

Mozambique in the Framework of Southern Africa

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The conjuncture in southern Africa, notably in respect to Mozambique, cannot be properly understood if one does not take into consideration those tight bonds which unite South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique on the economic, political and cultural levels — cultural being here used in the very general sense of the conceptions of life. A simple look upon the map will allow us to see that Rhodesia and the richest areas of South Africa, to wit, Transvaal province where the Rand minerals are located, do not have a proper outlet to the sea: the most economic route goes through Mozambique, specifically through the ports of Lourenco Marques and Beira. This explains the annexationist pretensions expressed by Great Britain at the end of the last century concerning Lourenco Marques, called Delagoa Bay, and which gave rise to a dispute decided under the arbitration of the French Marshall MacMahon.

Later, and taking into consideration the set of other factors of reciprocal interest, there was established a modus vivendi between Mozambique and South Africa, which was consecrated by a series of agreements of which the Convention of 1928, called the Transvaal agreement, and later renewed in 1962, was the most important. According to it the colonial administration in Mozambique pledged to send 100,000 Mozambican workers to the mines in South Africa every year — a base that could be exceeded with the permission of the latter country. In turn South Africa pledged to utilize the port of Lourenco Marques for export traffic from Transvaal, plus a certain quantity of citrus fruit. An identical arrangement was made for Rhodesia, a few of whose contemporary implications we shall have the occasion to appreciate.

In the long run, given the failure of the colonial economy in Mozambique to take off, the result was to create a strong dependence vis-a-vis South Africa and Rhodesia. In 1960, nearly 400,000 Mozambican workers were found in

South Africa and Rhodesia in the framework of the bilateral agreements of Portugal-South Africa and of Portugal-Rhodesia. According to these agreements, the workers' salaries are to be paid to the Portuguese government which would pay the worker in Mozambican 'escudos' at the termination of the contract. This explains how, for instance, 'the output of manpower abroad' could contribute one-fifth of the hard currency income in the budget forecast of Mozambique in 1961.

A quick examination of the balance of payments of Mozambique in 1966 shows on the other hand that transport, railways and ports – not to speak of the fiscal income to which they give rise – represented nearly 42% of total income.

This close dependency also explains the bitterness of the Portuguese complaints about sanctions against Rhodesia which meant, with the closing of the Beira-Umtali pipeline and the decrease in the traffic in Beira and Lourenco Marques ports, a loss of 15 million pounds up to August 1967 (nearly 19 million by the end of the same year), a loss which Portugal claimed in indemnities from the United Nations.

Mr. Nogueira, Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs and the maker of this demand, did not however stress that, according to the OECD report, commerce between Portugal and Rhodesia had increased fourfold during the same period, going from \$314,000 in the first nine months of 1966 to 1.2 million dollars for the same period of 1967 (imports), and from \$111,000 to \$493,000 in exports, while industrial production in Mozambique increased to 43% in 1966 from nearly 6% in the preceding year. The refinery in Lourenco Marques, for instance, handled 12 times more oil over the previous year, oil which was going openly to Rhodesia, as was admitted by the above-mentioned Portuguese minister.

These last elements permit us to see that this economic interdependency which we are speaking of does not only belong to historical legend. On the contrary, it is tending to become considerably stronger in a perspective that goes beyond the framework of a transitory political solidarity, but is part of the grandiose projects of economic integration advocated by South Africa.

In our view, that most important item of this integration plan consists in the construction of the Cabora Bassa dam, located on the Zambezi river, in Mozambican territory, in the province of Tete. This dam seems in fact to constitute the cornerstone of the plans of economic cooperation between South Africa and Portugal, and aims at supplying inexpensive electrical energy to South Africa, Mozambique and Malawi, thus accelerating the economic integration of the area. The estimated production amounts to 17 billion KW/h per year while the production of Aswan scarcely exceeds 10 billion. The first stage of the project alone would cost nearly 105 million pounds and three consortia have presented definite proposals:

1. ZAMCO (France – West Germany – South Africa)
2. Cabora Bassa Construction (Great Britain)
3. Cabora Bassa Builders (France – USA).

South Africa has already pledged itself to buy nearly half of the dam's

output, energy which will be supplied to it through a line 1,400 kms. long. Even though the first stage of the project has been announced for completion by 1974, it is believed that a certain amount of energy may be produced from 1970 on.

On the other hand, the completed project will make the Zambezi river navigable all along its Mozambican channel, which is 830 kms. long. A port has been planned at the mouth of the river on the Indian Ocean, which could harbour a 40,000 ton ship. Ian Smith's racists are rushing for their part to make the Hunyani, a tributary of the Zambezi, navigable as well, which would give them a means of river communication with the ocean.

The most serious political consequences are to be located however in the settlement scheme made possible by the reclamation of 2.5 million hectares of productive land where the immigration of a million white colonists is projected. No one doubts that this mass of settlers would constitute a formidable human dam opposed to the liberation of this southern region of Africa.

In the framework of economic integration and with the same political aim, there has been the suggestion of a common market for southern Africa, which would include not only the white powers but also the independent countries of Africa. This is the economic aspect of the tentacle-like nature of this white Holy Alliance, and which alternates threats and aggression with seduction and economic infiltration manoeuvres, seeking to create or reinforce economic dependence, and hence political dependence, of the independent African countries of the area.

In face of these overall plans, particularly in view of the acceleration of the process of integration, our answer consists in the development of our political and military action, and its extension to the whole area of the country. Launched in 1964, armed struggle for liberation has already achieved some important successes. In the two northern provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado, large areas have been freed from colonial occupation and the people have recovered the exercise of their own sovereignty.

Last March, a new front was opened right in Tete province where the Portuguese are thinking of building the Cabora Bassa dam. The previous successes allow us to forecast considerable difficulties in carrying out the Portuguese plan, if it doesn't make it impossible.

We should now examine the establishment and the development of military cooperation organized among Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia. The first evidence of this was supplied by an ex-officer of the Portuguese army, Commander Jose Ervedosa, to the Committee of 24 of the United Nations, which met in Algiers in July 1966. According to him, the contacts among the General Staffs of the three armies date from the month of February 1962. Today this cooperation is no longer a secret.

At its origin we find the condition of the white minority in South Africa, without a fallback position, determined to defend its position as a dominator of the African people.

Portugal on the other hand was having to cope with similar problems in Angola and Mozambique, problems which were rendered more acute once

armed struggle in Angola had begun in February 1961. Isolated by the old colonial powers – England, France and Belgium – who had preferred to try the more peaceful and less expensive ways of neocolonial domination in place of direct colonization, Portugal turned towards South Africa and Rhodesia to establish joint military plans.

The peculiarity of the Portuguese attitude in the face of the so-called current of ‘decolonization’ pertains to the structure of its economy, that is to the backward character of its economy, and to the kind of colonial exploitation practised by Portugal which demanded the maintenance of a system of direct domination, the only one which allowed the over-exploitation of natural resources and of local manpower in particular.

This *inability to neo-colonize*, rather than ideological factors, is at the basis of the Portuguese decision to oppose independence, if only of a formal kind, for the colonies.

On the other hand we must emphasize that the social structure in the countries of southern Africa is more or less the same. We are speaking, in each case and despite quantitative differences, of colonies settled by whites where the Europeans are in total control of the political, economic and cultural life of the country, in spite of the often great disequilibrium between the size of the white population and that of the African populations. All this together with the economic and social bonds established from the beginning of the century among the settler minorities in these countries – and this is particularly true of Mozambique – naturally brought them to work together to elaborate a strategy of ‘common defence’. It involved at first an exchange of information on the activities of the nationalist forces and of experiences with anti-African repression agreements for the extradition of African and nationalist patriots. To the development of nationalist politico-military action there has corresponded an intensification of white cooperation: South African helicopters of the base at Caprivi were sent to intervene against the Angolan nationalist forces, while the white South African forces openly fought the patriots in Zimbabwe.

In Mozambique our information services signalled the presence of South African troops stationed in Tete province along the Zambezi river, particularly in Chicoa, Mague, Zumbo (several companies) and in Chioco (a battalion); even more recently still, South African troops were said to be in Fingoe and Funrancungo.

In this regard, we should like to emphasize the importance of the participation of South African troops on the fields of combat of the Portuguese colonies, since it tends to remove all autonomous decision-making power from Portugal insofar as ‘its’ colonial policy is concerned. In effect, by tying its defence, indeed the destiny, of Angola and Mozambique to Rhodesia and South Africa, the Portuguese are willy-nilly taking the path of defence to the death of their colonial territories in a framework whose essential elements have been fixed by South Africa.

We shall finally discuss, if briefly, the situation of southern Africa in the context of world imperialism. Traditionally a source of excess-profits,

extremely rich in gold, diamonds and raw materials of all sorts, South Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies have been coveted by international imperialism for a long time. The discovery of veins of raw materials of military importance, and of oil only strengthened this interest. The economic exploiters of these regions found zealous and faithful allies in the European settlers in the area. A convergence of interests no longer solely racial but fundamentally economic was established between the settlers and international capitalism. The analyses presented here have abundantly demonstrated, with statistical evidence, that this was so because of the nature of imperialist capitalism itself. We would simply like to emphasize the strategic importance both of South Africa and the Portuguese colonies in the imperialist strategy given the renewed importance of the Cape Route as a central means of international communication. Not only transitory factors, and such as the closing of the Suez canal, but also the technical demands of the giant oilers, and the 'strategic covering' of the Indian Ocean, have led European politicians such as General Bethouart, David Rousset and Sir Alec Douglas-Home to summon the West to protect this vital route, which implies increasing support to Portugal and South Africa. To underline the reinforcement of the ties between the imperialist powers and the white powers in southern Africa, we should also remember the aggravation of the international conjuncture characterized by the escalation of reactionary violence in face of the successes attained by popular forces throughout the world.

Having reached the stage of direct intervention in Vietnam, world imperialism, headed by American imperialism, but involving also Great Britain, Federal Germany and also France – whose role in southern Africa is one of the most notorious – Japan, etc., world imperialism has evolved, we were saying a division of forces and tasks in the framework of a global strategy of choking popular aspirations so as to maintain its domination and its exploitation.

The white bloc of southern Africa is assigned the important task of protecting the reserves of raw materials, of ensuring the exploitation of African manpower and of undertaking an action of re-colonization of the continent, from the South northward.

Before the alternative where we find on one side the exploited popular masses, and on the other the exploiting settlers, the West, i.e. the capitalist countries, has chosen the latter. It could not be otherwise. We note this. We too, we have chosen. We have chosen to be with progressive humanity, with the millions of people who combat oppression, misery, social downfall, those who build a new world and a new man. We are with the forces of progress and social justice; we are with history.