

AFRICA

Portuguese-Speaking African Summit

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THE HEADS of state of Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé e Príncipe and the Cape Verde islands met in São Tomé in the middle of February 1985. It was the fifth summit of these countries which had agreed, already at their first summit held on June 1979 in Luanda, to meet periodically as members of the former Portuguese colonial empire in Africa in order to consider possibilities of expanding mutual cooperation, including the coordination of their foreign policies. Neither the complementary character of their economies nor territorial proximity, which otherwise play an essential role in every regional cooperation, had determined this gathering but the fact of belonging to the same former metropolis, their common struggle for independence and, first and foremost, the resolve of all of these countries to build a socialist state and economic system in specific African conditions. As a new element, one might add to this their common resistance to foreign interference and attempts by some countries to turn them off the road of development they have chosen themselves.

Although even the earlier gatherings of this kind were useful and important to all the participating countries, the convening of the gathering this year was due to the existence of special important reasons, which points to its exceptional significance. Two of the aforementioned countries — Angola and Mozambique — find themselves in a delicate and difficult situation which called for special attention and thorough consideration with a view to drawing common conclusions and reaching agreement on further actions to be undertaken. This applies, in the first place, to the agreements concluded by these two countries with South Africa in Lusaka on February 16, 1983 and in Nkomati on March 16, 1984, the first on disengagement and the second on non-aggression, for the purpose of normalizing their mutual relations.

With the exception of Guinea Bissau which, as is known, acceded to independence in September 1974, the other four countries became independent between June 25 and November 11, 1975. Guinea Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands and São Tomé e Príncipe became Portuguese colonies as early as the XV century and Angola and Mozambique in the XVI century. The long and ruthless colonial rule caused enormous harm to the development of these countries and left behind it some almost indelible traces. Portugal, as a colonial

metropolis, remained on African soil the longest and, when internal changes in Portugal itself accelerated the process of liberation of its colonies, the colonialists vented their rage on them by destroying or incapacitating almost all that could not be taken away, while all those possessing any kind of training or technical skill left these countries. The aim was obvious: to create the most difficult conditions possible in the economy and other sectors so that the peoples of these countries should "regret" the departure of the colonizer.

Quisling guerrilla formations were created by the colonizer with the help of South Africa, viz. the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the Movement of National Resistance of Mozambique (RENAMO) and, to some extent also, the Cape Verde Union for Independence and Democracy (UCID) which have based their activity on the above conjectures. Making use of the dissatisfaction of a section of the population owing to the difficulties and weakness of the new power, they engaged in actions aimed at destabilizing the régimes, primarily in Angola and Mozambique, as the two largest and, owing to their natural resources, most interesting countries. The common aim of all these satellite movements was to overthrow the governments of these countries and to replace them by pro-Western groups.

Already during the struggle for independence, the countries of Portuguese-speaking Africa had established their common organization — the Conference of National Organizations of Portuguese Colonies — with the basic objective of coordinating their military and political actions against the common colonial oppressor and coordinating policy on questions of international relations and cooperation.

The present useful mutual cooperation was upset, to some extent, by the coup d'Etat which took place in Guinea Bissau on November 14, 1980 resulting in a separation of Guinea Bissau from the Cape Verde Islands, one state until then. The coup in Guinea Bissau was interpreted in the Cape Verde Islands as an action directed against their interests. Actually, the new Guinean leadership reproached the deposed Head of State, Luís Cabral, among other things, of having enabled the Cape Verde Islands to enjoy a privileged position and the Chairman of the African Party of Independence of Guinea Bissau and the Cape

Verde Islands (PIAGC) Pereira, himself a native of Cape Verde Islands, of having directed the policy of the common party primarily in the interest of the Cape Verde Islands. This caused serious difficulties in mutual relations leading, in January 1981, to the splitting up of the common party and forming of a separate African Party of Cape Verde Islands and the separation of these two countries into separate states.

Up to June 1982, relations between Guinea Bissau and the Republic of Cape Verde Islands were characterized by extreme distrust and intolerance. Then, at the initiative of the President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, supported by the presidents of Angola and São Tomé e Príncipe, the two countries were reconciled and Luís Cabral, President of the common State, was released from imprisonment. This reconciliation enabled the two countries to continue their cooperation and was unanimously welcomed with relief by all participating countries. This made it possible to hold the second summit meeting in Praia, the capital of the Republic of Cape Verde Islands.

Throughout the period of their mutual cooperation, all these countries have lent unreserved assistance and support to the P.R. of Angola in its struggle against the quisling movement UNITA and the military interventions of South Africa. These countries adopted unanimously the same stand with regard to South Africa's attacks against Mozambique, particularly in 1982 and 1983. In addition to common problems of an international character, these countries were also faced with many difficulties and problems of an internal nature stemming from the former common colonial administration and from their common option for the building of a socialist society and establishment of people's government, as firm commitments given to the peoples of these countries in the period of struggle for independence. Regardless of some specificities of each country, taken separately, there exist many areas of common interest and, consequently, a need for useful cooperation.

A common organization for the study of economic projects and economic potentials of each country was established as early as 1976. Most successful within its framework has been the Inter-State Commission for Transport. This Commission laid down transport policy in all the five countries, particularly in the field of passenger transport. It also coordinated investment policy in air transport which resulted in the conclusion of an agreement between Angola and Mozambique, on the one hand, and Guinea Bissau, São Tomé e Príncipe and the Cape Verde Islands on the other, according to which the last three countries did not develop intercontinental air traffic. Services in this respect were guaranteed to them by Angola and Mozambique, so that they were able to channel their modest resources into the development of road transport and local air traffic. The Commission elaborated a common identity card which, as a travel document, is to be used by the inhabitants of all the five states in their mutual traffic.

A common Commission for the Application of People's Administration of Justice was established, in 1980, with a view to studying current practices in all the countries for the purpose of replacing the inherited legal system.

As all these countries were, to a greater or lesser degree, short of financial resources for the implementation of their development plans and projects (the only exception, for a few years, being Angola), the idea was launched to establish a common Portuguese-speaking African Bank for Development with capital from these as well as from other countries. The establishment of such a bank would enable the member countries to have an easier access, under favourable conditions, to the international capital market.

An enumeration of the areas and projects of concrete cooperation among these five African countries — which, as it is possible to conclude, do not constitute a formal community — would take us far. These countries are, otherwise, members of appropriate regional African economic organizations (Guinea Bissau, the Republic of Cape Verde Islands and São Tomé e Príncipe are members of the Economic Community of West African Countries, while Angola and Mozambique are members of the Conference for the Coordination of the Development of Southern Africa); they are all members of the United Nations, of the Organization of African Unity and of the movement of non-aligned countries.

The common problems and interests that we have mentioned have brought the heads of state of these five countries to the São Tomé summit. However, the summit was dominated by the situation of Angola and Mozambique one year after the conclusion of agreements with South Africa. Regardless of the obligations assumed, South African troops have not yet been withdrawn completely from the territory of the P.R. of Angola, nor has the lending of assistance to traitorous movements in Angola and Mozambique been discontinued. Therefore, the question not only of the real intentions of the Government in Pretoria but also of the United States Government, through whose good offices and mediation the above agreements were actually concluded, is being posed ever more frequently.

The policy of the colonial metropolis, Portugal, was severely criticized at the meeting at São Tomé, owing to Portugal's interference in the internal affairs of Angola and Mozambique and its assistance and support to rebels. Representatives of UNITA and RENAMO enjoy the hospitality of Lisbon from where they conduct a propaganda campaign against the legal governments of Angola and Mozambique. Therefore, according to foreign sources, some of these countries envisage the possibility of closing down their embassies in Lisbon if the Portuguese Government does not expel the representatives of UNITA and RENAMO from its territory.

The participants in the São Tomé summit also availed themselves of the opportunity to exchange views on achievements realized in the internal develop-

ment of each country since the last summit in 1983. One of the most important projects of mutual cooperation among the five countries, studied at the summit, was the integration of their merchant marines and the proposal to abolish visas for the citizens of these countries when travelling from one country to another. It seems that an agreement to this effect has been signed.

Finally, the results of the preceding summits of the five African countries and their important contribution to the strengthening of mutual relations and

laying down of foundations for political, economic and other cooperation were appraised positively. It is to be expected, therefore, that this useful practice will be continued both in the common interest of these countries and in the interest of regional and broader African cooperation. It remains, however, to be seen, what concrete measures and actions will these countries take in the immediate future in order to induce South Africa to comply with the obligations assumed by it under the agreements with the P.R. of Angola and Mozambique.