SOUTHERN AFRICAN RESPONSES TO IMPERIALISM: THE CASE OF MOZAMBIQUE

By

SAULO BUSOLO WANAMBISI
HISTORY DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Southern Africa situation reels in struggles against US imperialism and the White settler regimes propped up by Western especially U.S. imperialism. Yet in those struggles and in terms of mainly influencing the course of events in the area concentrated on the terrain of possible avenues for revolutionary breakthroughs is the seething contention between the superpower struggles in the region.[1]

In a world conjuncture of articulated crises of imperialism, post-national independencies, post-revolutionary societies and the world working class movement and a phase in which the initial successful socialist and national liberation struggles have seen imperialism being defeated politically, the imperialist solution to the crisis threatens life itself ie. a nuclear winter.

Under conditions of struggles for world hegemony, US-led imperialism battling against the Soviet Union's quest for an expanded Pax Sovietica is out to forcibly impose its injured Pax-Americana. From the cold war to peaceful coexistence, Detente to the present New Cold War, the Grenada and the Euromissiles events point tendentially to an American hegemonic predominance at world level.[2]

Southern Africa is of particular and critical strategic importance to US imperialism and their War block. Responses to imperialist domination of the region veer from politics to economics. Politically, the region is active with struggles for national liberation in South Africa and Namibia in the midst of independencies without liberation and liberations without independence in the Frontline States.

South Africa seen as the last bastion of White minority rule in Southern Africa is frantically combating the

liberation movements both internally through increased arms expenditure and more repressive legislation and internationally through building closer economic and military links with major Western powers as well as building a "Sixth World" coalition with international Pariahs like Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Israel and regimes escalating interference/destabilization of Frontline States.[3]

The OAU recognized liberation movements suffering from a crisis of revolutionary political leadership together with the Frontline States tend more and more to lobby the imperialist powers to pressurize the Boer ruling class to concede democratic reforms with the goal of a democratic republic elected through universal suffrage.[4] Both the official liberation movements and the Frontline States have misrepresented the nature of the struggle by concentrating on Anti-Apartheid and not national liberation from imperialist domination and exploitation of the peoples of the region.

Thus if "one of the strategies of NSSM 39 of the Nixon administration was to strengthen linkages (such as increased aid) with Black-led regimes in the region in order to win them over to the US position and have them assist in "convincing" the liberation movements that negotiated decolonization was the most "fruitful" path",[5] then the organization of Frontline States as a form of Southern African responses to imperialism has been in favour of imperialism.

The tendency on the part of the Frontline States to take upon themselves the responsibility to determine the tactics and strategy of liberation movements in the region far from reflecting the weaknesses of Southern African liberation movements in general does raise the issue of possible deliberate attempts to forestall the

victory of those movements. The Zimbabwe case fully illustrates the Frontline States manipulation of liberation struggles in their favor. The role of Mozambique and Tanzania in engineering the Lancaster House betrayal of the Zimbabwean revolution is well-documented.[6]

The Frontline States responses to imperialism on the other hand meet with the imperialists own reaction to their own contradictions. There is the imperialist trilateral strategy "to demilitarize the African liberation struggle - not the minority regimes - and force a negotiated solution" - the 1977 Anglo-American Plan for Zimbabwe, the 1977 Western contact Group initiative for Namibia. Emerging from the West's trilateral strategy is the incorporation of regional influentials like Tanzania and Nigeria. Capitalizing on manipulating the real pressures felt by the Frontline States - balance of payments deficits that require supplementary financial assistance from both the IMF and the World Bank, the trilaterist west increase their leverage which have the Frontline States act as peace agents and defenders of stability and world order. The position of those Frontline States whose disarticulated economies are webbed to the Witwatersrand industrial mining complex in such cases becomes self-explanatory.[7]

Nonetheless the Frontline States confront South Africa in a new regional Association, the SADCC[8] as an economic form of response to South African expanaionism. Again as with the Political response to imperialism in the region, the SADCC economic response has identified South Africa as the cause of poverty and underdevelopment in the region. And the result? There is not only confusion as to the main enemy of the peoples of the region but also an inversion of

the nature of the struggle leading to oversimplification of the process of domination and that of liberation.[9] To be sure it is not enough to see the nature of the disarticulation of the economies of the SADCC countries in the form of racism in South Africa. Racism can be dismantled but would that alone be enough to dismember the regional economic inequalities?

Since the 19th century the South African based mining capital has expanded both territorially and sectorally. The mining corporations have interests throughout the SADCC countries. Secondly, these corporations have diversified their operations. They are involved in the mining of a host of different minerals. Their areas of activity include a whole range of sectors. For example the Anglo-American Corporation is involved, apart from mining, in such diverse economic activities as: iron, steel and Engineering; civil construction; timber; pulp and paper; motor car manufacturing; transport; chemicals and explosives; agriculture and food processing; property, banking, insurance and investment; exploration; research and development and the supply of technical and commercial service. It is this global and powerful outreach which has enabled this corporation to exploit the resources of the countries of the region, without much opposition both during the period of colonial rule and independence.

The problem in the Southern African region should therefore not be seen in the domination of South Africa but rather in the battle between the transnationals for capital export outlets, markets and sources of raw materials. This coupled with the yearning for national development creates centrifugal forces that tend to tear down the attempt for cooperation

intended to assist national development. Thus since we have argued South Africa is not the problem, the SADCC nations whatever the yearnings for regional cooperation are forced to concretely attend to the question of mobilizing resources first and foremost to implement their national programmes. This involves allocation of resources encompassing the whole spectrum of the economy in which the transnationals are active participants as the case is in most of these countries. Such pressure in the neo-colonial economy exerts considerable strain to the idea of regional integration desirable as it may be to the leaders.

It has also been argued that the case for SADCC is the transformation of their economies as a concomitant of the struggle to disengage from South Africa. Added to this is that the development of for instance a mining industry which aims at enhancing the development potential of the host economy demands a sophisticated technological infrastructure, skilled manpower and a developed industrial establishment which could sufficiently integrate the mining industry both backwards and forwards. The conclusion drawn then is that the SADCC countries though rich in mineral resources, the nurturing of an infrastructure for them is beyond the possibility of a single and underdeveloped country. Hence the need for regional cooperation. The reality of the issue however is that the imperialist domination of the SADCC countries means that they have no control over technology for much of the economic infrastructure in their countries. The control over technology is now the major conduit by which monopoly capital valorises itself internationally and ensures the neo-colonisation of the developing countries.

For one the capital goods industry is almost non-existent in the SADCC countries yet it is from that sector that technology is generated and hence the sector's role in the process of industrialisation. This means that capital goods and intermediate goods (and even food) account for a large share of imports in all the SADCC countries and for this reason it goes to show - with the need to coordinate so as to escape backwardness - how imports are bound to increase as import substitution proceeds in the region. This type of investment activities and trade patterns must lead to a greater siphoning of resources to external sources of capital and supply on merchandise account and once this is added up with superprofits earned by the monopolies on the capital export account which is also siphoned off, the impact which reflects itself in the SADCC neo-colonies for that is what they are as balance of payments problem is catastrophic. This again tears down the forces for regional integration.

In terms of international and inter-state trade, the prices of manufactured goods increases as those of primary commodities (which the majority of the SADCC countries produce) fall. The result is that they cannot sell much to each other while the monopolies increase their inputs. In this case expansion of production and trade disintegrates the attempts at regional integration even before it begins functioning as it calls forth a structural dependence on non-SADCC countries' inputs. Expansion and integration are not the same things. If demand is weighted to favor imports and supply of exports, expansion in each case due to the present neo-colonial structures in SADCC depends on outside forces. This results in what has been termed 'collective neo-colonialism'.

colonialism'.

From the above discussion, the viability of the SADCC initiative has therefore to be based on the resolution of the political question in the region. For us it is the understanding of the forces of imperialist domination which generate certain forces in the economies of the region that gives us a glimpse at the forces of imperialist domination and exploitation and the forces of nationalism. Nationalism is a reaction against much domination and it is these forces pulling apart, but easily compromised without the strength of the working people that gives us an idea of the centrifugal forces that are at work in SADCC. The national states is the more concrete organisation in continuing the struggle against imperialism as there is no real basis for a positive regional integration under neo-colonialism.

2.0 MOZAMBIQUE: SOME ISSUES NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT CRISIS:

Discussions about Southern African responses to Imperialism require a specification of "who is Mr. Imperialism that everyone speaks about but no one sees." The late Amilcar Cabral at one time insisted in what he called the "main question of the fight against imperialism" that a distinction must be made between imperialism and imperialist domination.

> Sometimes we hear people cry out 'Down with imperialism' in their own country, but in reality they are fighting against imperialist domination. It appears to be of vital importance to distinguish imperialism from imperialist domination, to situate both in their historical perspective and to define their geographical locations. 10

Granted the above premise, a thesis emerges that imperialism is a phenomenon of "capitalist countries which have become imperialist ones" and thus it "exists in capitalist countries and not in our countries." And the conclusion;

> ... the fight against imperialism must be fought within the imperialist countries, and the struggle against imperialist domination must be fought in our own countries. In this fight against imperialist domination in our countries, we consider that the most important struggle today is the one directed against neocolonialism. 11

For us in dominated social formations, what is at stake here is the intimate link between the fight against imperialism in imperialist countries and that against imperialist domination in our countries.

Thus the international dimension in anti-imperialist struggles is underscored as an important element. Southern African responses to imperialism seen as a world level phenomenon have to deal with a world level analysis of political forces. Both the advanced and dominated countries must be understood together as parts of the world level whose hierarchy is organised on the basis of differential predominance. Under such arrangements the politically new element is the struggle for world hegemony by the superpowers and the consequent implications of class struggles for state power within geopolitically determined structural and conjunctural situations.

Southern African responses to imperialism from the point of view of the national states should be conceptualized from the above framework. Taking

Mozambique as a concrete case one would for instance be interested to know what theses emerge from there vis-a-vis

a) the crisis of capitalism in its imperialist stage,

b) the crisis of the experiences of post-natibnal independences,

c) the crisis of the experiences of socialist construction in post-revolutionary societies,

d) the crisis of the world working class movement and the Proletarian class political capacity,

e) struggles for world hegemony.

The year Mozambique attained its independence witnessed historic victories in the world-wide struggles against imperialist domination in Asia - the year of Indochina and in Africa - the year of the radical dissolution of the Portuguese colonial empire. That year for Africa marked the transition from the Congo of 1960 to the civil war in Angola as products of imperialist rivalry and world hegemonic power politics. Internationally therefore the US led imperialism was put on the defensive by the Soviet state capitalist formation struggling for world hegemony.

Within such International conditions, the radical nature of the struggle against Portuguese colonial expansionism in Mozambique had possibilities for a revolutionary breakthrough to institute a new beginning. We insist on possibilities for a revolutionary conjuncture by no means ensures automatic

transition to a higher mode of social organisation of life. In Mozambique, a revolutionary breakthrough meant the process of disentangling from the world imperialist circuit of capital through Portuguese - Southern African axis or reintegration on a new basis.

In Mozambique, the phenomenon of internal colonialism in the loose sense of white settlerdom via emigration as a by product of Portugal's modernisation had the net impact of totally marginalising the African peoples as a condition for the historical transition from precapitalism to a regime of capital accumulation based on forced labor. Domination of the African peoples was so intense and their resistance so radical to the extent that many observers conflated the themes of national liberation and socialism. Nonetheless a revolutionary national independence demanded of FRELIMO and other patriotic forces a nationally based process of capital accumulation. That on the other hand required a revolutionary seizure of state power in the political realm and relying solidly on mass initiative to utilize that power to carry the national revolution into the socio-economic realm.

Issues at this level related to the class political capacity of the leading core of the movement (FRELIMO) to destroy those institutions and practices that formented national oppression i.e. the colonial state as the organised core of class rule through institutions /practices opposed to the masses aspirations for real liberation. Writing in 1987 one raises the following questions: what are the conditions that could have impinged on a non-state, non-independent class fraction (historically (conditioned) in leadership of the

national liberation movement not to join the state and therefore not set itself in opposition to the mass movement as a ruling political power? How to remain in the mass movement to continue the struggle against the state and the new forms of domination to completely root out imperialist domination? How to conceptualize Cabral's class suicide thesis in practice at the point of transition from anti-colonial to anti-neocolonial struggles and the conditions, which favor or militate against such a kind of "suicide"? How to conceptualize the negotiated transitional route of independence in relation to mass resistance as the real material force against colonial domination for real independence? Can antagonistic contradictions be resolved peacefully? If history is any guide we could say then that as early as 1961, we learn from Patrice Lumumba that "no matter how nationalist one may be, inside a colonial state machinery, one cannot exercise a mass-based class dictatorship."[12]

Still at the level of politics come up issues to do with class aspects of the leadership and party questions in anti imperialist struggles. How to conceptualize FRELIMO's transformation into a Marxist/Leninist party in the epoch of what is said to be the crisis of Marxism[13] & others refer to post- /as Leninism? Is it not a contradiction that the mass movement whose concentration /gives rise to the party process of seizure of state power and its transformation can be induced by the state? Answers to these issues could clarify the claim by the FRELIMO leadership in 1980 that the Party was cut off from the people.

At the economic level, to what extent were the economic measures statizing all forms of profit

and interest bearing businesses and property irrespective of whether the owners were nationals or not, economically sound and politically justifiable? How much political work had been conducted amongst the peasants in order to lay a sound basis for the measures to collectivize them?

Overall; in view of the persistent crisis in the country, could it be argued that perhaps FRELIMO may have advanced some theoretical ideological theses whose political elaboration and concretisation not only suppressed and disorganized popular forces but also set in motion nationally disintegrative tendencies by alienating both elements of an embryonig national class of capital and the broad masses of peasants in a geo-political context charged with regional hostilities (from the white supremacist South African regime) and international tensions (between the superpowers with Southern Africa as one major arena)?

As the economic difficulties mounted and deepened in the form of food crisis, floods, drought, famine compounded by MNR's escalated armed offensives against the state and under conditions in which alignment with the COMECON block had been vetoed, the NKOMATI ACCORD came into force to provide the political conditions for proper reintegration into the world imperialist system through the same old axis of South Africa and Portugal. Soon after the Accord, Maputo witnessed the presence of high ranking Western personages. First to arrive was France's President Mitterand's African Affairs Advisor, Guy Penne who announced the doubling of French aid to

Mozambique. He was followed by Tiny Roland of Lonrho. Next was David Rockefeller, the American banking magnate who jetted into the capital at the personal invitation of the late President Machel through the mediation of former Portuguese Premier Pinto Balsemao at the time in town on a private visit and an influential figure in Portuguese banking circles. Following on the visits, speculation (proofed to have been correct) was rife that the next step would be Mozambique's membership in the Lome Convention Treaty and the IMF and the World Bank.

NOTES

1. See amongst others, Revisionism and Southern Africa, Revolutionary Reprints, No RR102, RCP Publications, Chicago, Illinouis, 1981; Russia's African Adventure, Australian Independence Movement, 1982, Bill Sales, Southern Africa/Black America; Black Liberation Press, N.Y., 1977; Arthur Gavshon, Crisis in Africa, Penguin Books, 1981.

2. Wamba-dia-Wamba, "Present Conjuncture: Some Aspects necessary to grasp world ideological formations", Dar es Salaam (Mimeo).

3. Henry Isaacs, "National Independence and Social Liberation", Ikwezi, No. 5, April, 1977; Joseph Hanlon, Beggar Your Neighbours, Indiana University Press, 1986; Phyllis Johnson and David Martin (eds), Destructive Engagement, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1986.

4. D. Fogel, Africa in Struggle, Ism Press, Seattle, Washington, 1982.

5. Carolyn Brown, "Apartheid and Trilateralism: Partners in Southern Africa" in Holly Sklar (ed), Trilateralism, South End Press, Boston, 1980, pp. 352.

6. "A Reader criticises Machel For Dual Attitude to White Settlers", Ikwezi, Vol. II, No. IV, December 1976; "Frontline States Interference must stop", ANC-(Zimbabwe) Statement to the liberation Committee of the OAU meeting in Lusaka on January 29, 1977 in Ikwezi, No. 5, April, 1977;" Zimbabwe: The Revolution Aborted

in D. Fogel, op. cit., Carolyn Brown, op. cit.

7. Carolyn Brown, op. cit.

8. Ann Seidman, "Towards Integrated Regional Development in Southern Africa", 1980 (Mimeo); A. Kgarebe (ed.), SADCC 2-Maputo, Nottingham, 1981.

9. D.W. Nabudere; "Imperialism and the South African State", Ikwezi, No. II, March, 1979.

10. Amilcar Cabral; "Portugal is Not an Imperialist Country", in Aquino de Braganca and Immannuel Wallerstein (eds.), The African Liberation Reader, Vol. I, Zed Press, London, 1982, pg. 32.

11. Amilcar Cabral, ibid, pg. 33.

12. Wamba-dia-Wamba, "Some Background to Congo-Zaire", Ikwezi, No. 8, March 1978, pg. 68.

13. Paul Sweezy, Post-Revolutionary Society, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980, Chap. 9.