

SOUTH AFRICAN-LATIN AMERICAN CONNECTION

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During the last ten years the world has been witness to furtive attempts by USA and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) circles to form a new military bloc complementary to it in the form of the South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO) in which South Africa, Argentina and Brazil would play an important role. This is envisaged in the endeavours to expand the Rio de Janeiro Treaty (Inter-American Mutual Assistance Treaty of 1947) to include South Africa thus bringing into existence another aggressive military bloc. At this stage we cannot underrate this danger threatening both the peoples of Africa and Latin America.

In practice this means the pooling of efforts by reactionary states in defence of Western imperialism, especially threatened by the revolutionary take-over by the peoples of Southern Africa. In spite of the fact that such a treaty does not yet exist, the imperialist efforts have already born fruit in the form of the presence of Chilean officers with the racist army in Namibia. This has been achieved through the use of the politico-economic lever for military purposes.

The recent changes in Southern Africa coupled with the progress of the liberation movement in recent years render South Africa the weak-link in imperialism's strategy. In response, imperialism has tremendously increased South Africa's role as a junior-partner, militarily as well as economically.

South African trading partners are also to serve as arms re-routing agents in order to circumspect the international ban on arms sales to South Africa. The case of the US company, Space Research Corporation which has developed an advanced 155 mm artillery system and has test bases in Antigua and Barbados, aptly illustrates the point. "The Star" of the 16th November, 1978 reported Antigua's Premier, Mr Vere Bird, as having said there was definite evidence that the Corporation had shipped arms to South Africa via Antigua.

This calls in response for the closest co-operation between the national liberation movements in Southern Africa and various national democratic and liberation movements in Latin

America, to vigorously expose these odious attempts at strengthening and prolonging the life of fascism and oppression in both our continents and specific regions. Through co-ordinated effort the liberation movement can reverse and off-set these imperialist gains as it has been able to in the past, and strengthen the struggles of the African and Latin American peoples for genuine liberation, progress and world peace.

The past twenty years have seen the historic and resounding victory of the Cuban revolution and the firm forward march by forces of peace, progress and socialism across Latin America.

In response, US imperialism, continuing to regard Latin America as its own back yard because of its multimillion dollar investments there, has taken steps to repress and intimidate the social forces that rose across the length and breadth of South America demanding freedom, the right to eat, land reforms and a foreign policy to safeguard their national interests.

At the Afro-Latin American meeting Against Apartheid and Racism in Southern Africa, Fascism in Uruguay and other Latin American Countries, held in Luanda, our National Commissar, Comrade Andrew Masondo, put the cards of the African National Congress on the table and left no one in doubt when he pointed out that efforts are now being made to consolidate the fascist-racist alliance on both continents at a higher level, through an aggressive military pact, the long-planned South Atlantic Treaty Organisation, frequently condemned as an attempt to destabilise world peace.

Despite the counter-offensive, the anti-imperialist consciousness of the peoples of Latin America has been deepened and strengthened and in a number of countries, through varying wars and forms of struggle, the people have taken the victory road.

Latin America is today entering upon a new phase, lit by a broad revolutionary and democratic future. The triumph of Sandino's heroic people symbolised this earlier growth of strength and is the fruit of the selfless struggle of generations of Nicaraguans who refused to bow to imperialist intervention in their country and kept alive the great Sandinista tradition.

The struggling people of South Africa and their vanguard movement, the African National Congress, are demonstrating their growing militancy in the fight against the oppressive apartheid regime, for political power.