

# SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE NKOMATI ACCORD

By Z. Nkosi

Opinion about the Nkomati and Lusaka agreements is gradually hardening in the frontline states. In the dying days of 1984 Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos arrived in Maputo at the head of a high-powered delegation on a two-day visit to Mozambique. A joint communique issued at the end of talks with Mozambican President Samora Machel emphasised “a high degree of fraternity and a similarity of views on the main issues of the struggle against imperialism and its agents, the armed bandits”.

Mozambique declared its support for the proposals submitted by Angola to the UN Secretary General as a basis for negotiations with South Africa. These were:

1. Completion of the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola as laid down in the Lusaka Agreement.
2. Cessation of South Africa’s support for UNITA and the dismantling of UNITA’s bases in Namibia.
3. Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 laying down the procedures for Namibian independence.
4. After the establishment of UN forces in Namibia and the reduction of South African forces to 1,500 infantry, the Angolan and Cuban governments will start the gradual reduction of the Cuban internationalist contingent from Angola on the basis of a programme to be presented.

The Angolan side to the Maputo talks expressed support for “Mozambique’s efforts to ensure that South Africa carries out the Nkomati Accord to the full” and for Mozambique’s struggle to destroy the MNR bandits.

In their document, the two Presidents reaffirmed “their solidarity with the liberation struggle of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa, led respectively by SWAPO and the ANC.”

The two sides pledged co-operation in the struggle against imperialism, the strengthening of national independence and the building of socialism in the two countries.

In a commentary on the visit and the talks, the Maputo daily newspaper *Noticias* predicted that the Mozambican and Angolan governments would harden their positions towards South Africa as a result of the Botha regime’s failure to honour its undertakings. Both governments, the paper observed, “have more than sufficient justification to complain that the Lusaka understanding and the Nkomati Accord are not being honoured”.

*Noticias* added that the South African regime’s cool response to Angola’s recent proposals showed that Pretoria “is not interested, or not able, or perhaps not willing to participate in efforts to establish peace and security in Southern Africa.”

Speaking a few days later at the traditional end of year reception given for leading figures in Mozambican public life, President Machel said:

“The real architects of the conspiracy against Mozambique are based in certain Western European capitals” and added that they benefit from “the complicity of individuals and organisations in neighbouring countries from whom they receive the necessary logistic support and who infiltrate terrorists, saboteurs and mercenaries” — a remark clearly directed towards, and duly resented by, South Africa.

President Machel said the aim of the conspiratorial network led by imperialism was “to change the course of our history, and create conditions for the return of those who were always the sworn enemies of the Mozambican people”. In 1985, the tenth year of Mozambican independence, “we must act decisively to secure peace and eliminate banditry”. This was “the basic condition for economic recovery”.

The Mozambican Information Agency report stated: “President Machel repeatedly stressed the socialist nature of the Mozambican revolution, and praised the assistance received from other members of the socialist community. Solidarity from other socialist countries had meant that ‘at critical moments and on favourable terms’, Mozambique had been able to acquire fuel and consumer goods. The President also pointed to the strengthening of Mozambique’s alliance with the rest of the socialist world during the past year”.

According to the same agency, on December 27, at a ceremony in Maputo for representatives of the Mozambican community living and working in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, South Africa was accused of systematically violating the Nkomati Accord. The ceremony, held in the Presidential palace with President Machel wearing the same full-dress uniform he wore for the signing of the Accord, was attended by about 100 Mozambican workers, mostly from the South African mines.

A representative of the Mozambican workers read a message regretting South Africa's refusal to implement the Nkomati Accord. The message noted that Mozambique had signed the agreement "sincerely, without any subterfuge" in order to establish peace in the region, but "what was previously hidden is now becoming clear". The South African government's agreement to sign the Accord was "nothing but a trick" and the regime never intended to carry out its obligations under the Accord. "South Africa never stopped supporting, training and infiltrating the bandit gangs, and it never stopped sending planes with weapons destined for the bandits inside Mozambique".

This view was supported in a speech by Frelimo Party Political Bureau member Marcelino dos Santos in an end-of-year reception in Beira. He said:

"Our enemy is called imperialism, and in this part of the world its spearhead is South Africa. We are continuing to detect radio communications transmitting orders to the bandit gangs, and reports from the bandits back to their leaders". He directly accused South Africa of trying "to give political status to the bandits and criminals which it created in the first place".

President Machel himself returned to the theme in a speech at a New Year reception for the diplomatic corps held in Maputo on January 4. Although the South African government had pledged to implement the letter and spirit of the Accord, he said, "violence and terrorism are continuing to claim lives and spread destruction in Mozambique". There were clear signs that the Accord was being violated "from the territory of South Africa and of other neighbours of Mozambique".

The dean of the diplomatic corps in Maputo, Czechoslovakian Ambassador Vaclan Brelac, read a message condemning the "increasing violence used by certain forces in some countries to prevent social progress and to maintain their own domination and exploitation". He added: "We all know it is not the fault of the Mozambican government that the Nkomati Accord is not being implemented satisfactorily". The MNR bandits, he said, "are supplied from outside by those who are eager to return to the old colonial order".

President Machel was most specific when speaking to a party of French journalists in Maputo on February 6, 1985. The deterioration in the situation

in Mozambique, he said, "is because South Africa is not fulfilling the (Nkomati) Agreement. I don't know if it is unable or unwilling to".

The first national congress of the MPLA-Workers' Party was held in Luanda from January 14 to 19. In his opening speech President dos Santos said:

"It has been proved more than once that it is South Africa that is responsible for maintaining the present climate of tension in our region".

Pretoria, he said, was "still banking on eliminating the legitimate governments of frontline countries in order to put its own puppets in power . . . The serious and constructive new peace proposals presented by our government have met with an arrogant response harmful to our sovereignty on the part of South Africa, which has outdone itself in making unacceptable demands contrary to the ethics of international relations". President dos Santos noted "the premeditated inability of the South African government to comply with what was stipulated in the Nkomati Accord". At the same time South Africa was continuing to occupy part of Angolan territory despite the undertakings entered into in the Lusaka agreement.

"There are no valid reasons to justify that act of continued aggression", he said. "All the facts lead us to conclude that the South African government wished to use the hope of peace that was created merely to try to break out of its international isolation and to ensure the survival of the apartheid system". Furthermore, there was "no longer any doubt that the vast plan of aggression and destabilisation carried out against our country over these years by the racist South African regime was only possible because of the active support and connivance of certain western countries".

By contrast, said President dos Santos, "the bonds of friendship and solidarity with the parties and peoples of socialist countries have been consolidated and expanded . . . Inter-party co-operation has been implemented and inter-governmental co-operation is developing satisfactorily in the economic, technical and cultural fields". Angola would continue its efforts to use existing possibilities for the constant strengthening of the material basis of its relations with the socialist world.

"In this perspective the most correct ways are being studied of achieving not only closer bilateral co-operation with all socialist countries but also broader co-operation within the framework of Comecon".

Denying the insinuations of the western press, President dos Santos said: "Cuba continues to receive no material rewards for the internationalism it practises in Angola in such an exemplary way in the military field". He disclosed that Cuba "decided more than a year ago to cease receiving payment from the Angolan people . . . Cuba is continuing to make sacrifices,

including the lives of some of its finest sons, in helping the Angolan people and their revolution, in an exemplary way, to defend independence, the country's integrity and the gains so far achieved".

The President added that "the Soviet Union is still the main supplier of the weapons and military equipment with which our valiant combatants have been facing enemy onslaughts".

On the basis of Angola's foreign policy aimed at safeguarding the independence, prestige and interests of the People's Republic of Angola, the President said there had been "diplomatic initiatives to normalise Angola's relations with Senegal and the Peoples Republic of China, as well as to increase prestige and a correct understanding of our national realities in Western Europe, with a view to diversifying and expanding economic relations with all countries of interest on the basis of reciprocal advantage".

The second congress of the MPLA-Workers' Party is scheduled to take place towards the end of 1985.

### **President Nyerere's View**

In an interview with the journal *New African* shortly after his election last November as chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere, replying to the question "What do you think about the Nkomati Accord?", said:

"For South Africa it has been absolutely wonderful. And the Americans think it is a tremendous example of the success of . . . what is that policy called? — Ah yes! — 'Constructive engagement'! They keep on saying how wonderful it is.

"We think it is a humiliation. We don't want any more Nkomatis. It is the success of the South African policy of destabilising the frontline states, and it is assisted in this by the USA. And it is proper that we should view it completely frankly. It is a defeat on our part.

"We understand *why* Mozambique had to look for accommodation at Nkomati — but they haven't even got the minimum they thought they could get out of it. But we *understand* why they did it, because there was a promise that South Africa might stop supporting the MNR and Mozambique decided they needed peace to start some development in their country. But they have not even got that. From the very beginning, South Africa never meant to honour that agreement because during the very negotiations the South Africans were actually sending in more armed men. They were breaking the agreement before they had signed it. Even after the agreement they continued sending people and are still doing so". (*New African* January 1985).

# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE FAILURE OF THE BANTUSTANS

**South Africa: African Rural Development, by Maziphula M. Mbongwa.** (Dr Govan Mbeki Fund, University of Amsterdam, 1984.)

As is so often the case, titles conceal more than they reveal. This is certainly true of this monograph written by Masiphula Mbongwa whilst ANC Research Fellow of the Dr Govan Mbeki Fund of the University of Amsterdam.

He has produced an interesting and insightful analysis of the relation of the bantustans, and agrarian “development” within them, to the South African political economy. The context in which he sets his analysis is that of national oppression and capitalist exploitation, drawing out the fact that underlying the creation of the bantustans are political as well as economic forces.

Although the monograph is short, it touches on a wide range of issues, all of which are not possible to deal with in the space of a short review. Central to his argument is that:

“Bantustans were created to ensure absolute political control and socio-economic exploitation of African people. Their aims are to preserve and protect the continued system of white dictatorship and capital enslavement. ... The continued pursuit by Pretoria of the process of the apartheid decolonisation — bantustan and bantustan independence — that act in itself constitutes a reminder that African self-determination, political and economic emancipation and one-man-one-vote remain as alive and unfinished issues in South Africa.” (p14/15)

The failure of industrial decentralisation (a fact admitted to by P W Botha in November, 1981, when he announced a new strategy for regional economic development) and the collapse of agriculture in the bantustans,

the alleged economic "raison d'être", expose Pretoria's claim to be promoting "separate but equal development" for the sham that it is. But more importantly, Mbongwa argues, these policies have contributed significantly to the socio-economic crisis facing South Africa today, and particularly the crisis of unemployment and poverty which is affecting the African majority so severely. At the same time, Pretoria's recognition of this failure has given it the excuse to advance the political "solution" of "self-government" and "independence", by which it hopes to absolve itself of responsibility for the failures of its own creation. It is in this light that we can assess the questions of "manpower" and skill shortages, the shift to capital-intensive and automated production in both secondary industry and agriculture, the exodus of whites from the platteland, militarisation and its implications as well as the immediate resort to extreme repression in the bantustans, where Pretoria's "chiefs" have little or no room to manoeuvre.

The monograph is well written and is thought-provoking. It should stimulate further research and analysis into the many problems it raises.

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## **ANGOLAN WOMEN BREAK NEW GROUND**

**Angolan Women Building the Future: From National Liberation to Women's Emancipation;** from the Organization of Angolan Women, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1984. Price £5.95

This book is essential reading for all of us in the South African liberation movement. It includes speeches and resolutions of the first congress of the Organisation of Angolan Women (OMA) as well as theses which were widely discussed in preparation for the Congress. It reflects the progressive and concrete way in which our Angolan comrades are tackling the emancipation of women, building on the gains and experiences of the national liberation struggle, overcoming the obstacles imposed by the war South Africa is waging against Angola, and integrating the struggle for the emancipation of women into the general task of national reconstruction.

OMA was set up in 1962 and played a vital role mobilising women to take part in the liberation struggle. In 1973 OMA was awarded Unesco's Nadejda Krupskaya Literacy Award, an honour usually accorded to countries, not to a women's organisation engaged in a national liberation war. By 1983, OMA

had over a million members. (Angola's population is between six and eight million). The laws of the People's Republic and Angola guarantee non-discrimination against women, but new laws relating to specific conditions of women were needed, particularly in relation to the family. Also, legal equality is not enough to make equality a social reality. OMA's national coordinator Ruth Neto, stated:

"Our objective is to raise the economic, social and educational level of Angolan women, so that they may play an increasingly useful part in building a socialist society and in the tasks of national reconstruction."

Participation in national life is seen as the key to women's emancipation, which is part of the struggle to advance the whole people.

The discussion theses encompass women's oppression under colonialism, their role in national liberation and the current struggle for their emancipation, given the historical legacy of subordination, backwardness and obscurantism. To overcome this, eliminating illiteracy among women is seen as vital, as well as raising their level of education. Special attention was given to working women, the important issues of equality at work, support for working mothers, the specific conditions of peasant women and the question of mother-and-child care. Finally, the theses covered women and the family, the problems of young women, unmarried mothers, housewives, sex education and family planning, abortion and prostitution.

In his speech at the opening session President dos Santos noted that women "during the colonial period were those most exploited and oppressed, if we consider that they were subjected not only to colonial domination, but also to the authority of their husbands." He stressed the relationship between the solution of Angola's national problems (the imperialist war of aggression and the economic and financial crisis) and the emancipation of women. If the national problems are not solved, women's problems can't be solved and it is vital for women to contribute to solving the national problems.

### **Immediate Goals**

Ruth Neto, in her report for OMA's National Committee, indicated the achievements of OMA before and after independence and outlined the main immediate goals of the organisation:

1. To increase membership and ensure active participation.
2. To combat illiteracy and raise the educational and scientific level of women.
3. To ensure increased active participation of women in all sectors of national life.

4. To intensify political and ideological work among women so that they understand their role in the revolution.
5. To dignify and significantly improve the living and working conditions of peasant women.

Lucio Lara, of the MPLA-Workers' Party Central Committee, pointed out that the OMA Congress had produced the result that:

“The Party and the State are now in possession of valuable elements which will make it possible to programme action to solve many of the problems facing our women ... This will help to establish more just conditions in society.”

The Congress adopted a wide range of resolutions to implement the process of emancipating women. The resolution on working women stressed the need to enforce equality between men and women at work, already provided for in law. Women should in practice enjoy the same opportunities as men. Women should have access to refresher courses, further training and education at work. Facilities should be provided to minimise the domestic tasks of working mothers in urban areas. Child care facilities should be available in work places, neighbourhoods and agricultural co-operatives. Priority should be given to functional literacy, especially in rural areas. The laws should be revised so that the principle that the inherent tasks of the home should be shared by the couple is enacted.

The resolution on women and the family recommended that new legislation be drafted to ensure equality between men and women. These new guidelines should be publicised by all the country's leading bodies. There should be legal and social protection of unmarried mothers. Young women must have access via training to economic independence. Conditions should be created to ensure the right of women to freely consented motherhood. Sex education in schools and mass media should be used to educate people on contraception. Family planning should be introduced as one of the ways of reducing infant mortality. As a last resort, in an unwanted pregnancy which could harm the physical, mental or social welfare of a woman or girl, abortion should be authorised. There should be frank discussion of prostitution to make society aware of the need to eradicate it. Meetings, talks and symposia should be held for the ongoing education of adults on the new relationships in the family and society. All discriminatory measures and attitudes towards women should cease in state services.

The prestige of OMA is testimony to the calibre of the revolutionary Angolan women who have built this organisation. The achievements of this first Congress reflect the determination of the Angolan people and their government, the MPLA-Workers' Party, to work for the genuine

emancipation of women in Angola. The whole world can learn lessons from this book, which provides an invaluable insight into the relationship of women's emancipation to the national democratic revolution.

Mosadi Wa Sechaba

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## **FAILURE OF A MISGUIDED MISSION**

**Confessions of an Albino Terrorist** by Breyten Breytenbach.  
(London, Faber and Faber, 1984.)

The Afrikaans poet Breyten Breytenbach, released after serving seven years of a nine-year sentence under the Terrorism Act, writes: "It was my intention to produce a political text — if it turned out to be more 'literary' than expected it can only be because I couldn't help it." (p. 339). Given this stated intention a reviewer is more than entitled to judge the book on its political content. This I intend to do, but first I will make a few remarks about the 'literary' aspects of the book.

The bourgeois media have been fulsome in their praise of the book as a literary creation. This is an opinion that I do not share. Two distinct styles are used in the book. The long discursive passages are written in a convoluted way. It is often virtually impossible to follow lines of thought in these introspective passages, let alone to determine what is fact and what fantasy. Yet it is these verbose sections of the book that the bourgeois media have lauded. These purple passages are interspersed with very much better written descriptive sections in which the mindlessness and oppression of the South African prison system are brought out. The descriptions of Beverly Hills — the maximum security prison where condemned prisoners are kept — the cells under the Supreme Court in Pretoria and Pollsmoor, are vivid and often very moving. Yet, to my mind, these sections never achieve the immediacy and impact which is sustained throughout Indres Naidoo's *Island in Chains* or Hugh Lewin's *Bandiet*.

Throughout the book, including the descriptive passages, Breytenbach himself is very much in the forefront. The book

"took shape from the obsessive urge I experienced during the first weeks and months of my release ... to tell my story and all the other stories ... (the Book) had to become the reflection of a search for what really happened, and for the identity of the narrator." (p. 337-8)

The existential search for identity can all too easily become an obsession with self and mere self-aggrandisement. Breytenbach does not escape this pitfall.

This great (and I would suggest, from the evidence of inefficiency and lack of real political commitment that emerges from the book, unwarranted) sense of self-importance is very clear from the following passage.

“Okhela split in two — ostensibly on pro-Breyten and anti-Breyten lines. (Both factions have been in contact with me since, both claiming to have remained true.)” (p. 183).

The Okhela factions “remained true” to Breytenbach, the father figure who had handled his first trial in such an abject manner that he ended up apologising to the South African prime minister and offering, in return for his liberty, to spy on the liberation movement for BOSS. “Remaining true” does not say much for the political acumen of his fellows in Okhela. Incidentally, Breytenbach brushes off his handling of his first trial and the subsequent offer to BOSS in the most cursory and unsatisfactory manner.

### **The Politics of it All**

Let me turn to the political content of the book. Breytenbach sees the External Mission of the ANC as being “in the grip of the dogmatists”. (p. 359). When he discusses what is to be done about it, he is emphatic: “Combat dogmatism.” (p. 360). The implication is clear — the External Mission of the ANC must be combatted. (I will make no comment here on the misapprehension that the ANC ‘externally’ is somehow different from the ANC ‘internally’.)

His position on the South African Communist Party is equally unambiguous. While he claims that he is not involved in ‘red-baiting’ (p. 75), he produces, with no attempt at evidence to support his views, the tired old arguments that “The SACP actually has the nerve centres of the liberation movement in its control.” (p. 75). His criticism of the party is twofold. Firstly that it is “in principle and practice a multi-racial, non-racist organisation.” (p. 76). His criticism here is that he felt that the party’s non-racial character was “papering over the real problems of cultural awareness” and thus “diminishing the effectiveness of the militants by confusing the feedback”. (p. 76). Secondly he regards the SACP as dogmatic and doctrinaire. He makes no secret of the fact that an ultra-left position is at the root of his criticism. “Our criticism of the SACP was coming from the left.” (p. 77).

Having rejected the SACP *in toto* and the leadership of the ANC (or at least that part of the leadership that is in exile), Breytenbach’s infantile disorder

can only lead him to individualism and adventurism. His book exemplifies this. Furthermore, the structures created by the ultra-left are particularly prone to be penetrated by the enemy. Thus Schuitema, an Okhela colleague of Breytenbach's and a former secretary of the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement, admitted "to having given information to Craig Williamson, one of the South African spies abroad but, he asserted, only from 1978 on, and then only to counteract the communist domination of the liberation movement." Schuitema also admitted to Breytenbach "regular contact with and/or control by various South African security services." (p. 184).

It is particularly instructive to look at Okhela's intended role in the trade union field Okhela had

"succeeded in obtaining the promise of substantial sums of money directed to the nascent Black trade unions inside South Africa and we were going to have our contacts inside the country ... channel this money to the intended recipients. To be able to do that, though, we needed to establish a trade union office abroad, in Europe, manned by a Black and a White trade unionist from inside."

As is so often the case, Breytenbach raises more questions than he answers. What, if anything, was to be SACTU's role in this trade union initiative? Perhaps more important, what was the role of the ICFTU or the AALC? It was Breytenbach's intention, during his trip to South Africa, to recruit Steve Biko as the Black trade unionist who would go to Europe. Surely a surprising choice, for, great as were Biko's political and community skills, he was not a trade unionist.

"Biko was a powerful figure though, a natural rallying point for Black Consciousness and non-ANC forces." (p. 99).

The implication is clear: Okhela's trade union activities were to be aimed at undermining the ANC.

### **Origins Unclear**

Okhela's relationship to the ANC never becomes clear. "Okhela was formed in support of a *faction* within the ANC." (p. 62) (His italics.) Yet he claims that Solidarité, the organisation from which Okhela grew, was formed "on behalf of the ANC." (p. 77). The Okhela Manifesto states: "We derive our legitimacy from the African National Congress who requested us to form this organisation." Breytenbach has a footnote here: "This is not true. In fact the office-bearers of the ANC with whom we were in contact could not and did not encourage us in the name of the ANC." (p. 389) It would have been of great interest if Breytenbach had cast more light on this matter.

Of the Okhela Manifesto, Breytenbach writes: "The Manifesto's analysis of the role to be played by Whites in the struggle for liberation is probably still

fairly valid.” Given this lukewarm approach to the Okhela document, it is surprising that he decided to publish it in full as an appendix to the book.

To my mind the most irritating feature of the book is the use of names.

“In some instances I have used the real names of the people involved, mainly because it would have served no purpose to camouflage them. In many other cases I have modified or replaced the names — but behind every name there is a real person, and you may rest assured that the people concerned will recognise themselves.” (p. 338).

What purpose can it possibly serve to hide the real identity of virtually every security policeman or prison warder? Why should the security police torturer, Spyker van Wyk, not be identified as such, instead of hiding behind the pseudonym of Nails van Byleveld? Why should Schnepfel, the parody of a man who had such great power over White political prisoners, be referred to as Schnorff? Why should Denis Goldberg, one of the comrades convicted at Rivonia, become Arthur Goldberg? Why should the UDF be referred to as the Union of Democratic Forces? This obfuscation is carried to such an extent that one almost starts to suspect that Breytenbach wants to protect those who uphold the apartheid system.

I will quote one further example of Breytenbach’s complete lack of understanding of political processes. “Whatever privileges we South African political prisoners had or have are nearly exclusively due to the work of the IRCC.” (International Red Cross Committee). (p. 206). I would rather say that improvements have come about for South African political prisoners primarily because of the disciplined, principled struggles of the political prisoners against the draconian authorities (not to mention the activities of the world-wide anti-apartheid movement). But then Breytenbach himself requested not to be kept with the other White political prisoners — even though he does not mention this.

This book is definitely not a meaningful contribution to progressive writing about South Africa. The sections on prison conditions are worth reading, but the chief interest of the book is as an illustration of the individualistic preoccupations and destructive criticisms which come about when intellectuals are not able to discipline themselves and work within the structures of the mass movement.

**Geus van de Suid**

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