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SOUTHERN AFRICA AFTER SPINOLA

by

Ruth First

Military coups are inclined to produce changes of a superficial character unless, as in Chile, they demolish the mass base of organs of popular power or, as in Portugal, open a road towards their formation. Not that there can yet be certainty in Lisbon and for Portugal. Disparate elements are jockeying for control of the army and the state. The old ruling class has not yet rallied its forces but it may well do so. The euphoric crowds that claimed the streets during those heady days in April have still to consolidate their organisation and institutionalise their power. The battle for social change is clearly just beginning. But forces and ideas that were in fetters in Portugal for half a century and longer now have room to stir. The conscripts have sickened of the wars in the colonies and are clamouring at the front to be sent home. There is nowhere any doubt that the coup d'etat in the Portuguese army which abruptly ended the dictatorship would not have happened except for the long drawn-out guerilla wars in Africa, and Portugal's failure to win them. It is correspondingly clear that the resolution of Portugal's present crisis is inextricably bound up with her capacity to end that commitment to war, and to break sharply and irrevocably with her colonial past.

The coup d'etat was staged by a young officers' movement demanding not a military but a political solution in the colonies. Speedily-initiated negotiations with liberation movements-- still in progress in two of the three colonies as this article is written-- are a measure of that intent on the part of the new regime, or important elements within it. Perverse as this may seem, the solution is, if anything, seen by the radical elements in government and young officer corps as too easily evident. Wars fought so bitterly in the field longer than a decade, over such substantial issues, are not effortlessly ended in a week or two around a conference table. It is true that those now in office who were themselves persecuted by the Salazar-Caetano regime are indisputably in the best position to deny any responsibility for that government's colonial policy the purposes of which were and are inimical to the development of the peoples in the colonies and in Portugal alike. But the difficulty is that it was a deep-running policy, going back centuries; its purposes cannot be dismantled without tearing at deep roots in the Portuguese system, and also in Southern Africa as a whole.

The moment for this operation has never been more opportune, and the liberation movements can be relied upon to seize their time. But there is a certain danger in over-simplifying the issues between the forces at play. *The decisive issue throughout Southern Africa*, as everywhere, will not be the formal recognition of any right to formal independence, which comes in a variety of shapes and forms, but *which social and political forces will come to take power, and to what end*. The politics of guerilla warfare are not as readily understood as the logistics of the battlefield, and it is precisely on the meaning and perspective of independence, and the means to attain it, that the issues dividing Portugal and the colonies are liable to be most intransigent of a rapid and easy solution.

The State of the Battlefields

The military situation is clear enough. In Guine-Bissau where General Spínola himself commanded, Portuguese power is confined to the towns and to isolated garrisons. Over 80 countries now recognise the independent state of Guine-Bissau, though no western countries as yet, and PAIGC is delaying its application for United Nations recognition till it commands majority support. In Angola guerillas tie down a Portuguese army 50,000 strong. A British correspondent (of the *Financial Times*) was recently in the briefing room of military intelligence in the Luanda headquarters of the Portuguese army and she described a map studded with coloured pins to mark the rise and fall in guerilla actions. On the day she was there, at the end of March, there were about twenty pins, 'but the pinpricks left over the map's surface were almost as eloquent as Braille'.¹

But if in Angola, for reasons outlined below, the Portuguese forces have managed to maintain a certain stalemate, Mozambique is the soft under-belly of the colonial presence in Southern Africa. In ten years of war, the last three months have been the most disastrous ever for Portugal. Frelimo forces are beginning to strangle the 'throat' of the colony, in the provinces of Manicó e Sofala, linked with Tete, which straddle the transport and communication infrastructure not only of Mozambique but are of central importance also to Rhodesia. The crucial stretch is a narrow 250 kilometre band between the Rhodesian frontier and Beira, Mozambique's second port, after Lourenço Marques. Frelimo tactics have completely disconcerted the Portuguese military command which was expecting a frontal assault on the Cabora Bassa dam and hydro-electric project. Instead Frelimo forces have infiltrated south of the Zambezi River, well south of the Beira-Rhodesia road, and are striking into the white agricultural heartland of the more southern regions. Even before the coup there

was an increasing exodus of settlers, and alarm and despondency were beginning to spread through the colony's small white community. Frelimo's new offensives through Zambia into Tete province also made possible the opening of a new guerilla offensive inside Rhodesia. The Smith government has admitted more than once that it is out of control of the security situation in the northeast of that country. Here guerilla actions appear to be past their initial installation stage, and to be capable of renewing themselves from the local populations. The South African press has published alarmed--and alarmist--reports about how Frelimo guerillas are now only seven days forced march from the South African border. In Namibia--South Africa's illegal colony--armed actions in the Caprivi Strip are for the present more politically than militarily significant. But fear of escalated operations and of links between the struggles in northern Namibia and southern Angola--which share a common border--are holding down large South African military forces. In South Africa proper though the perspective of the liberation movement is one of armed struggle, armed actions within that country have not yet commenced; nonetheless in the last two years the regime has been severely harrassed by renewed and prolonged strikes, and fresh outbursts of semi-legal protest which demonstrate that contradictions within the system are more acute than ever.

An Imperialist Sub-System

There are important differences between the Portuguese, South African and Rhodesian varieties of colonial exploitation, yet the Southern sub-continent as a whole is an imperialist sub-system, with a long history of a close working alliance between the white minority regimes.² Rhodesian troops and planes are taking part in the war in Mozambique. South African troops police Rhodesian territory. South African helicopters have patrolled southern Angola. PIDE records revealed after the debacle of the Caetano regime document the close defence, strategic and intelligence co-ordination of the white regimes, and their short-term tactical decisions.

Apart from the common economic and strategic interests of the white minority ruling classes, their strength lies in the centrality of Southern Africa and its rich resources for international capital.³ In the sub-continent it is becoming increasingly difficult to unravel the local and outside components of capital.⁴ The old national colonialisms throughout Africa have begun to change as corporate giants cross national boundaries, thus changing the terms of African involvement with the capitalist centres. This is consistent with the ever-closer integration of the southern African system within the whole western capitalist imperialist system. South Africa herself has played an important part in this international penetration of capital into the region.

The very week of the Spinola coup Professor Karl Schiller, former West German Economics Minister became president of the Economic Development Bank for Southern Africa (EDSA). The bank is the brainchild of an Afrikaner industrialist (Anton Rupert who heads Rothmans, the international cigarette empire) and its internal participating companies include five West German banks, Ford, General Motors, and IBM from the USA, Barclays Bank and a Canadian bank, Swiss and Luxembourg credit banks, and Anglo-American, the South African mining-finance giant.⁵

On the other hand there have been tensions and contradictions affecting the solidity of the white ruling classes and their short-term tactical decisions, as well as their relations with their international allies. Thus Ian Smith's action in closing the border with Zambia became economically embarrassing to both South Africa and Portugal; and Portugal for her part has always been extremely sensitive to the South African criticism of her military strategy. Nonetheless these are essentially non-antagonistic conflicts and the Southern African Liberation Movements have always calculated that the complex as a whole can be expected to try to act in accordance with the common interests of all its parts.

Race for Capitalism in South Africa

Holding this view of the Southern African system of colonial-style exploitation as a sub-system, the liberation movements have nonetheless to analyse and grapple with the problem of the uneven development of the liberation struggle in the region.

In Angola and Mozambique substantial portions of liberated territory are under popular control, admittedly under special war conditions. In Rhodesia and Namibia armed actions are being sustained but it is premature to talk of liberated areas. In South Africa where the task facing the liberation movement is to lay the basis for sustained armed struggle, the problems are the most formidable.⁶ This regime is in control of a rich and varied economy which supports a massive military budget and a large, well trained and technologically sophisticated modern army.⁷ There is a permanent army of occupation in the shape of one white for every four of the population of 21 million. It would be difficult to find an indigenous ruling class in the world as firmly entrenched and technologically primed.

The power structure in South Africa arises out of the development of an organic industrial basis with an impressive rate of internal capital accumulation controlled by a powerful indigenous mining, finance and industrial bourgeoisie. This is the key dimension of the strength of this system. What was originally a settler society broke, or maintained only tenuous connections

with the metropolitan capitalist economy, and managed to promote important structural changes leading to the establishment of a local if peripheral capitalism.⁸ But it was a capitalism which incorporated pre-capitalist methods of labour coercion and exploitation, through the creation of a contract indentured Black labour force.⁹ This labour force is kept outside the political and civil system, denied free access to the labour market, denied the right to bargaining procedures and trade union organization, and is expelled from the industrial and urban centres to the labour reserves - the Bantustans - when no longer productive. The result in South Africa has been spectacular industrial expansion, an investment climate of high profitability (hence the importance of the South African economy to internal capital and strategic calculations) but an African working class subjected constantly to a process of de-proletarianisation.¹⁰

The distinctive character of the South African revolution must grow from several points: from the size, experience and consciousness of a black working class unique in Africa;¹¹ from a 'peasantry' which has in part been proletarianised; from towns which have been the stronghold of political organisation, now driven underground, and this for over a decade; and also from the rural reserves drained of labour power until they are no longer productive, and left to stagnate in deepening rural misery, and they confront the internal contradictions generated by the government's attempt in these Bantustans to initiate the elements of a neo-colonial situation of a special apartheid variety. For here, side by side, is a huge pauperised reserve army of labour, and a Bantustan bureaucracy-chieftainship controlling land, trading allocations and political institutions of extremely limited power, both operating within the constraints of an economic order which makes the Bantustans in their nature economically non-viable and dependent, and politically excluded from the centres of power. Mass unrest in South Africa is never far from the surface, witness the recent waves of African strikes. On the other hand the problems of the liberation forces are to sustain underground organisation under conditions of perpetual martial law; to grapple with a powerful, resourceful and entrenched enemy which comprises all classes of the dominant White minority, since all have a direct and immediate interest in the perpetuation of the system of exploitation, and to breach a system of industrial-based political and economic power armed with the resources modern capitalism can command, but a variety which additionally uses racism as an indispensable element of capitalist exploitation to block the emergence of Black working class organisation.

The Portuguese Colonial System

Portuguese colonialism has been of a very different order. Portugal was an early but also a feeble coloniser.¹² She also

colonised by proxy - inviting capital and concessionaires from other colonising powers to open up her territories. In Europe Portugal herself has been described as a neo-colony, with heavy investment by foreign companies,¹³ deeply subordinate in the global economy, the poorest nation in Europe, with a gross national product lower than Brazil, her one-time colony, and the majority of her peasantry still working a subsistence agriculture.

Far later than in the case of other colonial empires, Portugal ran a colonial system dependent on forms of primitive accumulation through intense forced labour exploitation in the cultivation of agricultural export commodities. Portugal's home industrial base was narrow, and colonial markets for manufactured goods were virtually non-existent.

Cabral¹⁴ argued consistently that Portugal's metropolitan economy and her form of colonialism were too feeble to mediate any neo-colonial situation. Portuguese capital would not be safe from more competitive rivals without its continuing system of tight political control. Portugal's political control in the colonies continued to be administered directly from Lisbon, with little encouragement of local intermediaries and thus local agents of any neo-colonial system. This thesis will have to be re-examined in the light of economic changes in Portugal and her colonies in the most recent period. A scrutiny of accelerating foreign investment in Portugal, as well as in Angola and to a far lesser extent in Mozambique, by United States, British, German, other West European and *South African capital*, suggests the possibility was looming even before the Lisbon army coup, of a neo-colonial solution being pursued by western capital in the face of resistance by Portugal.¹⁵

Mozambique

But these are developments of more recent vintage. In parts of Mozambique even the physical penetration of the colonising power was limited, and some of the northern provinces experienced only a partial and discontinuous colonial presence. Mozambique was clearly a combination type of several co-existing modes of production. Parts of the economy were recruited into the direct service of the metropolitan economy through plantations and mines. Export crop production by concession companies; demands for the peasant production of stipulated crops, like cotton, for delivery at sub-market prices; and labour reserve mechanisms operated side by side. Mozambique functioned as a crucial labour reserve for South Africa's gold mining industry, through the Mozambique Convention which is a state treaty for the exchange of labour for harbour dues and

other trade services, and also less officially for Rhodesia to which large numbers of workers have migrated periodically. According to some estimates, as many as 400,000 men are away at work in South Africa and Rhodesia at any one time, an overwhelming proportion of the adult male labour force of the southern provinces of the country.¹⁶ Preponderantly the forms of surplus extraction from Mozambique are still essentially agricultural, with 80 percent of her exports made up of crops produced on company estates, plantations, commercial farms of peasant farms; with mineral exports, unlike the case of Angola.

Marcelino dos Santos, Frelimo vice-president, has given a tentative analysis of the resulting social formation in Mozambique: no working class of any size; not more than 5 percent of the population permanently urbanised and incorporated into the modern economy, without still growing roots in the indigenous economy.

The base of the liberation movement thus began to be built in the countryside, in a Yanan type strategy of the transformation of the social order there -- in the liberated areas -- rather than any tactic of a *putsch*-type seizure of the urban strongholds of settler power. A new ideological formation, new institutions, new forms of production were to be built as the revolution was built, and advanced.

Frelimo has been careful to define the nature of the enemy. In Mozambique, Dos Santos has said, is situated the infrastructure of the colonial system -- its apparatus. Political power is not in the hands of the settler community in Africa -- taking all the three Portuguese colonies, 10 percent of the Portuguese live in Africa -- but is in the hands of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, with its international allies. The chief contradictions of the African masses lie with the Portuguese ruling class. Frelimo has been fighting not the Portuguese, but Portuguese colonialism. However, in the same interview Dos Santos conceded that white responses cannot be fully explored till Frelimo forces take the struggle nearer their strongholds, in the towns. The coup in Lisbon has undoubtedly brought forward the testing-time of a settler minority fearful of being left to its own devices by changes in Lisbon, and yet threatening to resort to them in an attempt to retain metropolitan support.

In all the Portuguese territories -- but Guine Bissau and Mozambique especially -- the work of the liberation movements has been characterised by striking military successes. These forms of armed offensive are crucial of course, but essentially because they not only reject and remove the forces and forms of the colonial order, but also because they provide armed cover for the processes of reconstruction in the liberated territories.

Here the revolution is being built in the shape of new food crops, new forms of agriculture, new living standards, new schools and a new education system, new roles for women, but also forms of popular mobilisation and participation, institutionalised in new structures, and the organisation of production under new forms of social control. Where the liberation movements are best entrenched they are in command of economies of limited wealth and technology, but the changes perhaps least perceptible to the standards of colonialism and capitalism are the most significant within peasant economies improvising new forms of production and political mobilisation.

Economic Changes in the 1960s

Portugal or her colonial economies have had some changes. To understand the genesis of the Spínola-led coup it is crucial to scrutinise the changes that have taken place within the Portuguese economy. This is beyond the province of this article, but the background to the coup d'etat must surely be sought not only in the backlash from soldiers who experienced the waste and futility of these unending colonial wars, but also in the need for Portugal to adjust within a changing Europe. By its signature in July 1972 of a trading agreement with the European Economic Community, by mid-1977 all but a few of Portugal's most sensitive industries will lose protection from competition with the rest of Europe. Behind Spínola's challenge of the ultra-right in Portugal is reported to lie two of the most powerful combines in the country, CUG and the Champalimaud Group.¹⁸ The Companhia Uniao Fabril is by far the largest industrial concern in Portugal. A conglomerate of 100 companies with assets of almost £1,000 million -- 10 percent of Portugal's total corporate capital -- this company is involved in literally every major sector of Portuguese industry. In particular, its control of the economy of Guine Bissau is such that it has long been called 'the company war'. For some years CUF has been losing money on its Guine operations. The CUF management apparently approved of Spínola's policies in that territory when he was in command; facing the challenge of the Common Market, it is profoundly concerned at Portugal's inability to invest on the scale required to meet it. The Champalimaud Group is less than a tenth the size of CUF but it does hold a central position in the economies of Angola, Mozambique and Portugal itself.

It was Spínola who obtained for this group the government licence which enabled the group to erect the national steel-works, and the general was on the board of the steel company for some years. The uproar about Spínola's conscience-book thus runs far deeper than a mere debate about war tactics; he is a spokesman for forces beyond the military. It is significant that one of the earliest actions of the post-coup

provisional government was to initiate talks with the European Economic Community.¹⁹

Economic Changes in the Colonies

In the colonies, Angola especially, changes in the character of capital have transformed the nature of the Portuguese stake there. Since 1969 exports from that colony have doubled. By 1973 Angola's main exports were oil, coffee, diamonds and iron ore, with oil exports at the top of the table, supplanting coffee for the first time. But the major extractive industries are in the hands of the United States, British, German and South African capital. *The foreign exchange gains to Portugal come now not from trade between the colony and the home economy, but from capital inflows from foreign investors, and payment of company royalties, profits tax and rents.* Any calculation about the future shape of Portugal's relations with Angola must take into account the presence, and predominance, of the international firms, as well as locally based Portuguese capital. Also emerging in Angola is a small import-substitution industrial sector: some processing of agricultural raw materials is taking place on the spot, and there is some emphasis on the commercialisation of the subsistence economy, through the development of rural extension schemes and industrial estates.²⁰

Portuguese ownership is obligatory in certain industrial fields, such as fishing, shipping and oil refining. Lisbon approval has to be obtained for all investment in oil refining, defence and certain industries like diamond cutting and polishing. There is by now a fairly prosperous white middle class, a large number of small-scale traders some of whom have launched into plantation agriculture, and a relatively established directorate of the newer industrial and commercial firms²¹ which on the one hand is nervous of being shouldered aside by foreign firms, but on the other is resentful of Lisbon-imposed controls. Monetary and credit matters remain under the control of the Bank of Portugal which acts as clearing agent for the escudo zone.

In Angola the mineral boom has taken place principally in the crucial western and west-central districts little affected by the armed struggle.²² In this territory the military situation has reached a certain stalemate. The liberation struggle here faces some acute problems. Some arise from the size and spread of the territory and are thus logistics problems (especially for MPLA with its supply base in Zambia). Some arise from the fact that whatever prompted the differences -- and there are deep-running ideological and historical reasons for the splits -- Portugal has been able to exploit divide-and-

rule tactics in the existence of three liberation movements (MPLA, linked with Frelimo and PAIGC in CONCP; GRAE led by Roberto Holden; and UNITA, originally a splinter group from GRAE); as well as in the divided allegiances of OAU states and the pursuit of their own purposes in the area (thus Zaire for GRAE and Zambia for part of MPLA). Most serious of all, perhaps, are the conflicts which have recently erupted inside MPLA in at least two, distinct in time and yet possibly related, bids to recast the leadership and to call into question the policy and military tactics of the last few years. The combination of valuable Western and South African capital involvement, an aggressive white settler population, and a divided, and hence manipulable and weak, liberation movement could result in a highly inflammable situation inside Angola, and one which Portugal's stronger partners in economic exploitation might well seek to work to their advantage.

The basis of Mozambique's economy, on the other hand, remains almost entirely agricultural: cashew nuts, cotton, sugar and sisal, though there are the beginnings of the installation of local processing. Tourism, an important source of income, has been ruined by the war. Cabora Bassa is expected to come on stream next year, with iron and coal deposits as a basis for a steel plant which will export to Japan and South Africa. But the economy as a whole needs massive investment in the private sector, and any faltering in present economic activity is in danger of crippling the investment and development plan and the economy as a whole. Like their Angolan counterparts, Mozambican businessmen chafe under Lisbon's hegemony. But while Angolan settlers speak from a position of some strength, Mozambique is of relatively less significance to the Portuguese system, and Mozambique's fortunes are more closely tied in with those of South Africa and Rhodesia, both of which countries undoubtedly have a vested interest in helping to secure Mozambique for their political, economic and strategic purposes.

What will Lisbon do?

What difference is the change in Lisbon likely to make to the colonial wars? While it is common cause that the wars precipitated the crisis inside the Portuguese army and the political system, it is far less clear what solution will be produced to end the colonial crisis, and of course the response of the liberation movements clearly depend in large measure on what issues from Lisbon.

Spinola himself, like Caetano and Salazar before him, continued in his book to talk about the overseas provinces as the

'essential pre-requisite for our survival as free and independent state'. Otherwise, he wrote: 'Portugal would be reduced to a meaningless thing in a Europe which is assuming the proportions of a giant'. Spinola was the front man of the coup, but it is clear that its real executors were the captains and majors who are more radical, yet divided and uncertain.

There is evidence of a severe internal struggle going on inside the army. The original 'Captains' Movement' which later grew into the Committee of the Armed Forces, began with rather mundane grievances about the prestige of forces, with promotion and training problems. By the end of 1973 the movement is reputed to have numbered over 1,000 officers, who had turned to confront the central problem of the wars they were fighting in Africa, but initially still out of apprehension that the officers would be blamed for the failure to achieve a military victory in the way their predecessors had been blamed for the defeat in Goa in 1961.²³ In Mozambique itself a settler attack on the Beira Officers' Club stiffened the conviction of the soldiers that they were bound to be the scapegoats, and that there would be a political rather than a military solution to the war, and that this required the overthrow of the government in Lisbon. But not the entire officers corps supports this tendency or belongs to the Committee of the Armed Forces. The inner struggle in the army is by no means resolved, and at the same time the balance of forces in the new Portuguese government is as yet undecided. Real power rests not with the provisional civilian government but with the Commander (General Spinola), the Junta (and within, or behind it, the pressure group of the radical young officers), and only then with the civilian ministers.²⁴

This helps to explain the contradictory and discordant 'solutions' that issued from Lisbon in the weeks immediately after the coup d'etat.

Following contacts with white settler lobbies, notably in the shape of Sen. Jorge Jardim, a white Mozambican settler-editor, junta spokesmen have talked in terms of an impending referendum, of possible elections, of the possibility of free play for political parties, including Frelimo in the case of Mozambique.²⁵ (This followed the mushrooming of political groups, all jostling for a part in the political process still to be permitted). In Guine Bissau the junta's visiting spokesmen proposed 'rapid decolonisation and the rapid promotion of Africans into key jobs'. PAIGC must have shuddered at the repetition of the old formula for Portugal's 'civilising' mission in Africa: 'Colonialism', said this armyman, 'dies the moment that the colonised attain the same social and cultural level as the

coloniser'.²⁷ There was the suggestion of a Gaullist-style personal referendum -- Vote Spínola or Aristides Perreira of PAIGC.

With such a babble of confusion issuing from London, the liberation movements said little in the early weeks, but what they said was loud and clear. (Frelimo also escalated its military actions in the field). Immediately after the coup, PAIGC's liberation radio criticised 'the error of those who see the former leader of Portugal's colonial war as the man with the intention or the capacity to direct Portuguese decolonisation'. Even as the jubilant crowds gathered in the streets of Lisbon, PAIGC reported, there were intensified air attacks on its liberated territory by the Portuguese airforce. The PAIGC greeted the demonstrations of the people in the streets, reminded Portugal that it had always been careful to distinguish between the Portuguese people and Portuguese colonialism, made the point that it was not indifferent to events inside Portugal, far from it, but called for vigilance. The condition for any meaningful change was the end of the war, and the withdrawal, thus, of Portuguese forces. A similar broadcast a few days later saluted the officers who had reversed the regime of Caetano and Tomaz, thus giving the people the possibility to regain their liberties and end the tragic wars. But concluded PAIGC, the most concrete action it could take in support of the people of Portugal was to continue the struggle to end the colonial burden on Portugal and colonies alike.²⁹

Frelimo, meanwhile, was making a set of related yet slightly different points. It had 'no reaction' initially to the call of the junta to lay down its arms, its executive committee announced. (In the following days it launched an important attack on a train crossing to Beira.) It had always been open to negotiation, but its unshakeable purpose was to liquidate Portuguese colonialism and to attain full independence. Independence would involve the recognition of Frelimo as the authentic and legitimate representative of the will of the people. Only through this recognition would the wars be ended. This, clearly, was less a detailed negotiating position for delicate talks between liberation movements and a new Portuguese government -- once the conditions for such talks became favourable -- than a perspective of struggle which is built into the nature of the popular struggle Frelimo is trying to wage, and which it shares with its fellow movements in the close association they have built over the years.

Often explicitly but throughout by implication in their practice of guerilla warfare as the continuation of popular mobilisation by armed means, the liberation movements have made it plain that they are not fighting for the form of decolonisation

likely to be offered by a colonial government, however reformed, and certainly not in the terms spelled out by junta spokesmen in the period immediately after the coup. This decolonisation is 'flag' independence, and Africa is thick with governments which achieved political independence but were unable to break the sequence of economic exploitation of which they are victim. The liberation movements have always insisted on the distinction between this form of political independence, and the kinds of structural changes they are struggling for in their countries. Even in the liberated areas, according to Marcelino dos Santos,³⁰ the question of new forms arose:

Which ways should we follow? It was in that phase that the contradictions appeared and those who were mainly fighting for their own individual interests or for the interest of a narrow group, came more openly to the surface. If we do not follow collectivist attitudes we will not be able to face the enemy successfully. In this sense it is true to say that the internal dynamic of the struggle is such that the conditions generate collective thinking. Even if the origins of such collective attitudes are partly pragmatic, there is certainly a strong possibility that in the course of collective effort a situation is created from which it will be difficult to withdraw. If our organisation maintains a true revolutionary leadership the special circumstances of the process of our liberation open up real possibilities for an advance from liberation to revolution.

A neo-colonial solution consists in the acquisition of a share in state power by certain privileged or elitist indigenous classes, or strata, or classes-in-formation. The new political groupings that have mushroomed since the Lisbon coup and have offered their services in negotiation to the Lisbon regime are indicative of the kinds of forces that would be amenable instruments in a neo-colonial solution.³¹ Frelimo's assertion that it is the sole authentic representative of the Mozambican people is scornful of their claims, but it is above all indicative of its conviction that only through sustained struggle, by grappling, concretely, in the liberated zones and in the politics of a guerilla army, with the problems of the forms of political and economic power, in however embryonic a form, will it be possible to forge structures for the social mobilisation of resources rather than their individual appropriation by small privileged groups.

A Negotiated Settlement?

Frelimo's President, Samora Machel, has made it plain that independence is not negotiable - this is the unassailable right of every Mozambican - only the mechanism by which it can be hastened. In its talks with Lisbon's representatives, PAIGC insisted not only on the principal of total independence for the Cape Verde Islands³² but further, that the right of all the colonies to be independent should be seen as indivisible, and guaranteed in principle by Portugal. Portugal will find it easiest to let Guine Bissau go, and she is most likely to achieve her independence in the near future. But this would have happened anyway, because of the advances of that struggle. The negotiations are hard going for Lisbon, however, precisely because the lines are being laid down for a strategy for the other two territories.

A traditional view of the negotiations would see in them the equivalent of the Evian settlement which ended the war between Algeria and France. But Algeria at the end of her eight year war, and the Portuguese colonies, allowing for the differences between them, and the difficulties confronting the Angolan movement, are not strictly equivalent. The guerilla movements would undoubtedly welcome an end to the fighting, but they are far from exhausted after the type of war Algeria experienced, and they have built liberated base territories, and an army of political-military cadres that in two of the three territories can negotiate from strength, not weakness, against the kind of compromise settlement which would leave many of the crucial issues still undecided.

There is another important distinction. In Algeria, unlike the Portuguese territories, once the colonial power withdrew direct control, there were no neighbouring governments or powerful corporate interests waiting to rush in.

In Angola the course of events will be decided by a host of elements that are as yet far from clear. Compliant liberation movements that freeze the struggle to areas of parochial control could leave foreign investors and settler interests intact, and thus unprovoked. The search for local neo-colonial intermediaires might take place less in the liberation movements than among the ranks of existing and potential elites, like the deputies in Luanda and the lower-level civil servants among the African population, though in Angola the incipient Black middle class has made virtually no impact yet on business or other private enterprise.³³ The 100,000 odd Portuguese ex-army conscripts arrived in the territory since the war began in 1961, and the black contingent in the Portuguese army, whose exact size is

unknown but is put at anywhere between 6,000 and 24,000 men, would be quick to retaliate to any threat, real or simulated, to their security. Economic investors or United States or South Africa policymakers, impatient or unnerved by Portugal's uncertain conduct in Angola might decide to act without her. In this context, in which the dangers are gravely aggravated by the weakness and divisions in the liberation movements, the anxiety of a demoralised army and a radical young officer corps to be rid of the war in Angola is not in itself a guarantee of a rapid or easy solution.

In Mozambique, white settler organisations equivalent to the OAS in Algeria have been mooted, as in the case of the Front for the Continuations of Western Civilisation (FICO, which means in Portuguese 'I Stand'), but to date these groups have rallied little firm support. A unilateral declaration of settler independence will not be as easy in Mozambique as it was in Rhodesia. The white settler community has never enjoyed even remotely the form of self-government Rhodesia has practised since the 1920s. There are few locally entrenched men in positions of power in the colony; all the top echelons of the civil service are appointed by Lisbon and return there when their duty tour is complete; the separatist settler groups have probably not won enough support in the army to risk a unilateral decision, and anyway of the Mozambican army more than half are reported to be African conscripts. Above all the settler community is divided, between the bitter-enders who want to fight on for no change at all; the groups that would prefer links with South Africa rather than with Lisbon; and the liberal element - outflanked on the left by militant student sections³⁴ - who want a solution of some kind that will provide a lasting base for peace in the country.

How Far North will South Africa Go?

How likely is Rhodesian and South African intervention? How far north is South Africa likely to operate to preserve the sub-system of exploitation? Rhodesia is fully occupied maintaining her own UDI, though she deploys troops across the border into Mozambique when the needs of the two regimes coincide and she is likely to have to do this on a larger scale. South Africa would clearly prefer not to have to succour - financially as well as in other ways - another rebel settler regime. She too knows the elementary principles of guerilla warfare and is anxious not to extend her forces over too vast a space. In Pretoria there must be worried men, for all their military and political strength. One of the three supports of their triangular structure of white minority exploiting states in the sub-continent is visibly and probably incurably shaken. The Portuguese junta second-in-command

Colonel Da Costa Gomes at a press conference in Beira ruled out direct South African intervention in Mozambique; this was clearly a bid to block settler initiative, but his prognosis made sense.

South Africa will intervene, but less directly. She is already engaged in the covert forms of counter-insurgency which the CIA used in Laos for years. Since August 1967 an unstated number of 'police' have been operating inside Rhodesia with the forces of the Smith regime in so-called 'border protection'. This is likely to happen in Mozambique too. Certainly South Africa will intensify her undermining operations against those African states, like Zambia and Tanzania, which succour the liberation movements for supply and training purposes. A dramatic move from Pretoria is, however, unlikely for the present. The situation is still too fluid and uncertain, though it could change rapidly. The southern parts of Mozambique are not likely to be lightly surrendered, on the other hand. South Africa has not surrendered her expectations of cheap power from Cabora Bassa. There is the urgency of protecting specific interests, which are economic to a degree, but far more importantly political and strategic. Rhodesia's links to the Mozambican ports of Beira and Lourenco Marques are her lifelines, but there are even broader regional and global calculations at stake, in the importance of the Indian Ocean and South Atlantic areas, and here South African and Western interests reinforce one another strongly.³⁵ These purposes are made public enough, in an attempt to enlist NATO forces on the side of the Southern African regimes. Less explicitly spelled out are South Africa's nightmares about the close proximity of liberation struggles which threaten, not physically, but by sheer force of example, the survival of her own system.

In a joint press conference statement the South African and the Rhodesian Prime Ministers declared that it was 'absolute nonsense' to say that South Africa was prepared to send in troops to help the Whites in Mozambique.³⁶ All they wanted was 'good' and 'stable' government in Mozambique; they were not even concerned they claimed, about the possibility of it being Black.

South Africa has looked at the independent states of Africa with a shrewd and discriminating eye. The political paraphernalia of dependent and subservient Black governments need be no more threatening than Malawi's example, and could be less provocative to African reaction than Rhodesia's. South Africa will not directly improvise a neo-colonial solution but she will not be averse to one. She will not march an expeditionary force into a Portuguese colony to fight settlers' battles for them but she

will stir settler apprehension (probably with the help of PIDE remnants reported to have sought refuge in the Republic) to stiffen Lisbon's protection of her nationals, and, especially, to aggravate the doubts and divisions in the regime.

It is thus premature to suggest that the colonial wars are over, or that negotiations for a temporary, let alone long-term resolution of the conflict, can be rapidly or easily concluded. But one thing is certain: the crisis in Africa which brought down the Salazar-Caetano variety of colonial occupation will, unless resolved, seriously and imminently threaten the future of any constitutional government in Portugal. The search for a solution judged authentic by the liberation movements will be far from easy; that will make it no less indispensable.

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This article appears in place of a transcript of a lecture on the "Politics of the Armed Struggle in Southern Africa" which Ms First presented at a seminar, UCLA African Studies Center, early this year. With her cooperation, we hope to carry that discussion in one of our forthcoming issues. For now, we are very grateful to Ms First for providing our readers with an immediate topical analysis on the implications of the Spínola coup to Southern Africa.

Footnotes

1. Bridget Bloom, 'Army Successes in Angola', *Financial Times* Survey, Angola and Mozambique, May 6, 1974.
2. The latest study of the relations between *South Africa and Portugal* is written by Basil Davidson for the United Nations Unit on Apartheid, no. 7/74, April 1974.
3. See among others, Lionel Cliffe, Peter Lawrence and Richard Moorsom, 'Western Economic and Political Involvement in Portugal and the Colonies in the 1970s', *Ufahamu*, IV, 2(Fall, 1973), pp. 145-165; E. de S. Ferreira, *Portuguese Colonialism from South Africa to Europe*, Gottingen, 1972; the United Nations Unit on Apartheid, 1970, 'Foreign Investment in the Republic of South Africa': Sean Gervasi 'The Strategy of the Neo-Colonialist Powers in South Africa', *The Black Liberator*, I, 4, p. 227.
4. For an attempt, see R. Murray and C. Stoneman, 'Private Overseas Investment in Southern and Central Africa', London, mimeo. 1970.
5. 'New Spearhead of South African Expansion?' *African Development*, March 1974.
6. For a discussion of the policy and strategy of the liberation movements, and the problems faced, see Joe Slovo, 'Southern Africa: Problems of Armed Struggle', *Socialist Register 1973*; also Ben Turok, 'South Africa: The Search for a Strategy', *Socialist Register 1973*; also *Strategy and Tactics of the African National Congress*, London, 1969; Sol Dabula, '10 Years of Umkhonto We Sizwe', *African Communist*, 47, 1971, pp.22-38.
7. See Barakat Ahmad 'South Africa's Military Establishment', UN Unit on Apartheid, Notes and Documents, No. 25/72, December 1972.
8. The work of Samir Amin ('Underdevelopment and Dependence in black Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, X, 4 (1972) pp. 503-524, but more importantly his theoretical works *L'Accumulation a l'echelle mondiale*, Paris 1970 and *Le developpement inegal*, Paris 1973) has initiated the task of analysing dependent peripheral capitalism in Africa and different forms of the mode of production under colonialism. There is the danger of rigidifying his principal types -- African of the colonial trade economy, Africa of the concession-owning companies, and Africa of the labour reserves for they are not mutually exclusive and often co-exist in a single economic system, -- on which aspect see G. Williams 'The Political

Economy of Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism in Nigeria, mimeo. But Samir Amin's work has already stimulated a growing body of studies on the economy of the labour reserve system. The labour reserve economies are extensively though not exclusively situated in Southern Africa where there are areas of great mineral wealth and settler agriculture. They require, characteristically, the settler monopoly of political power, this directed to the accumulation of capital in the settler-run economy, which in turn requires severe limitations to be placed on the capacity of African independent production, and compulsions for the supply of large labour forces, whether temporary or permanent or both.

9. Harold Wolpe 'Capitalism and cheap labour power in South Africa', *Economy and Society*, XIV, (1972) pp.425-456 has demonstrated how distinct modes of production have been incorporated within a total economic system so that pre-capitalist modes have been overlaid and encapsulated within the capitalist mode. In the case of South Africa the labour requirements of the gold mining industry proved capable of being solved through the institutionalisation of a system of migrant labour from the labour reserves (or Bantustans) on to which were devolved part of the cost of the reproduction of the labour force.
10. The work of S. Trapido, 'South Africa in A Comparative Study of Industrialisation', *Journal of Development Studies*, VII,3 (1971) pp. 309-320, and Martin Legassick 'South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence', forthcoming *Economy and Society*, analyse how mining and agricultural and later manufacturing interests converged to perpetuate the system of cheap, migrant labour which is still operative today, when manufacturing had already by the 1960s overtaken the combined contribution of mining and agriculture to the national income.
11. On the character of the South African working class, see the discussion conducted in *Race Today*, (March 1974) pp. 76-80, (April 1974) pp. 119-122 and (May 1974) pp. 147-150 and initiated by the article by Ken Jordan 'Trade Unionism vs. Revolution in South Africa'. See also R. Davies 'The White Working Class in South Africa', *New Left Review*, 82, November-December 1973.
12. The standard analysis of Portugal as coloniser is Perry Anderson, 'Portugal and the End of Ultra-Colonialism', *New Left Review* 15-17, 1962. Judith Head, University of Durham, in a re-appraisal as yet incomplete, suggests that it was not the Portugal was such a unique and anachronistic coloniser in Africa, operating a colonial order unlike the others on the continent, but that it was Portugal's inability

to generate industrialisation on the basis of the wealth of the slave trade in Brazil, that made her a slower and alter developer, and that analysis of Portuguese colonialism in Africa has to be part of a study of her involvement in Latin America as well. Also that in the later period under Salazar and after, Portugal was attempting the same kind of consolidation as other colonial powers, though her own economy remained at the periphery of international capital.

13. See the Cliffe et al. article in *Ufahamu op. cit.* In Portugal proper 21 percent of all investment is by foreign companies.
14. A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, Stage 1, (1969) p. 64.
15. Cliffe et al, *op. cit.*
16. The work on Mozambique's functioning as a labour reserve for other economies in the sub-continent is out of date and patchy. In fact there is a dearth of analytical material about Mozambique. An exception is the study of the prazos, by Allen F. Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanisation of a European Institution*, the Zambesi Prazos, 1750-1902, University of Wisconsin Press, 1972. Isaacman traces the history and functioning of these crown estates established by the Portuguese government in the lower Zambesi Valley in the 17th century, which were a modified form of plantation and tribute system. They were the principal administrative units during the first half of the colonial period, were later designed to promote agricultural production and the export of cash crops, and were abolished only in 1930.
17. Interview with Marcelino dos Santos, by Joe Slove, *African Communist*, 55, (1973) pp. 25-53.
18. 'The Big Business Behind Portugal's anti-war General', *Sunday times* Insight report, March 24, 1974.
19. 'Closer links likely soon with EEC', *Guardian*, May 4, 1974. The EEC argument had been that so long as she maintained her colonies, and spent so much of her resources in Africa, Portugal could not be considered a completely 'European' country.
20. 'Angolan economy well palced for growth', Tony Hawkins, *Financial Times*, May 6, 1974.
21. For details of the social and economic distribution of the white population in Angola see David Birmingham, 'New Politics in Angola', *West Africa*, May 27, 1974, pp. 623-625.

22. Davidson, UN document, *op. cit.* p. 8.
 23. *Observer*, May 19, 1974, David Martin on p. 10.
 24. The power hierarchy is reported to be, in order of importance, General Spínola, then General Costa Gomes, chief of staff of the army and the prime minister more or less equally influential; followed by the Movement inside the Armed forces, and finally the ministers of the provisional government.
 25. Press reports from Lisbon, *Guardian* 4 and 5 May 1974.
 26. This was a speech made by Colonel Carlos Soares Fabião in Bassau and reported from Lisbon on May 9.
 27. *ibid.*
 28. *Guardian*, May 8, 1974.
 29. PAIGC Liberation Radio broadcasts, 25-30 April 1974.
 30. Interview, *Op. cit.* For a stimulating analysis of the revolutionary ideology created in the course of liberation struggles, and a comparison with the brand of nationalism which brought formal independence to African countries north of the Zambezi, see John Saul, 'Neo-colonialism vs. Liberation Struggle: Some Lessons from Portugal's African Colonies, *Socialist Register* 1973.
 31. They include bodies like GUMO and FUMO, the Mozambique United Front, which is said to have been formed in 1971 by break-way members of Frelimo and which sent a message to Dr. Soares urging that his talks with Frelimo be limited to ending the war in Mozambique. *Guardian*, June 7, 1974. For reports on GUMO, see *Observer*, May 12, 1974, *Guardian* May 3, 1974.
 32. The right of the Islands to independence together with Guine Bissau has been a long-standing demand of PAIGC, thought Cabral is on record as having remarked that even twins are not born at precisely the same moment, which suggests that once the principle is entrenched, a timetable is negotiable.
 33. Birmingham, *op. cit.*
 34. Mozambique students in Lisbon have demonstrated as abody for the territory's independence under Frelimo leadership.
 35. See the Cliffe *et al.* article, *op. cit.* for the importance of the Portuguese colonies along the eastern and western seaboard of Southern Africa, in order to protect the Cape sea route and to guarantee Middle East oil supplies. See also the recently released document detailing Nato's Southern African strategies: 'Portugal, the Western Powers and Southern Africa', by Sean Gervasi with the collaboration of L. W. Bowman and J. P. Ellen Frey-Wouters. On United States reaction to events in Portugal see Aquino de Braganza, *Afrique-Asie*, 56, pp. 27-29.
 36. *Financial Times*, May 30, 1974.
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