

IN order to understand Nkomati our basic analysis will therefore be to outline the development of the present status of international relations in general, the changing nature of regional relations, the mode of development and position of individual countries in the region. We then need a clear conception of the nature and path of our national liberation struggle. We need this in order to understand the impact of Nkomati. Finally, we need to develop an adequate strategic and organisational response so that we can continue and indeed intensify our struggle.

Without purporting to give more than a broad outline, the history of Africa's relations with Europe can be divided into a number of phases. In the earliest phases prior to the slave trade what relations there were, and these were limited contacts, were relations of equality. In the sixteenth century for example, there is correspondence between the King of Portugal and the King of the Congo, where the Portuguese king refers to his 'royal brother'.

The slave trade however altered this balance and ushered in an era of European exploitation of Africa, first of African bodies as slave labourers. This pulse fundamentally weakened Africa and paved the way for colonial conquest and a more systematic and far-reaching European domination over Africa.

Subsequent struggles and indeed our present South African struggle are part of a wider struggle to free Africa from this imperialist grip and to enable Africans to determine their own political destiny.

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Jesse - de - 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 84/15. FARA 32.

IN the twentieth century this balance was to change. Already the socialist movement and progressives in the African and Asian colonies were calling for an end to colonialism. But the October Revolution of 1917 created a fundamental breach in the imperialist world. After 1917 a socialist state existed, whose very first acts declared the annexation of other peoples' territories to be an international crime. Also in its practice the Soviet Union was to annul all unequal treaties previously entered into by Tsarist Russia and to allow Finland and Poland to realise their self-determination by seceding from Russia.

After World War II we saw the emergence of an asocialist camp in Europe, a number of states committed to socialist development and in their relations with Africa, Asia, and Latin America, committed to self-determination and sovereign equality.

IN 1949 the socialist world expanded further with the creation of the People's Republic of China and in the 1960s and 1970s it was extended to Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Afganistan and on our own continent there are states with a strong socialist orientation, such as Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique and also South Yemen.

All these socialist gains were severe setbacks for the imperialists. But these setbacks went further. Latin American states, previously almost entirely under American tutelage are now asserting a degree of independence. Many of the states of Africa and Asia having a socialist orientation are pursuing policies that bring them into contradiction with imperialism. Such anti-imperialist trends have found organisational expression in the nonaligned movement, the changing balance of forces in the U.N., the commonwealth and other organisations.

So the 1960's and 1970's were in the main, periods of severe setback for imperialism. The imperialist response has been varied. In the sixties it was at first possible to directly respond militarily as in Guatemala in 1965. In the seventies this was more problematic, especially after the imperialist defeat in Vietnam. The tendency has subsequently been to set up sub-imperial powers. First the Shah, who unfortunately for imperialism is no longer with us, then Isreal and now S.A.



So what we have then in the 1980s is two world systems with the socialist world in alliance with the nonaligned states making many gains against imperialism. The consequence for SA of the principled stand of these states as well as the concerted efforts of the ANC external mission and other anti-apartheid forces has been that SA, once a respected member of UN and Commonwealth has been hounded out of virtually every international organisation. By the time of the election of Thatcher and Reagan, SA's isolation was virtually complete.

The election of Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl has seen an attempt to redress the international balance of forces, to rollback Communism, even by direct imperialist intervention as in Grenada. It has also seen an attempt to rescue SA from its well deserved polecat status, to find a way to bring the racist regime back into the respectable capitalist world.

It is in this context that we must understand the Botha regime's renewed attempts to depict itself as peaceful. In order to justify their reabsorption into the wider capitalist family, the S.A. regime must appear to behave "normally". Even if so-called peace with neighbours is secured by violence, that might appear to provide a basis for justifying the ending of its pariah status.

I now want to pass on to the S.A. region. Prior to 1965 we find on the one hand protectorates - Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland; Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola; Rhodesia, Namibia under South Africa's yoke and South Africa itself practising extreme repression.

In the period 1965 to 1974 we see the protectorates securing independence and armed struggle being entered into in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola. In S.A. extensive repression continues.

In the period 1974 to 1980 we see S.A. gradually surrounded by independent states apart from Namibia. First Mozambique and Angola successfully gain independence after heroic liberation wars. Then the Zimbabwean liberation war is concluded after the Lancaster House talks, which lead to the country's independence.

All these events stimulate mass action within S.A. First the renewed worker activity and emergence of independent trade unions. Then we see the heroic Soweto rising of 1976 followed by the more organised mass action which we are still developing in the communities, in women's organisations, student organisations, etc, today.

Throughout the 70's and 80's armed resistance has escalated as demonstrated in a series of daring acts of sabotage, notably Koeberg, Voortrekkerhoogte, Pretoria, Oil Refineries, etc.

The final phase of the struggle in the South African region from 1981 to 1984 is the period when S.A. tries to reverse the gains made by the liberation struggles in the region. It is the period of destabilisation and extensive military intervention. S.A. directly intervenes in Angola, and still occupies large tracts of Angolan territory. South Africa also carries out incursions into Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho, Mozambique. This is coupled with a massive policy of destabilisation. These strategies are aimed at subverting the independence of states in the region by encouraging counter revolutionary bandits in Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

To counter this the states in the region have formed themselves into a coherent political force as the frontline states, who exercise considerable political influence in Africa as a whole. Economically they have formed SADC to reduce their dependence on apartheid S.A. Finally, they have called on the assistance of Socialists and friendly neighbouring states. First Cuban and Soviet military support to Angola, Soviet naval support in Mozambique after Matola raid, then Tanzanian military support in Mozambique. This is coupled with extensive economic, scientific and medical assistance from Socialist and Scandinavian states.

The destabilisation of states in the region is related to the struggle against apartheid. To the extent that peaceful and armed struggle against apartheid has intensified, the apartheid regime has tried to pretend that its source lies in neighbouring states. Previously it blamed Moscow. Though it still does that, more immediately it blames Southern African States who support the South African struggle against apartheid. Despite these states denying that they have ever offered military bases to ANC, the South African apartheid regime tries to intimidate them into reducing their commitment to end apartheid.

I now want to turn to Mozambique. Prior to 1974 it conducted an armed struggle against the Portuguese fascist and colonial regime. Having secured independence it proceeded in its struggle to build a socialist state, to end oppression and class exploitation. But it faced considerable difficulties. First there was the legacy of colonialism which had left the country without an industrial base, which also explains the class character of the Mozambican struggle which was primarily peasant in composition. Then there were natural disasters such as severe droughts and alternatively, flooding of crops. Then the extensive damage caused by MNR bandits.



Nevertheless in this period after Mozambican independence the Peoples Republic of Mozambique pursued a principled policy towards the apartheid state. From the outset it recognized the ANC as the legitimate representative of the South African people and its struggle consistently against apartheid and for the regime's isolation.

In the most recent period 1981-1984, the Mozambican regime has had to evaluate the consequences of these pressures and to confront an economically disastrous situation. This is the context in which Nkomati was entered into. We know that in such situations, demoralisation may set in, that forces within a political movement, previously in the minority, may rise to dominance, advocating a different line.

This is also the situation when the Reagan and Thatcher regimes are trying to reverse the trend of South African isolation. This is the time of raids into neighbouring states and deals with imperialism. South Africa's reabsorption demands not only "peace treaties" but what is depicted as "internal reform" is an attempt to rehabilitate the image of apartheid by conducting racist policies by different means. This is also the period of extensive militarisation of the South African state, where parliament's power decreases relative to the executive in general and the military in particular. The imperialist goals in this period, which it seeks to achieve through apartheid S.A. are: internal repression, but of a more acceptable kind in appearance, external extermination of the ANC, destabilisation and re-entry of S.A. into the international arena.

What does all this mean for us, for democrats struggling within S.A. to create a free and non-racial state. Our approach to the struggle in consequence of these imperialist endeavours, must be, in the first place, to draw more and more people into our movement, to develop our organisations so that we harness their energies as effectively as possible. What forms of struggle we can engage in cannot be chosen abstractly. They will only be feasible in so far as they reflect the level of our organisation.

Externally - what must our relations be with the front line states? I think that we need and they need to realize and acknowledge that there will be no long term stability in the region until there is liberation in S.A. There may be treaties but there will not be peace within S.A. and without the internal peace there can be no possibility of peaceful relations of equality with the states of the region. Nkomati may forbid forms of subversion in one state. The apartheid regime will not brook independent states. Their very existence threatens it. It is in our interest to have independent Mozambique and to have strong and independent states in the whole region.

We must support them. Equally it is in their interest to support us in our struggle to rid the world of the scourge of apartheid.

What then is the impact of the Nkomati. We noted at the beginning of this talk that it has weakened the spirit of many of our people. We cannot allow that to continue. We have to rid ourselves of any feeling of defeatism. A long and difficult struggle lies ahead. We never expected it to move smoothly. We have had many setbacks before Nkomati. We surmounted them and we will surmount this one. We will do so if we improve our organisations and in our strategic response if we put even more of our energy behind the UDF into turning this Front into the truly mighty force that it needs to be.

With Nkomati we may expect more repression. The state may feel that the accord frees its hand to deal more viciously with mass resistance. How we can meet this prospect, the only effective way of carrying the people with us, no matter what the racists may do, is to intensify mass action and struggles - among the workers, in the communities, among the youth and women.

As regards the international impact of Nkomati, admittedly P.W. Botha got to Europe and was received by Thatcher. But even these "gains" must be seen dialectically, for as with the New Zealand rugby tour the "gains" were largely eroded by the spurt that these visits provided to anti-apartheid organisations, who used the tour as a rallying point to draw vast protesting crowds.

I cannot pretend that we wanted this Nkomati Accord. It was something of a setback. But this setback occurred within the context of an overall advance in our struggle, internally and internationally. We must not allow ourselves to be immobilised by this Accord. We must strengthen our organisations, and deepen our understanding and develop our strategy and tactics. No matter how many accords the racists may force other states to enter with them, no matter how much violence they use against our people and other states in the region, our struggle will not stop. No matter how long it takes, we will continue. Ultimately we will be free and the freedom of S.A. will be the freedom of the whole region.



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