

# THE KHARTOUM CONFERENCE— A LANDMARK

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**T**HE Conference held in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, from January 18-20 in support of the peoples of the Portuguese Colonies and Southern Africa marked a big step forward in consolidating international support for the armed struggles now going on in Africa against colonialism and white supremacy regimes.

This Conference, sponsored jointly by the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation and the World Council of Peace in collaboration with the six authentic national liberation movements waging armed struggle, was attended by representatives and experts from more than fifty countries as well as from a number of international organisations. The list of participants was a very imposing one. Delegations from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam carrying a message of solidarity from Ho Chi Minh and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam came there to demonstrate the oneness of the struggle against imperialism and colonialism whether it is carried on in Vietnam or Southern Africa. Asian delegations included representatives from India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, Laos. All the socialist countries with the exception of China and Albania were represented by their solidarity organisations. From the Americas representatives came from USA, Canada, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Mexico and Paraguay. The Middle East and North Africa countries were fully represented. Europe was represented by delegates from Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Spain and Portugal.

It is a sad commentary on the existing political state of affairs on the African continent that, despite strenuous efforts by the sponsors, independent Africa was very poorly represented. But there were delegations from Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Madagascar.

Recognising the importance of international solidarity action for the cause of the struggle, the top-most leaders of the six national liberation movements came in person to give the conference a first-hand, factual report on the situation in their respective territories, the progress on the battle-fronts and the position in the liberated areas.

Portuguese Colonies: Powerful delegations from Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique were headed by Amilcar Cabral, PAIGC, Agostinho Neto, MPLA, and Eduardo Mondlane, who has since been so shamefully assassinated, of FRELIMO. They spoke of the fascist terror and repression let loose on the people by the Portuguese colonialists. They gave a sober but heartening account of the valour and skill of the armed guerrilla fighters who with the aid of the local populations were able to beat back the Portuguese army and liberate vast areas in the three territories concerned. In Guinea Bissau, over two-thirds of the territory has been liberated and the Portuguese troops driven back to find refuge in a few towns left to them. In Angola, a third of the area has been freed and in Mozambique, over one-fifth. About a quarter of a million Portuguese troops are now bogged down in the three African territories in a desperate attempt to halt the advancing tide of the freedom fighters.

Evidence was laid before the Conference that, but for the economic and military aid rendered to Portugal by the Nato powers, the Portuguese colonial administrations in Africa could have collapsed.

South Africa: The report on South Africa was presented through several papers submitted by the delegation of the African National Congress of South Africa. The report on Apartheid—*The World Must Act Now*—was given by the leader of the delegation, Robert M. Resha, and the other papers dealt with such questions as Bases of South African Imperialism, Race and Apartheid Power, Political Prisoners, and the Role of Women.

These papers laid bare the facts that South Africa today is a highly developed imperialist state and with the support of Britain, US, West Germany and other powers, is engaged in a vigorous drive to take over imperialist responsibilities in Africa; that, in alliance with the Smith regime in Rhodesia and the fascist regime of Portugal, she constitutes a serious and direct threat to world peace.

As Robert Resha correctly pointed out in his report: the fascist Republic of South Africa 'is forcibly intervening in Zimbabwe to sustain the illegal Smith regime in face of a popular revolution—this is an act of invasion of what is supposed to be a British colony. It is extending its attempt at economic, political and military domination from neighbouring Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana northwards, first to Malawi, but with the object of penetrating all independent African States. South Africa has made blatant threats against Zambia and Tanzania. *Fascist South Africa is as much a threat to the peace, security and independence of the continent of Africa today, as was the Hitler regime to Europe thirty years ago.*'

Armed struggle in Southern Africa: Both the report of the ANC and that of the Zimbabwe African People's Union presented by Stephen Nkomo dealt with the guerrilla war waged in Zimbabwe since 1967 under the ANC/ZAPU military alliance. These reports show, within the bounds of security, the extent of the penetration within the country by the guerrilla forces and bases established there with the active help and co-operation of the local population. The Smith regime unable to rely on its own police and soldiers had to run to South Africa to seek more military support.

These reports also describe the desperate situation in which the Smith regime found itself as a result of the blows of the guerrilla war and the unleashing of a reign of terror and persecution of the unarmed African population, subjecting the innocent villagers to the most ruthless forms of torture and murder.

Namibia (South West Africa): The repression of the population by the savage application of the Apartheid laws to the territory by the fascist regime of South Africa, in flagrant defiance of UN came in for strong condemnation in the report of Sam Nujomo, President of SWAPO. The report also dealt with the large scale plunder of the wealth of the country and the ruthless exploitation of cheap labour by South African and foreign monopolies.

It also dealt with the guerrilla activities embarked upon by the Namibia Liberation Army, the military wing of SWAPO, since the beginning of armed struggle in 1966.

These reports of the national liberation movements together with fact papers on imperialist economic, political and military involvements in the Portuguese colonies and Southern Africa, on 'Neo-Colonialism, Military Coups and African Liberation', 'British Involvement in South Africa' and on solidarity actions, submitted by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, Jack Woddis, the International Defence and Aid, the Soviet and GDR delegations, were considered in some detail by the three commissions in which the Conference divided itself.

After two full days of deliberation, the commissions produced three resolutions which were unanimously adopted at the final plenary session amidst acclamation.

A clarion call to all the democratic forces for all-out solidarity was contained in the Declaration which stated *inter alia*:

We meet at a time when the forces of National Liberation, enjoying the support of the forces of progress and socialism, are challenging the aggressive forces of imperialism, colonialism and racism and are scoring new victories for their freedom, independence and social progress.

We met to face the challenge to Africa and to humanity presented by Portuguese colonialism and the white supremacy regimes of Southern Africa. . . .

We have decided with unanimity that Africa and the world give more effective help to the African Liberation Movements fighting for the freedom of their peoples. Coming to Khartoum from all over Europe, from Asia, from America, North and South, we solemnly resolve that this Khartoum Conference shall prove a historic new stage of advance in Africa's march to freedom, independence and unity.

The existence of these racist regimes, their aggressive alliance, and their economic, financial, political and military support by imperialism constitute a major threat to world peace. . . .

The Conference calls upon the progressive, anti-imperialist forces of the entire world to back the armed struggles which have been forced upon them as the only possible alternative to slavery for the foreseeable future.

The resolution on mobilisation of international support itemises no less than 24 practical measures which national committees and solidarity organisations in different parts can undertake in order to render the fullest moral, political and material support. (This resolution is summarised in the accompanying document.)

The militant spirit, reflected in the Declaration, was characteristic of the Conference and at the end of the Conference delegates left Khartoum with the firm conviction that much that was positive was attained after three days of business-like deliberation and hard work.

The Conference not only demonstrated the unity of purpose and action of the national liberation movements in this new period of armed struggle but also underlined the imperative need for building the force of united international mobilisation in support of the liberation movement.

Much ground-work has been done for the laying of a sound foundation for lasting alliance between all progressive forces and democratic organisations of the four continents, and for establishing links between the African liberation movement and the movement for social progress in the whole world.

Out of the Conference emerged a better and more clear understanding of the role of the socialist community as a most vital factor in the struggle of all peoples for national independence, social progress and peace. The invaluable disinterested aid and assistance rendered by the socialist countries and above all by the Soviet Union was publicly and gratefully acknowledged by the spokesmen of the national liberation movements as well as by many other participants.

What was most gratifying was the pledge given by the delegations

of the socialist countries of their continuing assistance which was made doubly reassuring by the following words of the leader of the Soviet delegation:—‘As regards the Soviet people, they will spare no effort in rendering every possible aid to the national liberation movement in attaining the noble goals of liberation.’

There is no doubt that the spirit of Khartoum will permeate all lands and the four continents from whence the participants came and it is now the responsibility of the democratic, anti-imperialist, revolutionary and peace forces everywhere to transform the recommendations for solidarity into reality and render full moral, political, financial and material support to the national liberation movements.

## Conference Document

THE RESOLUTION issued by the Mobilisation Committee after the conference recorded the developments reached by the National Liberation struggles in the territories of Africa dominated by Portugal (i.e. Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde).

It was noted that Portugal represents the weakest link in the imperialist chain and that the intensification of the international struggle against Portuguese colonialism and fascism is a matter of urgent priority.

South Africa is the main pillar in Africa supporting colonial and racist régimes, while Britain continues to entrench its agents, the Rhodesian racist régime, in oppressing the African people of Zimbabwe.

The following practical measures in support of the peoples' liberation struggle were among those recommended by the Conference:

1. Celebration of the solidarity days of the National Liberation Movements by mass demonstrations. These are: February 4 (Angola), March 17 (Zimbabwe), May 25 (Africa), June 26 (South Africa), August 3 (Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde), August 26 (Namibia), September 25 (Mozambique).
2. Recognition by all governments

of the following fighting movements as the sole legitimate authorities of the respective countries: MPLA (Angola), PAIGC (Guinea-Bissau), FRELIMO (Mozambique), ANC (South Africa), SWAPO (South-West Africa), ZAPU (Zimbabwe).

3. Boycott of all Portuguese, Rhodesian and South African goods.
4. Implementation by all governments of the UN resolutions regarding Zimbabwe, South Africa, S. W. Africa and Portuguese colonies.

5. Intensification of all measures for the political, economic, diplomatic and cultural isolation of South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal.

6. Campaigns for the release of all political prisoners, and for prisoners taken in the course of the national liberation struggle to be considered as prisoners of war and treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

7. Collection of material to aid the National Liberation Movements, especially funds, vehicles, medicines, clothing, blankets, foodstuffs.

8. Organising by governments and international bodies of medical teams for service in the liberated areas.