

SOUTH AFRICA: IMPERIALIST MANEUVERING AND THE TIDE OF LIBERATION

Alfred Nzo

In recent years we have heard the imperialists speak repeatedly of "big changes" in their traditional policy in Southern Africa. The United States has widely publicized what it calls a "new course" on our continent, its political conceptions of the future for Zimbabwe and Namibia, and how it plans to settle the racial problems in my own country, South Africa.

What is behind such statements? Have the big capitalist countries really made any changes in their policy in relation to our countries and our peoples?

Western planners had to contend with the historical changes that occurred in the south of the continent after the significant victories of the liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies. Neither could they disregard the fact that the general situation on the continent was building up in favor of the progressive and anti-imperialist forces. The Nixon and Ford administrations were forced to heed the changing realities and adjust their positions accordingly. The United States proclaimed it was ready to work for majority rule in the racist states. And this was held up as new US policy toward Africa. Subsequent events would show, however, that this course was no more than a bid for a neo-colonialist settlement in the racist oppressed countries of the South at a time when the revolutionary and patriotic forces were advancing on an unprecedented scale and endangering imperialism's economic and military-strategic interests.

It is equally evident that the revolutionary movement, particularly in Angola and Mozambique, greatly alarmed the United States, Great Britain, and other imperialist states, for it made it clear that the peoples would not stop at winning their independence, but would go on to charting a road of progressive development.

In order to slow down the revolutionary movements in the African South imperialism launched its "secret" wars against the progressive liberation movements and organized open intervention against Angola — South African racist troops invaded the territory of this young, sovereign state. The failure of these aggressive plans forced the Western strategists to seek other, neo-colonialist solutions. To isolate the liberation movements in South Africa from their natural friends and allies, the social-

ist countries, the United States and its NATO partners brought out the bogey of "communist penetration" more and more frequently. This campaign of intimidation was stepped up at the height of the events in Angola when the revolutionaries received extensive aid and support from socialist countries, particularly the USSR and Cuba.

When the Carter administration took office, the efforts to win Africa over by neo-colonialist means were carried a step further. US politicians believed the time had come to extol majority rule and proclaim themselves champions of human rights, for they were well aware that in many African countries, particularly in the racist citadels, human rights was a sensitive issue.

But freedom-loving Africa refused to be taken in by this "new" policy and the honeyed imperialist speeches which were but a coating on old racism. International capital is directly involved in the racist suppression of the liberation movement. A secret memorandum circulated by General Motors, the US multinational operating in South Africa, states expressly that it is creating its own combat forces to protect its plants in the RSA in case of labor unrest. These units, it says, will fall under the command of the racist regime's armed forces. The memorandum makes it clear that for the military authorities in Pretoria the two General Motors plants are key enterprises that could come under the Defense Ministry, meaning that when the need arises these plants would start producing military hardware.

Are we still supposed to believe that the Carter administration is our ally? Such allegations are obviously meant to lull the vigilance of the revolutionary forces, weaken the movement of oppressed people, bolster imperialist positions in South Africa, and leave the system intact.

The racist-imperialist alliance, enemy of the peace and freedom of the nations, is developing in many directions, one of which—military-nuclear cooperation—would give nuclear weapons to the racist-fascist clique. Work in this area has made considerable headway, as even the imperialist powers acknowledge.

Mounting pressure by the revolutionary forces has compelled the regime to expand its military program and increase its military-industrial complex, to whose existence it largely owes the lavish aid it gets from the multinationals.

The flames of the liberation struggle are spreading. Nineteen seventy-six, a year marked by the events in Soweto, ushered in a period of turbulent uprisings and demonstrations against all forms of oppression and embracing virtually all

segments of the population—the exploited working class, the youth, and the revolutionary intellectuals. The masses are saying "no" to racism and are denouncing the alliance between this misanthropic regime and international imperialism.

The struggle has entered a new and higher phase. Government troops are meeting with growing armed resistance from units of the Umkhonto We Sizwe (military wing of the ANC). A key six-hour battle took place last August only a hundred miles from Pretoria, and though the racists were armed with modern weaponry their losses were high. Our people were able to pull out in time. This was but a forerunner of things to come. So is it surprising that the racist regime is telling the white population to be prepared for what it calls terrorism? The racist Premier Botha and Vorster before him publicly proclaimed that it was no longer a question of crushing the ANC, but of trying to contain it. They warned the white population of the danger of "terrorism" spreading. The widespread resistance organized by the ANC is no longer kept a secret by the authorities.

The regime is now faced with the new problem of having to deal with the white youth who refused to serve in the racist army. Of the 63,000 young men called up in 1976, 37,500 or 59 percent refused to be inducted. Hundreds have been arrested and tried, while others have slipped out of the country. The result is that for the first time black people are made to serve in the armed forces. They have already been posted to operational areas, mainly in Namibia against the SWAPO-led national-liberation movement.

What is important, however, is that many white youths are seeking out the revolutionary forces, the African National Congress, in an effort to learn what they should do. The anti-government white youth refuse to support or be a party to a regime that kills innocent people—adults, women and children (sic)—indiscriminately, and they are against the regime's nuclear plans. For many, Soweto was a harsh lesson. White students took to the streets in protest against the regime's barbarity. This is a sign that as the liberation struggle in South Africa forges ahead it will be joined by growing numbers of white youth.

Slowly but surely the racist regime is disintegrating, unrest is mounting, the economic crisis is worsening, and unemployment is on the rise. And no maneuvering to climb out of the crisis will save the regime. This is apparent, for one, from the situation in the so-called independent bantustans, where the people have tasted the bitter pill of this infamous "independence," which in fact spells out nothing but a further deterioration of their condition and benefits only a small clique of traitors from among the tribal chiefs. The regime has bestowed on them titles of ministers, chief ministers, and the like,

and is using them as a buffer to absorb the shock of the growing opposition to racism and apartheid.

But bantustanization is no solution, for the people refuse to accept this fictitious independence. In a ploy to win over the people the so-called Transkei government headed by Matanzima claimed it was capable of resisting white minority rule, and announced its intention of breaking with Pretoria and assisting the liberation struggle. However, if the situation were normal in Transkei Matanzima would not have had the courage to make such bold statements. This was pure demagoguery to dampen the growing discontent. He was trying to convince the people that he had not deserted them altogether. However, he is only a tool of the South African regime.

The situation is equally explosive in one more fictitiously independent bantustan, Bophuthatswana, where an atmosphere of confidence prevails among the people following the successful military operations of the Umkhonto We Sizwe. They are literally demanding arms to fight the hated regime. They identify themselves with the revolutionary liberation struggle of South Africa and not with the puppet rulers.

The seeds of revolt will mature wherever the administration plans new "independent" bantustans. In the territory of the Venda tribe, for example, Pretoria's puppets suffered a crushing defeat during the racist-staged elections. The opposition party rejecting bantustanization won a sweeping victory. The authorities were forced to cancel granting this territory fictitious independence. These developments were not a surprise. The authorities were compelled to enforce a state of emergency in the area only a few months before the elections because of the growing anti-government feeling.

Our people's liberation struggle enjoys broad international support. The ANC has invariably expressed its deepest gratitude to socialist countries, mainly the Soviet Union, GDR and Cuba, for their assistance. With other progressive and democratic forces our organization recognizes the socialist world system's immense contribution to the national-liberation movement on the African continent. This effective solidarity should be welcomed and safeguarded against the unremitting assaults of international imperialism.

The support of the socialist world is important to the consolidation of the progressive African governments in Angola, Mozambique and other countries. Their consolidation would further the national-liberation struggle, helping not only individual countries but also the liberation movement on the entire continent.

It is our deep conviction that our ties of alliance with the socialist world, the national-liberation movement, and the progressive working-class movement in the capitalist countries will greatly benefit the national-liberation movements in Southern Africa.

Reprinted by permission of the National Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity with African Liberation (NAIMSAL), One Union Square West, Room 713, New York, New York 10003.



Chike C. Aniakor, *Initiation*