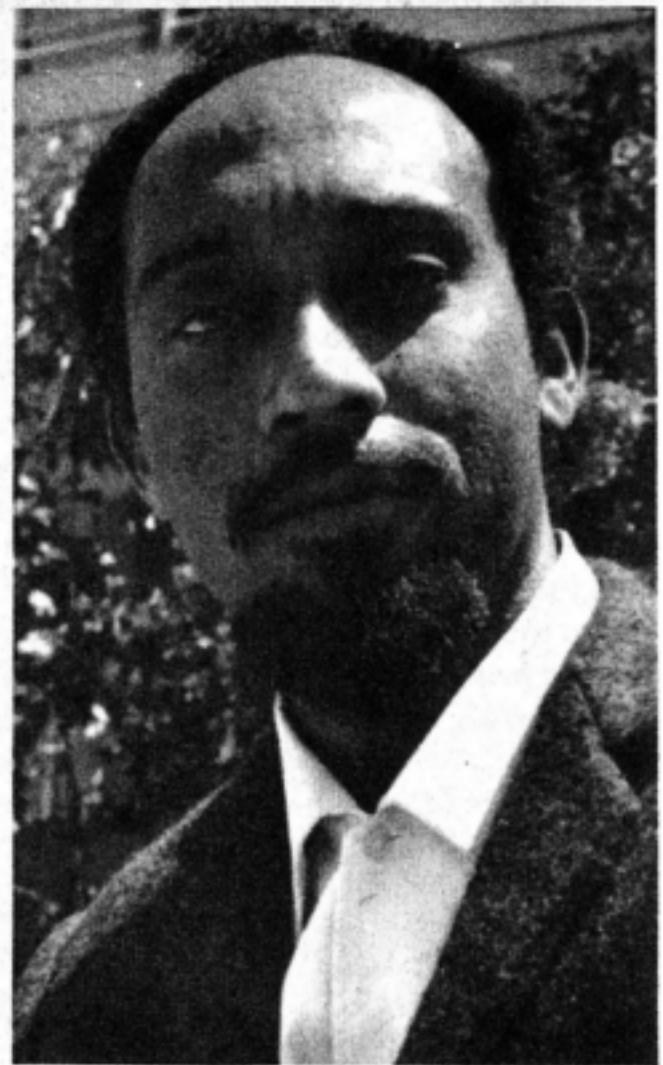


OFF THE CUFF

Marcelino Dos Santos talks to Sechaba



Marcelino Dos Santos

Continued from October

COMRADE DOS SANTOS DISCUSSED THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON HIS COUNTRY

Colonialism eliminated initiative from our societies. From the time when Portuguese colonialism intervened our capacity to create our destiny was finished. This problem is rather complex and one must stick to the essential points in order to answer. It is evident that when your Shaka created his Zulu empire his wish was to stop the penetration. But how? We were different tribes, which Shaka was trying to bring together. The Portuguese on our side stopped these groups from developing harmoniously. They introduced industry and with it a new form of society, of the capitalist type.

Historically capitalism is a more advanced form than the tribal system. But for me the essential point is that the development which took place did not concern the African man. It concerned him only as an instrument of production. I think that Man can only develop if one considers his ability to create, his freedom to be himself. Techniques were introduced but they did not profit Africans and we can see this today in our fight for National liberation.

The lack of cadres shows that Mozambique Man did not benefit in spite of the introduction of modern systems of production; he was not allowed to absorb or control these systems. Therefore I say that Portuguese Colonialism stopped the development of the Mozambique Man because it stopped and arrested his ability to create; the ability to study problems and find solutions. And it is only through

this work that man can develop. When man becomes a simple instrument there is no longer any development of Man. This is why I say that colonialism inhibited the development of Man in this region of Africa.

So you would say that historically speaking the introduction of capitalist techniques did not lead to any significant development in Mozambique?

I said 'no' because what interests us is the development of the people, not a special group.

How many industrial workers have you got in Mozambique?

We have ourselves tried to establish the figure by counting the workers in the factories and the plantations:— not more than 70,000.

COLLABORATORS

In every country where colonialism has established itself, it has managed to build up some support among the local population, collaborators and so — on. Would you care to comment on the success or failure of Portuguese colonialism to develop collaborators within the population of Mozambique? If this has happened would you say that this has created a possibility of a 'puppet' government at some later stage?

The fascist character of Portuguese Colonialism has actually prevented the creation of such a class which would eventually be useful to them on the political level.

First of all the administration of the population has been by direct rule of the Portuguese. Portugal did not use the existing institutions to enforce its domination, that is to say they imposed their authority even on the traditional chiefs. Then they placed Portuguese Nationals in all main Admi-

nistrative posts and only left secondary posts to the Africans, and even this use of Africans in secondary posts came long after their colonial conquest in Mozambique. Even the 'assimilados' were formed because of the necessity to have lower grade civil servants but without granting them any political rights.

It was therefore a technical cooperation which was required not a political one. We only saw the first signs of desired political cooperation with the Africans at the start of the Movement for National Liberation but at that stage the situation was rather twisted – the whole present attitude of the Portuguese Government towards some sort of social promotion can be called hypocritical under the pressure of a protest movement, carried out in the form of an armed struggle. Therefore we can say that cooperation in the past was strictly 'technical' and not political. To know whether in the future an effort will be made to create a 'puppet government' we can only treat it as a possibility in the action of colonialism and even Portugal cannot escape this rule. However we must examine their chances of carrying out such a plan successfully,

It becomes our responsibility to create the conditions which will make it impossible for the enemy to succeed with such a scheme. This is not a positive answer but we say that it is a possibility. To know whether Portugal will be able to do this, will depend on the work we do. It depends on our ability to take the necessary action to achieve our objectives.

At this stage we can say that correct action is being taken. The fact that Portugal does not want to accept the concept of National Independence is favourable to us in so far as all initiatives in favour of Portugal are doomed to failure. Portugal wants to control everything – it gives no possibility of independence. Therefore our actions have shown results and not only with the black population. You can observe that Portugal has not been able to mobilise the white population in a movement against us, which does not mean that there are no individuals against us.

WHITE SUPPORT

Do you expect any significant support at any stage or some sort of neutrality from the European population?

We have, since the start of our action, made a big effort in this direction. There are in Mozambique different types of Whites: Whites who consider themselves Mozambicans and join the Nationalist movement; Whites who consider themselves Portuguese but who claim to be anti-colonialist. We must say that there are people who live in Mozambique and have all the privileges of colonial society, who do not agree with fascism. We must also realise that ideas progress and that some may develop an understanding of the



problems and join the ranks of the revolution. There are also whites who live there and who say nothing.

But the fact of the matter is that to this day the Government has not been able to form a movement against us. When the Portuguese launched the provincial mobilisation of volunteers, who were part of the militia which supported certain army actions, in the first stages they distributed many arms, even in the towns. Afterwards they tried to recall all the arms when they realised that many people had simply taken the arms and kept them for themselves, and who were not prepared to participate in the volunteers organisations. And when they really tried to conscript people in the volunteers, the people just refused. Therefore they were unable to form this movement.

Regarding the Portuguese Government – if there was no longer a fascist government, what would the position of the whites be? We had better wait until there is a change. We can only say that the situation is not 'absolute' and for us the question is to know which measures to adopt in order to be victorious in our fight. We are progressing in this direction – we work towards victory.

We are a nationalist organisation. We are fighting for national independence. I think that in any struggle (even for national independence) we must respect the interests of the people, and we feel that there are today good conditions for the liberation of man. We believe that it is in everybody's interest to fight against Portuguese colonialism and in everybody's interest to fight against the exploita-

tion of man by man – that is to say that the majority of the population will be prepared to establish a society without the exploitation of man by man.

A BOURGEOISIE?

Concretely, what is the position of the bourgeoisie in Mozambique? There are at present two systems: the colonial capitalist system and also the traditional communal economic system. At the level of the communal economy we will have to face the traditional chiefs who have certain interests which they will attempt to maintain. We feel that in a limited way they would be opposed to the struggle for national liberation. In Mozambique today we find that almost 90% of the traditional chiefs have not been elected to their posts in the normal tribal fashion, but have been appointed by the Portuguese. Usually at a certain point the traditional chief was unable to follow government directives for moral reasons, and then the Portuguese replaced him. In this manner the traditional chiefs have been humiliated, they have a grudge against colonialism. But they have nevertheless kept certain benefits in terms of the tribal system. We therefore feel that at the tribal level there is a general tendency to oppose a liberation leading to emancipation.

If we examine the capitalist economy, we find that the Mozambicans are not really represented in the capitalist struc-





ture and do not belong to the bourgeois class, except in agriculture where we find a limited number of Mozambican landowners, but their economic power is small and they do not represent a social force. Therefore the majority of the population would be favourable to a system without the exploitation of man by man.

On the African scene, we find today that there is a new political consciousness developing. In the countries which have become independent people who have tasted independence have realised that this was not enough. Movements have developed, a certain political consciousness has appeared, which calls for more than a hymn and a flag. Taking these new developments into consideration we feel that we must devise a system which will benefit our people. On the practical level we are simply using methods which respect this orientation.

When we look at Portuguese colonialism, a fascist colonialism which does not accept the principle of independence, we must realise that it is a fight until death – either them or us. When we look at the material strength of Portugal compared to our strength we have to look for our strength not only in technical terms but in man himself. We must obtain the dedication of all those who are prepared to fight for liberation. We have to find slogans to build our unity. We cannot be tribalists, nor racists because we have to show that it is exploitation we want to destroy. If we had tackled the problem as a racial one we would be forced to condone the exploiters with black skins!

We in South Africa find that the form of the political contradiction is very sharply between black and white. In what way is this different in Mozambique and how does this fit in with your concept of Mozambique nationalism?

I think that the conditions in South Africa are quite different than in Mozambique where fascism affects both Whites and Blacks – the Portuguese Government does not only oppress the blacks, it also oppresses the Whites. Under these circumstances unity does not exist among the white population. Under this oppressive system, the material conditions of the 200,000 Whites in Mozambique are not always brilliant. There is a large section of the population which has a low standard of living; this is very important.

There is also the class of the liberal professions who have this urge for freedom. The relations existing between the Blacks and Whites are not that distant. There is still apparent racial discrimination in cinemas buses etc., but there are Blacks who maintain contact with the white population.

PERSPECTIVES OF THE REVOLUTION

It must be noted that economic power is not controlled by the people in Mozambique but by the Portuguese outside. If we try to define the situation in a more precise manner we find that the main conflict and the principal contradiction is between the working population and the bourgeoisie,

but this bourgeoisie is not in Mozambique. It has its agents in Mozambique but it is in fact in Lisbon, London, Paris etc. This is the main contradiction. **This means that the White population does not feel entirely responsible for the present situation and they also do not feel that they are the main beneficiaries of the colonial situation.**

We said earlier that we could not take a racial position because it would have meant condoning the exploiters with black skins. But the importance of this aspect of the problem cannot be understood at the start of mobilisation because there are only a few with better economic conditions. However, as soon as the liberation struggle starts a new situation arises and this class starts to believe that they may be able to maintain their better conditions. At this stage we have to make a choice; we must decide which orientation we shall follow. In Mozambique we had to think very seriously as soon as we had men who had been liberated – the preoccupations of each one becomes obvious. The ones which have joined the revolution, but who had individual preoccupations did not feel at ease with the chosen orientation of FRELIMO, which did not accept the establishment of institutions resulting in a system of exploitation of man, which forced us to examine under which conditions the armed struggle could be victorious. That is to say; as soon as there are liberated men we had to expect that some would say "Now we are free, what will we get?" and some liberated areas do not offer much in the way of development. In order to maintain enthusiasm we had to make everybody understand that the war will be over only when the whole country has been liberated. We then had to create something new.

Before the stage of the liberated man everybody wanted something new – freedom! Once the Portuguese had left, part of the work had been done – the people felt that they were in a liberated region, but what was new? What could be done to show that this was independence? We could only offer a new organisation of work which would give to the people something they did not have before and this was the possibility of enjoying the fruits of their own labour. Therefore the choice of a system which would allow the people to enjoy the fruits of their labour became necessary for the continuation of the armed struggle because we had to find the drive to continue to galvanize the population, to maintain their enthusiasm. In this way the people were able to say: "Yes, there is something new – the possibility of enjoying the fruits of our labour and it came with national liberation."

We also had to make the people understand that what we were trying to do could not be achieved only in one province but at the level of the whole nation. This is why we had to impose firmly an anti-racist action because a racist approach would have alienated the support of the Whites and secondly would hinder the realisation of social emancipation which had been an imperative of the armed struggle and which was an absolute part of our general orientation.

MORALS AND SOLIDARITY

In your concluding speech as Chairman of this Conference, you placed a good deal of stress on the moral outlook of FRELIMO. Would you say that your movement, by emphasising these questions of proper relations between human beings will indeed have some activating influence, invoke a special response in the capitalist world?

In fact, it is our aim. But as I was saying, we reached a stage where we realised that it is only through concrete

action that we can impose these new values. We have been able to get together here in Rome because the armed struggle exposed certain values.

We do not say that the armed struggle alone can bring about such things as solidarity, friendship etc. but we have said that in our particular case the armed struggle was found to be the only historical path to unify our people. If we had not embarked on an armed struggle we would have been unable to consolidate our fight. In each situation we have had to determine the best form of action, which will allow the creation of new values and which must orientate the relations between people. Without the armed struggle we would not have been able to establish the relations which now exist between the leaders and the people.

The armed struggle is essential for liberation and through it new relations are created. In a diversified society like ours it is only by social action that people are able to develop new relations adapted to new situations. In our case it has been through armed struggle. **At the same time the guerilla has acquired a high status. We are convinced that this status is not only due to the struggle in Angola and Mozambique but this high status is particularly due to Vietnam which showed us this fantastic capacity to resist the American monster with such highly developed techniques.**

People have noticed this capacity to resist and have wondered where it came from and what it meant. People have found that it was a human force, that we have created a new human dimension. People must now revise their positions, and it is not Nixon and Pompidou who will revise their conceptions; it is the people of the European countries who have had to rethink their attitudes. They have understood that whatever was being said of the Vietnamese their action has shown a new Human dimension and this has helped us all. The action in Vietnam as well as Latin America has enabled the guerillas to be looked upon favourably in the whole world.

OUR CONTRIBUTION

But our contribution, because of our historical situation, may be to show up the links which exist between us and the people of Europe. The objective link is well known – that capitalism exploits Mozambique and France as well. Through the different struggles people have linked their own difficulties with ours. People are not happy, which has proved to them that these problems are on a world scale; there are struggles for National liberation, there is the participation of European countries in these colonial wars; what does this mean? From one action to another they have reached a certain understanding.

And when struggles such as ours present themselves not as a disruptive but as a constructive force, people say to themselves: these are not just poor Blacks but people who are striving to build something; these are people who are trying to build a new life, therefore they are true human beings. This is the kind of reaction we have experienced in certain countries. The movement of solidarity supports us on principled grounds as opposed to the humanitarians who think in terms of poor people.

This is why we have said that the one result of this conference is the possibility to show that it is truly possible to establish between peoples relations which are not those of the exploiter with the exploited. The importance of this discovery is that we can organise joint actions which must be done to establish this front as a political objective, which aims to stop military intervention by imperialist forces.



SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLE

Sechaba: There are people in the West who, young and enthusiastic, would like to become volunteers in the struggle. Some would like to work on development projects, others as fighters. Can they participate?

A. We already have some friends who have come to work with us. For example this year some Swedish teachers came to teach in our secondary school. We have also had teachers from Czechoslovakia and now have some from GDR, India and Holland. We have also had technicians who have helped with publicity and we now have two Bulgarian doctors. We can therefore say that we accept technicians who offer their services to us because we need them.

However all these friends have not been utilised in the armed struggle. This is due to our view that the duties in the armed struggle must of necessity be carried out by ourselves.

Up to now we have not used the services of friends in the armed conflict and we do not envisage this in the near future, we consider that we can best use their assistance in the non-military sector especially to train personnel. This is the most important aspect of technical assistance.

Furthermore, we feel the essential task today for the Western European people is to organise a campaign, to mobilise public opinion to stop any move towards military intervention of imperialism, and they must understand that this is a real possibility. It is not only an illusion but a possibility. We must seize every opportunity which exists to be victorious against the enemy at the international level.