shared by others in the front line. Premier Botha undoubtedly hopes that the Accord will destroy our movement and our challenge to apartheid; undermining the frontline states is only one aspect of it as far as he is concerned.

It is we South African revolutionaries who are at the centre of the Accord and its main target. Yet it is we, uniquely, who are not a party to the discussions, not asked whether any accord is possible; not asked even to talk about a treaty whose subject is, after all, ourselves: *us; our country; our people; our future.*

And just because we and *our* revolutionary movement are at the centre of the Nkomati Accord, it is *our* movement and *our* people who are most directly affected by it, and who feel its most immediate consequences. No one could possibly pretend that the Accord has not adversely affected our freedom to operate. Of all the valuable acts of international aid our movement has received from many countries, the facilities accorded to us by Mozambique in the past have been amongst the most important. Now these facilities have been severely restricted, in some spheres totally withdrawn.

But of themselves, they do not demand of us any new policies. It was never our strategy to seek to conduct the struggle of our country's liberation from outside its borders. Activity outside our borders was forced upon us, unwillingly, in the worst period of our movement's decimation in the early 1960's. After the period of the Rivonia trial and the mass arrests, imprisonments and torture of our militants, our movement had been

brought close to ineffectiveness. Had it remained totally restricted to work only within the country, it was our judgement then that it might well be totally extinguished. It was decided to commence the building of an apparatus outside the country, to take on the task of rebuilding an organisation out of the remnants of the wreckage — an organisation which would once again function within our country but with fraternal assistance and support of personnel and organisation abroad.

### **The Way Back Home**

That central strategy has never altered. The ANC leadership outside South Africa, like the Communist Party leadership, has never seen itself as permanently in exile. It has always seen itself as a temporary caretaker for the movement which had to be rebuilt, regrouped and re-established at home. That the task of rebuilding would never be easy was always understood by those who had experienced, for themselves the reality of operating a revolutionary force within the terror of the South African apartheid state. It has been underway for over twenty years. And though it is still not a task that can be said to be complete, it has achieved signal success.

Within South Africa today, every aspect of our people's struggle contrasts sharply with the bleak days of 1960. Today there is everywhere widespread readiness for struggle, which flares up repeatedly in a myriad of local actions by workers, peasants, squatters, students, house-holders, professionals and politicians. Everywhere, on a local level, there are respected and trusted local spokesmen and leaders, together with local organisations who fill the vacuum created by the 1960 setbacks. And there is now the evidence everywhere of the existence of an armed force of guerillas, freedom fighters, operating within the country and surviving amongst the people “.. like fish in water”

This is not to claim that every mass popular resistance to the regime in township or factory is organised by the ANC. Far from it. But the ANC presence is there, everywhere; its influence and reputation, upheld and spread by the external leadership, give coherence, unity and self-confidence to every popular movement. To this extent, the external ANC leadership has fulfilled a large part of its task — the essential part — of sponsoring the spirit of mass resistance amongst the people, without which there can be no safe basis for a rebuilt organisation. And the SACP has played its full part in all this.

Now, for sure, the basis is there for rebuilt revolutionary organisations, underground and yet ubiquitous within South Africa. Whether, or in what



strength such organisations have in fact been built already, is not something that can possibly be discussed in such a forum as this. But certainly the objective circumstances are there. And so the external leadership has done what it set out to do — in part at least. It has created the conditions for a return of the organisations and their leadership to South Africa. It has fought a way back, via propaganda and underground organisation; and it has fought a way back via foreign training and cross-border return of the armed fore-runners of the peoples' liberation forces.

Our organisations have had over twenty years' hospitality in the frontline states to make this possible. If the curtailment of facilities in Mozambique is to have any long-term influence on our movement, it will be simply to lend urgency to the pace of this process of fighting our way back into the country; and thus to expedite the date at which an internal revolutionary leadership is once again established — this time securely surrounded by an armed cadre and an aroused and supportive population. The difficulties for us arising from the Nkomati Accord are short term; the challenging opportunities long term.

### **Facing The Future**

For in South Africa's freedom struggle, then, there is now intense pressure to meet the long-term challenge and re-establish the centres of our movement clearly within the borders of South Africa. It is a formidable challenge; but not more formidable than that faced in 1960 — and accomplished — of resurrecting our movement from the ashes of defeat.

For all the frontline states too there are formidable challenges. All are now being subjected to the international terrorism which finally brought the government of Mozambique to Komatipoort, with the aim of finally forcing each of them in turn to sign an Nkomati-style agreement.

But the main issue, as we argued above about Mozambique, is not the signing of an agreement itself, even though such an agreement may seriously handicap the South African freedom struggle. The fundamental issue is what will happen thereafter; and thereafter. For a containment of the ANC is not a final strategy of the US-South African axis. The "rolling back the frontiers" of national liberty and independence, of economic independence and of self-sufficient nationhood, is. Against that strategy, will any frontline state ultimately be able to hold fast to its chosen course towards its own future? This is the main question of Southern Africa at the moment. It is the overriding question Southern Africa needs to solve for itself, before which all the other manifold problems of the region must take second place.

The equation for holding out looks improbable. Against the vast financial, economic, technical and military resources of the aggressor can be arrayed only the spirit of independence and the still feeble economies and armies of the victims. If this were all to the equation, there would seem to be only one answer.

But this is not the whole story, for no people fighting against racism and imperialism should think of themselves as fighting alone, naked and unprotected against a more powerful foe. History has shown again and again that, despite the seeming disparity between contending forces, the outcome cannot be precisely predicted by counting numbers. Who would have foretold the military triumph of puny, underdeveloped Vietnam over the military strength first of the French empire, then of the United States? Or the political and social survival of the people's struggles in El Salvador and Nicaragua against improbable odds? The future is not fore-ordained. It depends finally on the perspectives and courage of peoples, on their ideology, strategy and tactics, on their decisions and their unity and determination in carrying them out, on the strengthening of the bonds between all the anti-imperialist forces everywhere, and perhaps above all, on strengthening the links between the forces of national liberation and national independence and the mighty bloc of the socialist countries with the Soviet Union as its heartland.

These are the perspectives which must be considered by the peoples of Southern Africa in deciding what must be done to halt the racist and imperialist juggernaut. It is not for us, in this journal, to dictate the details of strategy to the South African liberation movement, and even less to the frontline states. But we can put forward, and we do so here, some ideas for consideration, in the hope that they will eliminate pessimism and raise the prospect of successful resistance to the axis of enemy forces.

There are acceptable alternatives to the strategies incorporated in the Nkomati Accord. We must remember that if the position of Angola differs from that of Mozambique, it may be due in part to the substantial support and underpinning from fraternal Cuba, plus the warning from the Soviet Union that South Africa would simply not be allowed to occupy Luanda. For various reasons that deserve analysis, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Lesotho have so far resisted the South African pressure. But in the end there is, in our view, only one realistic strategy for Southern African independence to survive, and that is in long-term co-operation and unity of the national and international forces opposed to racism and imperialism, and ready to act against the aggression the enemy has unleashed in southern Africa.

One of the tragedies of today's dilemma is that Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord without adequate consultation with all the parties concerned. It appeared to be an individual decision reached unilaterally. If that is to be the pattern for the future, then there is no doubt that enemies of the apartheid regime will be knocked off one by one. They truly either stand together or they will go under individually. One of the most encouraging developments since the Nkomati Accord was signed was the unanimity reached at the meeting of the frontline states attended also by the ANC and SWAPO at Arusha towards the end of April.

### **Revolutionary Perspectives**

The strength of the front line against imperialism in Southern Africa would be greatly enhanced and the balance of forces substantially altered if the revolutionary struggle of the South African people were advanced much further, requiring the whole of the apartheid regime's military and economic resources to be concentrated at home. The balance of forces not only in Southern Africa but in the whole of Africa and indeed the world would be fundamentally altered if the South African revolution were to succeed in its aims and overthrow the apartheid state.

Here indeed lies the prospect of a real future for all Southern Africa's peoples. But it depends on the advance of the South African freedom struggle and the emergence of a new people's South Africa — socialist-oriented South Africa — to lend its weight, moral and material, to the frontline alliance. Here alone, in our view, lies the real security of the region, and the only way finally to secure its future against the "rolling back" inroads of imperialism.

It is a simple and obvious conclusion to which this leads: namely that our South African revolutionary movement needs the steadfast resistance of the frontline states in order also to facilitate our own work; but even more do the frontline states themselves need the advance and growth of *our* revolutionary movement to ensure their own independent future. In addition, the anti-imperialist forces of South Africa and the frontline states need to strengthen their ties with the world-wide association of anti-imperialist forces, above all the socialist countries. And it is to be hoped in turn that the world anti-imperialist forces and the socialist states will be able to increase their support of the peoples of Southern Africa to help them to withstand the destabilising pressures and outright terrorism of the racists and imperialists.

Southern Africa is now, more than ever, interdependent. And the people of South Africa, represented by our liberation movement, are now more than ever to be seen as a vital part of that interdependence. We cannot acquiesce

in the surrender of any part of Africa to the enemy. Everything must be done by the progressive forces of all countries to strengthen the ability of Africa to resist the counter-revolutionary pressure of the racists and imperialists, to build up the economies of the independent African states, to raise the living standards of their peoples.

Let us in South Africa accept the challenge thrown down by the Nkomati Accord by consolidating and extending the revolutionary process at home. We can always be sure that our own people, whose struggle nourishes the roots of our liberation movement, can never let us down.

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