

ISOLATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Part Two.

- Z. Makhosonke

Despite the failure to achieve the total isolation goal, the international campaign to isolate South Africa has gained ground. Though she has not been excluded from the United Nations, South Africa has been expelled from many international bodies - e.g. ILO, FAO, from the Olympic Games and many other international sporting bodies. There can be no doubt that the present so-called policy of 'multi-national' sport is the Boer government's response to the increasing isolation from international sports competition. She has been forced into isolation. The use of public funds by the Department of Information to buy friends internationally so as to undermine the isolation strategy is illustrative of the regime's desperation to ward off international attacks and isolation.

The primary weapons the enemy uses against the people and the national liberation movement remains brute force. As part of a subtle ruse to gain credibility for her policies, she has embarked on an aggressive policy of expediting the independence of the bantustans - thus making the Africans have a stake in this diabolical bantustan programme and equally to show that she is 'decolonising'.

It is significant to observe that it is the very bantustan leaders that are undermining the liberation movement's strategy of disinvestment. They sing the same song as the imperialists, the international monopolies and the South African fascists. International imperialism and the monopolies are no longer insensitive to the demands for breaking off relations with South Africa - hence the changes in the way of continuing the policies of exploitation. They are constantly looking for loopholes to weaken the spread of the isolation strategy and adopting new tactics.

Reacting to mounting pressure for disengagement, the major imperialists today do not blatantly sell arms to South Africa but sell patents and licenses. Today French Mirage fighter planes are manufactured in South Africa. It is within this context that we must see the French President Giscard D'Estang's announcement of a ban on arms sales from France to South Africa.

Besides the sale of patents, the imperialists have resorted to the use of third countries wittingly or unwittingly as conduits and fronts for their operations. Recently it has been

disclosed that Antigua has been used for the testing of shells destined for South Africa, produced by the multi-national company, Space Research Corporation of Canada. Again South Africa was able to procure embargoed US military equipment through Iran during the war of aggression against Angola.

This military co-operation shows no sign of diminishing. Of late it has taken the form of nuclear collaboration, with the active support of mainly the Federal Republic of Germany and France. Inevitably this capacity to possess nuclear weapons will be used by the racists to blackmail Africa.

Given that economic power helps in strengthening South Africa's military capability, it is incumbent that in the interest of international peace and security, the UN invokes Chapter VII of its Charter and imposes comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa, which will embrace the withdrawal of foreign investments in South Africa, and the stoppage of trade with the fascists.

However, we need something more than UN resolutions to stop racist and imperialist plots in Southern Africa. The isolation policy necessitates the building and strengthening of a powerful and broad mass movement: that goes beyond the left and traditional support groups to embrace all the strata of society - men and women, youth of the most diverse political orientations, ideologies and religious creeds, committed to a common goal. The isolation strategy and campaign against apartheid should not be circumscribed by any more or less closed structure or political sector, for this would be at odds with the tasks of struggle and with the possibilities of mustering the broad masses of the people - trade unions, youth and students, intellectuals, etc.

The South African case is not isolated and it does not affect only South Africans. Africa's peace and security is threatened by the existence of the apartheid regime. The workers in the arms industries must be apprised of the criminal role played by their bosses and the workers' own direct implication in the genocidal policies of the Boer regime. Would they have been indifferent to those who produced gas chambers to kill their kith and kin, we should constantly ask. Thus the international solidarity movement should also aim at:

- (a) The mobilisation of the workers and democrats against the alliance between monopoly capital and racism at both international and national level.

- (b) The elimination of the social and economic foundations of racist policies. Racist prejudices have been and are still being used methodically by capitalism.

As imperialism operates on global and regional levels, the solidarity movement must always be in a position to expose and frustrate its schemes, at its base and tentacles. Linking up the international workers' struggle against the national bourgeoisie and multi-national companies in their national and international activities will help educate the people of those countries about the predatory nature of imperialism.

In fact, in some cases pressure on some governments at grass-root level has been so great that, for example, the Canadian government was pressured into discontinuing subsidies to Canadian investors in South Africa. This is only a partial victory because present Canadian investment in South Africa can be ploughed back into the country without any interference from the Canadian government.

The consumer boycott must be explained properly to the ordinary person. By boycotting South African consumer goods, the international community will be denying South Africa the much-needed foreign currency which she uses to purchase military hardware and technology; helping to disrupt South Africa's trade plans and patterns with all the consequences that this entails; expressing their solidarity with their exploited black fellow-workers who do not benefit from such sales.

Put bluntly - by calling for disinvestment, sanctions, consumer boycotts, we mean the conscious economic undermining of the present fascist system of government. The help that international imperialism gives to the fascist dictatorship makes it more difficult to isolate it and equally makes it easier for it to pursue its policy of exploitation, repression and terrorism. Hence we need to cut the umbilical cord through which the dictatorship feeds.

It should be clear to both supporters & the liberation movement that imperialism's strategy for strengthening the Botha regime is simultaneously a strategy for the destruction of the forces within South Africa that seek to bring a genuinely popular change.

By isolation we seek to weaken the enemy - morally, politically, economically, militarily, etc. - so that greater scope and impetus is given to the revolutionaries and favourable

conditions created for the overthrow of the apartheid dictatorship.

Isolation has been an effective weapon of psychological warfare against the Boer regime if the desperate efforts by South Africa's Department of Information to buy off friends is anything to go by. South Africa must be reduced to a situation of seeing its allies destroyed or neutralised and having to fight without them. She must find herself in an environment where there is no room for racists and fascists.

Maximum mobilisation of opponents of apartheid internationally should make it difficult, if not impossible, for imperialists to intervene militarily on the side of the racists. Equally, greater isolation of the fascists themselves could be a restraining factor on South Africa from unleashing a programme of naked mass genocide on the Black population. Whilst we believe less and less that Britain, the US, West Germany, France, Japan and others can be persuaded to desist from supporting the fascist South African regime, it is important that the criminal nature of the regime be brought to the attention of the world at all times. The world community should be sensitized to the dangers to international peace that South Africa poses.

With imperialism's desperate efforts, particularly after the demise of Portuguese colonialism, to intervene (directly and through South Africa) and impose reactionary and pliable neo-colonial regimes in Zimbabwe and Namibia, the chances of widening the conflict are increasing. Rabid anti-communism and anti-Sovietism are the ideological justifications for imperialism's meddling into the affairs of Southern Africa. The dangerous trick in this is to isolate the liberation movements from their allies - the Soviet Union and the socialist countries - from where they receive inestimable support, particularly material support without which it would have been near impossible to wage resistance wars in Southern Africa.

Therefore, it should be clear from the aforementioned that the enemy of the South African Revolution is not only local white fascist reactionaries but also international imperialism and its supporters. With all the wealth that our country possesses, it is going to be a tough task to dislodge the racists and their international backers. We cannot, under such circumstances, ignore or even underestimate the relevance of solidarity in our struggle. To do so would be to our detriment.

It is instructive to note that British propaganda was successful in equating the Kenyan Peasant Revolt popularised under the name 'Mau-Mau' in the early 1950s with barbarism, cannibalism and savagery inspired by the 'forces of darkness'. This can be attributed to the lack of international support for the movement that led the revolt, thus giving the British forces of repression unlimited opportunity to act with indiscriminate ruthlessness in suppressing the revolt.

In conclusion we need to re-state that the isolation strategy is inseparable from the campaign to support the national liberation movement. Having accepted the inevitability of imperialism's support (unless we can stop them) for the racist South African Government, it is the internationalist duty of progressive mankind and the international solidarity movement to counter this by rendering all-out moral, political and material support to the liberation movement - the African National Congress - and its military wing - Umkhonto we Sizwe.

- - - - -

"AT THE PRESENT MOMENT THE BIG IMPERIALIST POWERS AND THEIR JUNIOR PARTNERS SUCH AS ISRAEL ARE QUITE CLEARLY RANGED SOLIDLY TOGETHER AGAINST THE LIBERATION OF OUR PEOPLE. IT IS THEY WHO HAVE CONSISTENTLY DEFIED THE CALL BY THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD TO ISOLATE AND DESTROY THE CRIMINAL APARTHEID REGIME. IT IS THEY WHO HAVE SUPPLIED THE ARMS FOR THE BUTCHERY OF THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS, WHICH CONTINUES TO THIS DAY, AND WHO HAVE GIVEN VORSTER THE MORAL STRENGTH TO DEFEND THE SOUTH AFRICA RACIST SYSTEM WITHOUT REGARD TO THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIVES. THEIR HANDS ARE THEREFORE AS SOAKED IN THE BLOOD OF OUR PEOPLE, WHICH RAN IN RIVULETS IN SOWETO, IN ATHLONE AND ELSEWHERE, AS THOSE OF VORSTER HIMSELF.

"MANKIND AS A WHOLE IS, HOWEVER, STILL MOVED BY THE DREAD HORROR OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM. THE TIME HAS COME TO CRY OUT 'ENOUGH! NO. MORE!'."

- COMRADE PRESIDENT O.R. TAMBO -

(From a statement to the United Nations -
26th October, 1976).