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P 13-15 are not a very comprehensive discussion of possible Chinese motives, I suggest a very single one on P 15. Also on p. 15 you say China has been selective in supporting movements. What factors determine that selectiveness? This is a crucial question.

Also you don't indicate the factors behind China's selectivity. Why no support for the FLNA for ex? Are there any other such cases? If you want to

CHINA AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICA CONFRONTATION:  
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understand China's motives, you had best understand why she is selective.

On the whole its disappointing because it is not clear just what China's motives are + what determines which groups she supports and which she doesn't. Also I don't think any serious people really doubt that the movements are independent so its not necessary to place so much stress on that point. Apart from China's motivations, you could also have said more about the image of China among the liberation movements. What you said in class but didn't say in the paper was in many ways more interesting. I still think its a good job. I suspect you may be holding back.

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CHINA AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICA CONFRONTATION:  
A STUDY OF PRC'S INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT  
FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION\*

INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Conflict

One of the most dominating issues in Africa today is undoubtedly the confrontation at the Zambezi river. To the north of the river two hundred and fifty million Africans live in independent States shaping their own destinies and preoccupied with the problems of survival and development. But south of the Zambezi are the powerful and intricate forces of white supremacy and colonial domination determined to maintain and perpetuate their presence by repressing and oppressing the African majorities.

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\* Note that the term "Southern Africa" is used in this paper in conformity with the current U.N. nomenclature to denote the territories under colonial and white minority domination. These are Angola, Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia, Namibia (South West Africa) and South Africa. For this purpose even the West African territory of Guinea Bissau which declared its unilateral independence from Portugal on September 24, 1973 and the Portuguese dominated islands of Cape Verde are included. Essentially, the term "African liberation" does not merely signify the termination of overt colonial rule. It also connotes effective political, economic, social and cultural decolonization. This concept of effective decolonization as opposed to formal or legal decolonization, has led many ruling African political organizations in independent African States to consider themselves as liberation movements. [See for example, TANU Guidelines 1971, Govt. Printers, Dar es Salaam 1971, p.37. At the same time, in the name of the same principle of effective decolonization, there have emerged in several independent African States dissenting political organizations with the avowed objective of overthrowing established authority. This latter category, which at times also received support of the Chinese leadership, was particularly manifested in the Congo (now Zaire) in the 1960s through the Supreme Council of the Congolese Revolution. The present study will however, confine itself to the liberation movement as it relates to the liberation struggle of the colonial territories from the yoke of foreign domination. Specifically, the study will focus on the liberation movement in Southern Africa and China's position and role in the liberation struggle there.



The basic issue involved here is not of recent origin; the inherent right to struggle for freedom and self-determination is a matter of fundamental principle and of universal concern. The nature of the conflict with its strong racial overtones furthermore makes it all the more relevant and critical problem for the international community. Referring to the growing danger of race war emanating from this conflict, Sir Alex Douglas Home, when he was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the mid-sixties, warned:

"I believe the greatest danger ahead of us is that the world might be divided on racial lines. I see no other danger not even the nuclear bomb, which could be so catastrophic, as that".<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, many African leaders have been in the forefront in drawing this danger to the attention of the world. Thus, President Kaunda of Zambia, whose country occupies a specially important and strategic position as the southern frontier of black power in the confrontation, has observed that a race conflagration in Southern Africa would make the Middle East conflict look like a "picnic".<sup>2</sup> More recently, the former British Foreign Secretary, talking to journalists in London on the situation in Southern Rhodesia in May, 1973, once again cautioned that "there has to be an evolutionary political settlement or else there will be a confrontation not only in Rhodesia but on the rest of the African Continent. I cannot imagine anything more catastrophic than that".<sup>3</sup>

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1. As quoted by Lord Caradon, formerly Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, in his TOM MBOYA LECTURE delivered at Oxford University, 7th February, 1974, entitled "AFRICA AND THE UNITED NATIONS", p.14.
  2. Wilkinson, Anthony R., Insurgency in Rhodesia, 1959 - 1973: An Account and Assessment, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1973, p.25.
  3. Quoted in Charles Mohr, "Rhodesia" Stumbling Search for Solution, THE NEW YORK TIMES, May 14, 1973.



The danger of a race conflict is only one, though admittedly more serious aspect of the problem of Southern Africa. Another aspect is the growing involvement of the major cold war antagonists on the separate sides of the confrontation. In this connection, China, the Soviet Union and the East European powers in general have sided with the liberation movements while some of the NATO members and particularly the United States, seem to be identified with the white minority regimes in Southern Africa. This trend is welcomed neither by the liberation movements nor by the leaders of independent Africa who, for obvious reasons do not wish the African continent to become, in the words of Tanzania's President Nyerere, "a hot front to the cold war", and "the freedom struggle in Southern Africa /becoming/ confused by a power conflict which is irrelevant to it".<sup>4</sup>

For the last ten years a military confrontation has been going on in the area. This confrontation between the African liberation movements and the white minority regimes in Southern Africa has now reached a new and explosive stage. The liberation movements with the active support of free Africa and equipped largely by arms and ammunition from the socialist countries, principally China and the USSR, are now posing a major challenge to the white minority establishments. The achievements of the Liberation Movements have been particularly evident in the Portuguese colonies where they have

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4. Speech by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations General Assembly on October 16, 1970. Published by the Information Services Division, Ministry of Information and Tourism, Dar es Salaam, 1970, p.6.



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created liberated zones. Indeed, the dissatisfaction of the Portuguese armed forces arising from the recognition of the futility of the colonial wars precipitated the overthrowal of the Government of Premier Caetano in Portugal on April 25. That coup which has resulted in the process of democratization within Portugal has also unleashed a trend of events which makes it feasible to contemplate an early termination of the five centuries of Portugal's colonial empire in Africa. Referring to the role of the liberation movements in connection with the recent changes in Portugal, the three presiding officers of the United Nations Committees dealing with Southern Africa stated:

"If the world recognizes that the cause of the recent coup in Portugal emanates from the futile colonial wars in Africa - as all reports so far seem to confirm that it does - then it is equally important to realize that the changes brought about by those who have taken power in Portugal were only made possible by the effectiveness, determination, resilience and sacrifice of the peoples in the Portuguese dominated territories and their national liberation movements".<sup>6</sup>

The African freedom fighters south of the Zambezi now number in tens of thousands. Besides the support and assistance that they receive from the African, Third World and Socialist countries, they are also assisted by a number of smaller West European countries, particularly the Scandinavian States, as well as by political, church and other groups in most other West European countries.

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5. A United Nations Special Mission comprising representatives of Ecuador (Chairman), Sweden and Tunisia visited the liberated areas of Guinea Bissau from April 2 - 8, 1972 and in their report testified to the existence of the "liberated areas" being under effective control of the liberation movement. See Report of the Special Mission established by the Special Committee at its 840th Meeting on March 14, 1972, UN Document A/AC.109/L.804 of July 3, 1972, para 75, p.19.
  6. Joint Statement by the Chairman of the Special Committee of 24, the Chairman of the Special Committee on Apartheid and the President of the United Nations Council for Namibia on May 9, 1974. Document A/AC.109/447.



Pressure therefore, is now on the white minority regimes in Southern Africa. It is significant that despite overwhelming superiority in arms at their disposal, and notwithstanding the massive economic and other assistance rendered to these regimes by the Western world,<sup>7</sup> they are currently constantly under the pressure of the liberation movements. Indeed, the issue is no longer whether the white regimes can contain the liberation movements; rather, how much longer can they do so? In this connection the role of the Great Powers is of significant importance. This paper will examine the position of one of those powers namely the People's Republic of China.

#### Aim and Scope of Study

An attempt will be made in this study to undertake an evaluation of PRC's relations with the national liberation movements in Southern Africa so as to place in proper perspectives the question of interaction between the Chinese revolution and Africa. The importance of the Chinese revolution can be viewed in at least three aspects, namely: its theoretical impact on the revolutionary struggle in Africa; its effect on China's relations with the African and non-African countries; and its practical contribution to the struggle. With these factors in mind, the present study will deal with both

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7. For details of Western assistance see UN documentation e.g. MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION WHICH MIGHT BE IMPEDING THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES, Conference papers A/AC.109/CRP 10 - 14 July, 1973, ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTEREST WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA, NAMIBIA AND TERRITORIES UNDER PORTUGUESE DOMINATION AND EFFORT TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, A/AC.109/CRP 1 - 8 June, 1973.



the theoretical and practical cases of interaction between a relatively young revolution and another which is in the making. Within this framework, a review will be made both of the actual role of China's support of the liberation struggle and of the problems as well as differences attendant in such support. An attempt will be made to demonstrate that, however modest the resultant harvest of its moral or ideological gains might be, China's presence in Southern Africa is an undeniable reality and that, given the circumstances which exist at present and will continue to exist for years to come in that region of the continent, China will continue to involve itself deeply and on an ever-increasing scale in support of the struggle for African Liberation. The study will also reveal how and where the revolutionary international policies of China constitute a common denominator with free Africa and the African Liberation Movement with respect to the liberation struggle particularly the armed struggle in Africa. The variable of "shared experiences" between Africa and China as former colonies or semi-colonies of the European imperialist powers will be examined to demonstrate the extent of guaranteeing continuity of the inter-relationship between the Chinese and African revolutions.

To this end, an analysis will be made of the fundamental political philosophy underlying Chinese foreign policy and of its practical applications vis-a-vis China's Third World allies as well as its extension to the "comrades-in-arms" of the colonial territories in Southern Africa. A particular emphasis will be placed in this regard on the analysis of the developments since Bandung, in the light of the conspicuous evolution in the conduct of Chinese foreign



policy. A critical review will be made also of the implications of Mao's "one line" theory as they patently manifest in the behaviour pattern of Chinese international diplomacy. Of particular significance in this regard is the complexity of Sino-Soviet diplomatic strategem and its effect on the African Liberation Movement.

## II

### INTERACTION ON A THEORETICAL LEVEL

#### "Excellent" International Situation

Reviewing the situation of the armed struggle in Africa in 1973, The Peking Review stated that that year "saw sustained fresh victories for the African people against imperialism, old and neo-colonialism, and racism; the flames of the armed struggle raged".<sup>8</sup> The Review then went on to identify those areas where the "flames of war" have been going on unabated: "Apart from Guinea-Bissau in Western Africa, the popular armed struggles were mainly concentrated in the South, embracing Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia."<sup>9</sup>

This review of events in the African continent, appears from Peking's point of view, to be clearly in consonant with the Chinese ideological premise that the world situation is excellent "in which countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people

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8. PEKING REVIEW, Vol.17, No.1, January 4, 1974, "1973 in Retrospect: Popular Armed Struggles in Africa", p.25.

9. Ibid.



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want revolution". The "excellent" international situation is predicated on the state of a "great disorder" prevailing in the world in which among other things the "third world has become stronger and more united, (with the escalated struggles of the Asian and African peoples against imperialism and hegemonism), playing an ever more significant role in international affairs".<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the "great disorder in the world" is viewed in the context of "imperialism", modern revisionism and reactionaries of various countries have been thrown into confusions".<sup>12</sup>

From the above postulation of the Chinese leaders' view of the contemporary world, a number of basic premises underlying the related Chinese policies can be clearly discerned: First, China associates "world disorder" with excellence in the revolutionary situation, obtaining in the region of Africa; second, China supports the liberation struggle in Africa and views the escalation of the armed struggle in that continent as eloquent vindication of "Chairman Mao's

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10. A commentary by Hsinhua correspondent, January 9, 1974, reproduced in PEKING REVIEW, Vol.17, No.3, January 18, 1974, p.9. This particular concept has been repeatedly emphasized by Chinese leaders and spokesmen in different forms. Thus Chao Kuan-hua, Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister, referred to this in his first statement in the General Assembly following China's admission to the UN in 1971. Official Records of the G.A. - Twenty-Sixth Session - A/PV.1983/. In his report to the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, delivered on August 24, 1973, Premier Chou En-lai also referred to this when he declared: "Countries want independence, nations want liberation, and the people want revolution - this has become an irresistible trend". See, THE TENTH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA (DOCUMENTS), Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1973, p.23. Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping also emphasized on this thesis in his address to the General Assembly's Special Session on April 10, 1974.
  11. "NEW YEAR MESSAGE", 1974 New Year's Day editorial by "Renmin Ribao", "Honggi" and "Jiefangjun Bao" as reproduced in PEKING REVIEW, Vol.17, No.1, January 4, 1974, p.6.
  12. A commentary by Hsinhua Correspondent, January 9, 1974, op.cit., p.7.



scientific thesis on the international situation",<sup>13</sup> and third, the Sino-Soviet confrontation is clearly brought into focus.

#### Similarities and "Shared" Experiences

China's revolutionary experience of having waged a protracted war should commend itself to the African freedom fighters who have to undertake a similarly protracted war though in different circumstances.

Mao Tse-tung's classic on "the protracted war" has found a place on the bookshelves of many an African freedom fighter. Situations differ but definite similarities exist. Like the Chinese, the freedom fighters of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau have had to launch a guerilla warfare on a sustained protracted basis. In Angola, the armed struggle was initiated by the Angolan Peoples Liberation Movement (MPLA) in 1961 and has been going on now for thirteen years with no visible signs of immediate success. The armed liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissu was launched by the PAIGC in January 1961, while the Mozambique Liberation Front unleashed its military resistance in September 1964.

In addition to the protracted nature of the liberation struggle in the afore-mentioned territories, there was another significant similarity. Like the initial exploits of the Chinese Communist Party's Peoples Liberation Army, the liberation movements in these areas have focused their military activities in the rural areas. The peasantry has therefore formed the backbone of the African Liberation Movements of the Portuguese dominated territories.

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13. PEKING REVIEW, Vol.17, No.1, January 4, 1974, p.6.



Confronted with an enemy with by far superior weaponry and resources, these liberation movements had also to operate on the premises that in the final analysis their peoples war would be victorious and colonialism would meet its inevitable doom. This strategic conception of the revolution falls in line with Mao Tse-tung's conception developed through the Chinese Communist Party experience in the revolution of "despising the enemy strategically" while "taking full account of him tactically".<sup>14</sup>

As a logical extension of this theory, it may be deduced that a number of liberation movement leaders also showed understanding of Mao's thesis which was put forward in the summer of 1946, to the American Correspondent Anna Louisie Strong: "All reactionaries are paper tigers".<sup>15</sup> This should not in any way be taken as an indication that the liberation movements have underestimated the power or the ferocity of their enemy. Far from that. Like the Chinese own behaviour in the light of this statement, the African Liberation Movements have refused to be cowed or intimidated by their colonial oppressors.

As a former semi-colonial country which was exploited, oppressed, "ridiculed" and "humiliated", China's experience has a lot in common with the African countries, both independent and dependent. Peking in her relations with Africa has tended to make maximum use of this "shared experience" at the hands of the European colonial powers.

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14. Peter Van Ness, *op.cit.*, pp. 37 - 38

15. Mao Tse-tung told Miss Strong:

"All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality, they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful". Mao, *SELECTED WORKS*, Vol.IV, Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1961, pp.100 - 101.



At times she has also subtly used the racial factor to emphasize closer identification particularly in her attempt to "expose" Soviet "Social imperialism". Professor Dutt of the Indian School of International Studies asserts that "there is a strong admixture of racial appeal and an advocacy of radical politics in Peking's policy towards Africa".<sup>16</sup>

Whether the Chinese leadership have deliberately sought to play up the sentiments of racial affinity even at the point of downgrading the ideological factor as their Soviet detractors tend at times to point out may be debatable. But what cannot be contested is the fact China has at time referred to this element. Thus, for example, the Chairman of the Chinese Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity Liao Cheng-chih in his address to the Second Conference of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization declared:

"The Chinese people entertain specially close and warm feelings for the African people in their struggle against colonial rule and for national independence...We were also regarded by the imperialist aggressors as a so called 'inferior race' and our people suffered the same bitterness of slaughter, plundering and enslavement at the hands of foreign colonialists".<sup>17</sup>

Similarly the element of common experience was repeatedly invoked. Subsequent to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between China and the Republic of Guinea on October 4, 1959, the Communist Party daily hailing this event inter alia related it to the common experiences of the African and Chinese people and declared that the latter "fully understand and sympathize with the plight of the African people still under colonial rule and firmly

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16. Vidya Prakash Dutt, CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY 1958 - 1962, Asia Publishing House, New York, 1964, p.272.

17. HSINHUA (New China News Agency), April 14, 1960.



support their heroic struggle for independence and freedom".<sup>18</sup>

### African Reaction

In considering China's attitude towards and its conception concerning the liberation struggle in Africa, the African response to some of China's conceptualization on the matter must also be borne in mind. In many cases, China's radical views on the issue of liberation and its international dimension has found echo among the more 'radical' of the African States as well as among the active liberation movements in Africa today. Two examples would serve to illustrate this point.

The joint communique issued by President Sekour Toure of Guinea and Chairman Liu Shao-chi at the conclusion of the Guinean leader's State Visit to China from 10 - 15 September, 1960, inter alia stipulated that, in order that a genuine and just peace may be realized, "imperialist aggression and the rule of colonialism must be terminated and the oppressed nations in the colonies and semi-colonies must be masters of their own fate"<sup>19</sup>. This declaration would seem to place President Sekou Toure in full agreement with the Chinese thesis that liquidation of imperialism is a sin a qua non for peace in the world.

The resolutions and decisions of the Second Congress of the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) held in Niassa Province (liberated areas) of Mozambique in July 1968 make interesting reading.

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18. Dutt, op.cit., p.286, quoting the 5 October 1959 editorial of Jen-min Jih-pao.

19. PEKING REVIEW, No.37, September 14, 1960, pp.9 - 10.



The Congress's resolution on foreign policy had among other things stated:

"This (armed) struggle (of the Mozambican people) is part of the world's movement for the emancipation of the peoples, which aims at the total liquidation of colonialism and imperialism, and at the construction of a new society, free from exploitation of man by man".<sup>20</sup>

This position of FRELIMO on the universal dimension and significance of the struggle is not at variance with the CCP's perception of the struggle against imperialism. Furthermore, it can be argued that it fits well with the so-called "intermediate zone" theory of the Chinese leadership in the sense that liberation struggle of the colonial people can be considered as part of the global struggle in the surrounding of the "cities" (the imperialist powers) by the "rural areas" (third world nations and people).<sup>21</sup>

#### Possible Motives for Support

Two more points merit mentioning in analysing the theoretical basis for China's support and assistance to the liberation movement in Africa.

First, what are the strategic, ideological, political or other factors which have led China to support the African liberation movement? There are at least two theories, not necessarily mutually exclusive - being advanced in this regard. The first one relates to the ideological conviction and commitment of the Chinese leaders in line with the aims and objectives of the Communist Party of China. Accordingly, China's support for the African Liberation Movement stems from her internationalist duties in the spirit of international

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20. Eduardo Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, Penguin African Library, Middlesex, England, p.195.

21. Lin Piao, "Long Live the Victory of the People's war", *Jen-min Jih-pao*, September 3, 1965, as reproduced in PEKING REVIEW, September 3, 1965, pp. 9 - 30.



proliferationism. As an extension of this theory, it can be pointed out that, with the revolutionary armed struggle raging in several African countries, "China's claim to be the vanguard of the world revolution would be disbelieved if Peking stood aloof from African politics". Thus, by taking action in support of the resistance movement in Africa, China "contributes to her own strategic, economic and ideological aims".<sup>22</sup>

The other rationale, perhaps a more cynical one - advanced in support of China's involvement in the African Liberation Movement is based on what can be termed "enlightened self interest". According to this theory through its intensified support for armed uprisings in Africa, the Peoples Republic of China might be diverting the pressures of her detractors from threatening her own borders, by getting China's enemies involved in a revolutionary warfare in Africa. Thus, the argument goes, if the United States were fighting a limited warfare in the African continent, she would be unlikely to risk a military confrontation with China herself.<sup>23</sup>

This theory however loses credibility in the wake of the era of 'ping-pong' diplomacy and the growing rapprochement between Peking and Washington since President Nixon's visit to China in 1972. Such a theory can hardly be applicable in the case of the Soviet Union, the current 'number one enemy' of China since Sino/Soviet confrontation, as both Peking and Moscow are intensively involving themselves on the same side of the Southern African military confrontation - that is, on the side of the African Liberation Movement.

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22. Bruce D. Larkin, *China and Africa - 1949 - 1970*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1970, p.3.  
23. *Ibid*, p.2.



What about other explanations -  
e.g. Peking seeks influence in Africa  
against both U.S. and S.U.

The second point relates to the question of rhetorics engaged in and actions undertaken by Peking. This problem of semantics and the need to <sup>24</sup>interpret them in proper and accurate perspectives has been the subject of scholarly consideration and discussion by different China "expert". In this connection, we can only mention that in the studying of China's relations with the African Liberation Movements, it is equally important not to take every public declaration of "firm support" at its face value and make exaggerated deductions. For in reality, China has been quite cautious and selective in her support of those movements.

### III

#### PRC'S RELATIONS WITH AFRICA: BACKGROUND

New China's relations with the African Liberation Movement appears to be a rather recent phenomena. This relationship is in a way interwoven with the general pattern of relations between Peking and the independent African States. Most research on the subject point out the fact that relations between the new Communist regime in Peking and Africa commenced in earnest after the Bandung Conference

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24. Professor Peter Van Ness writes: "In theory, Peking has committed itself to support for all revolutions against imperialism and other kinds of oppression throughout the under-developed world, but in practice something else again". Van Ness, *op.cit.*, p.82. Bruce Larkin points out, "It is also useful to distinguish policies of substance from policies of expression. Some actions are limited, to expressions of comment and doctrine, but are not accompanied by substantive commitments. Views are expressed for polemical purposes or to educate, to persuade, or maintain image". Larkin, *op.cit.*, p.10. And Professor Lall emphasizes the need to draw a clear distinction between semantics and actual position of Chinese leadership in order to understand the Chinese conception of negotiations. He asserts that expressions of "firm support" more often than not, refer to moral support. See, Arthur S. Lall, How Communist China Negotiates, Columbia University Press, 1968 pp.23 - 27.



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of April 1955.

A number of possible explanations can be inferred to the "low profile" approach of the Chinese leadership's attitude towards Africa prior to Bandung. Following the proclamation of the Peoples Republic of China in October 1949, China had its own priorities in the domain of international relations. Her immediate pre-occupations were to promote and consolidate her ties with the Socialist countries. The second priority, was the relations with the Asian States particularly those bordering China. Yet, important as these factors were, they cannot be attributed to be the conclusive reasons behind China's lack of contacts with Africa.

The "Great Wall" of separation imposed by Africa's colonial rulers to the communists of all persuasions should not be underestimated. And if dealing with the East Europeans was "unthinkable" on the part of the colonial peoples, contacts with the "red" Chinese was simply a matter beyond the possibilities of those Africans under colonial domination, - with the exception of very few cases. This latter category comprised those "stubborn agitators" who somehow managed to find their way to Peking at the risk of their own freedom on their return to their respective countries. Since the overwhelming majority of the African countries south of the Sahara were still under colonial domination at the time of Bandung, it is easy to understand the significance of this "barrier" imposed by Western colonialism. Many Africans therefore viewed China through the

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25. Larkin makes the interesting observation that even at the Asia-African Conference at Bandung, China did not seem to attach any significant importance to Africa, "although Bandung marked the beginning of significant Chinese initiatives in Africa". Larkin, *op.cit.*, p.19.



eyes of their imperial masters and the "spectre" of the "yellow peril" was deeply imbedded in many of them.

After Bandung, Peking gave increasing attention to Africa. This focus on the African continent was also in pursuance of Chairman Mao's general line of "East Wind" prevailing over the "West Wind".<sup>26</sup> China's active involvement in support of the African liberation movement can be traced to her support of the Algerian National Liberation Front. This support was particularly vigorous from 1957 up to that country's independence in 1962. As Larkin points out: "... the Algerian war was an important subject of Chinese policy. The FLN (National Liberation Front) sought aid from China and aid was granted. Moreover, after the FLN success, China cited the successful FLN guerilla struggle as an inspiration to the other colonial peoples".<sup>27</sup>

But without China's citation, there is no doubt that the victory of the Algerian Liberation war had a tremendous impact on the African revolution. The inspiration from Algeria undoubtedly played an important part in the launching of guerilla warfare in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. China, having made some contribution to the Algerian war and political effort could clearly look back to her role there as a significant "plus" in her relations with Africa. Furthermore, unlike the Soviet Union, (which did not recognize the Provisional Algerian Government in exile), China accorded that Government early recognition. Moscow refrained from doing so until Algeria became formally independent. In the wake of

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26. Dutt, *op.cit.*, p.19.

27. Larkin, *op.cit.*, p.272



the Sino-Soviet confrontation, China tried to use this factor to demonstrate her "impeccable" revolutionary credentials as opposed to the prevaricating nature of the Soviet "modern revisionists".<sup>28</sup>

As an important anecdote in reflecting on China's active involvement in African affairs, it may be observed that this new approach of the leadership in Peking coincided with the general trend of the People's Republic to be increasingly more assertive and affirmative in its pursuit of a more independent foreign policy. Hitherto, China's foreign policy in the continent was closely linked with that of the Soviet Union.

In the wake of the Bandung, China's diplomatic and political offensive in Africa entailed both promotion of contacts and relations with free Africa wherever possible as also with a multitude of African Liberation movements. Perhaps the most significant institution through which this was made possible was the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO). Peking was not only a founding member of this organization, which, though not a direct by-product of the Bandung Conference, drew its inspiration from that first major conference of Asian and African Leaders; China was in fact one of those countries instrumental in persuading President Nasser in hosting its first Conference in Cairo in 1958.<sup>29</sup>

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28. Dutt, *op.cit.*, p.27

29. Larkin, *op.cit.*, p.33. Throughout the early 1960s China took an active part in the functioning of AAPSO to which she had a Permanent Secretary in the Permanent Secretariat at the Organization's Headquarters in Cairo. China particularly, was active in all the three major conferences held before the Sino-Soviet confrontation caused some havoc within the Organization leading to China's withdrawal in 1966. Peking attended the first and founding conference in 1958, the second conference in Conakry, Guinea in 1960 and the third held in Moshi, Tanzania in 1963.



The importance of AAPSO lay not only in the fact that it was the chief "institutional embodiment" of the Afro-Asian world but above all in the nature and diversity of its members. For the purpose of the present study, the main point of interest would appear to be the fact that there was "equality" of representation of the liberation and nationalist movements from the colonial territories with those political organizations which are ruling organs of many of the African and Asian participants. This organization was essentially a "people's movement". And it is through this institution in particular that China was able to cultivate its relations with the liberation movements in Southern Africa. In this respect, it is pertinent to point out that three African Liberation Movements were and still are members of the Permanent Secretariat of AAPSO. These are the Angola People's Liberation Movement (MPLA), the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) of Southern Rhodesia and the African National Congress of South Africa.

#### IV

#### THE IMPACT OF THE SINO-SOVIET CONFRONTATION

The rivalries in the theatre of international politics and the contradictions of the principal actors in the arena are inescapably reflected in the relationship both between and within the liberation movements in Africa. And with the worsening of the Sino-Soviet confrontation, the stage was set for the intensification of Sino-Soviet competition vying for greater influence in the Southern African Liberation Movement. According to Wilkinson:

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30. Wilkinson, op.cit., p.26



"Ideological differences between China and the Soviet Union have introduced or reinforced tensions in the liberation tactics of the area. The Soviet Union has emphasized the 'external factor' and advocated a strategy of liberation combining a variety of military and non-military methods. This approach has been accepted on the whole by the SAANC (African National Congress of South Africa), SWAPO (South West African People's Organization), ZAPU, FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC - participants of the 1969 Khartoum Conference convened under the aegis of the pro-Soviet AAPSO..."<sup>31</sup>

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China on the other hand had tended to emphasize on the imperative of "undiluted revolution" based on the peasantry and on the principle<sup>32</sup> of self reliance.

The Chinese approach of giving maximum emphasis and priority to the armed struggle than any other form of struggle tallies with Fanon's advocacy of the inevitability violence for the realization of genuine decolonization. To quote Frantz Fanon: "decolonization<sup>33</sup> is always a violent phenomenon", and explaining why this is so, he asserts that "the naked truth of decolonization evokes for us the searing bullets and blood stained knives which emanate from it. For if the last shall be first, this will only come to pass after a<sup>34</sup> murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists". Fanon was of course referring to the general issue of decolonization and not specifically to the Southern African situation. Yet his remarks as well as the Chinese advocacy of priority to "armed struggle" are not really contested by those liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. Indeed at the 10th Summit Meeting of the Organization of African Unity, FRELIMO, PAIGC and MPLA laid special emphasis on the priority of "armed confrontation" above everything

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Ever Green Edition, 1966, Sixth Printing, United States, p.29.

34. Ibid, p.30.



else taking into account the then <sup>prevailing</sup> situation in Angola, Mozambique  
and Guinea Bissau.<sup>35</sup> Thus, Wilkinson's hypothesis on the differences  
of "liberation tactics" as being the causal factors for "closer  
identification" with the Soviet Union rather than China seem to be  
based on false premises, at least in the case of the liberation  
movements in the Portuguese dominated territories. *unlike what you're saying here*

The peasantry's role is something else and deserves some elaboration. Shamuyarira rightly points out that "most liberation movements in the world today have been deeply influenced by Chairman Mao Tse-tung's grand strategy of liberating the countryside, surrounding the enemy in the cities, and isolating him from the peasants".<sup>36</sup> Undoubtedly, the liberation movements in the Portuguese dominated territories have been adopting this strategy. Yet, the operative word in Shamuyarira's contention lies in the word "most". In other words, not "all" liberation movements accept this. The situation in South Africa is an example which comes immediately into mind. There, in the light of the developed nature of the country, the over emphasis on the role of the peasantry can be questioned. Again to quote Shamuyarira, "the vegetation is sparse open savannah. Most of the countryside is divided up into fenced and secured  
<sup>37</sup>  
settler farms and homesteads".

The South African situation in many ways would tend to contradict Frantz Fanon's assertion "that in the colonial countries the

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35. Author participated in the deliberations of the Conference. He was involved in the drafting committee where the discussions were somewhat heated with FRELIMO, PAIGC and MPLA laying special stress on armed struggle, while FLNA opposing such emphasis.

36. N. M. Shamuyarira (ed.), Essays on the Liberation of Southern Africa, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar es Salaam, 1972, p.viii.

37. Ibid.



peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain". Such an assertion has led some critics of the West Indian revolutionary to accuse him of over glorifying<sup>38</sup> and even romanticizing the peasantry. It can therefore be deduced that one of the reasons behind the 'alienation' of one of the liberation movement of South Africa - the African National Congress - to China is the differences in conceptualising the relative importance of the peasantry as opposed to the other classes in the struggle there.

The confrontation between the Soviet Union and China has had extremely adverse effects on the African Liberation Movement in general. To understand this phenomena, account must be taken of the fact that both these two 'giant' socialist powers had from the late 1950s been actively providing moral, political and material assistance to the liberation movements in Africa. This support was particularly crucial to those liberation movements which were actually engaged in armed combat, as indeed they were recipients of both military equipment and training facilities from Peking and Moscow. And the nature of the struggle in Southern Africa is such that outside assistance is a must for effective guerilla operations.

The formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963<sup>39</sup> with its Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa

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38. See for example, Kenneth W. Grundy, *Guerilla Struggle in Africa, An Analysis and preview*. Grossman Publishers, New York, 1971, pp. 58 - 62. The experience of the Zanzibar revolution of January 1964 is also significant. There the urban working class played a more decisive role. Furthermore, in the whole political and subsequently armed struggle of Zanzibar, it has been the proletariat rather than the peasantry which has been the most 'conscious' class.
39. This Committee which began as a Committee of nine members and currently consists of 17 African States, is primarily responsible for coordinating and channeling assistance to the African Liberation Movements.



was unquestionably a tremendous booster for the liberation fighters in Southern Africa. Yet, it is common knowledge that most of the arms and equipment for the liberation movements came from the socialist countries with the USSR and China in the lead.

Even before the open military confrontation between the USSR and China over Damansky island (Chen Pao) in March 1969 and in Sinkiang in September of that year, the African Liberation Movement was put in a very peculiar predicament. Increasingly, the protagonists of each side sought not only to cultivate the "understanding" and "friendship" of the liberation movements but at times, at least by implication, sought to judge the bonafide nature of the credentials of a particular liberation movement on the basis of that movement's attitude with respect to the confrontation. In this context, though both Moscow and Peking would appear to be "guilty" of this attitude, the Chinese seemed particularly insistent on this point, as reflected in two concrete examples cited below:

Prior to the outbreak of open ideological differences with its attendant polemical diatribes, China readily supported all nationalist and liberation movements in Africa. "As late as 1964 or 1965, if there were competing factions in a country, China tried to keep a delicate balance among them, maintaining contacts with all<sup>40</sup>". But in the wake of the Sino-Soviet ideological struggle, China did not maintain this stance. She chose instead to actively support those organizations which were more inclined to the Chinese 'line'. As it turned out, most of these were minority groups. They included the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) in

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40. Larkin, op.cit., p.187.



whose Headquarters in Dar es Salaam adorns a large portrait of Chairman Mao; the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)<sup>41</sup>; the South West African National Union (SWANU); the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (COREMO) and National Union for an Independent Angola (UNITA) whose leader Jonas Savimbi left the Kinshasa based National Liberation Front of Angola led by Holden Roberto.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, Moscow has decided to support the Organizations of the "Khartoum Alliance" already referred to earlier, <sup>th</sup> in the exclusion of all other liberation movements in Southern Africa. It is interesting to take note of the fact here that the African National Congress of South Africa - whose leadership is reportedly considerably influenced by the pro-Soviet South African Communist Party - is the most detached African Liberation Movement from Peking. And yet, it was with some of the leaders of this organization that China first made its contacts with the liberation movements' representatives.<sup>43</sup>

The other example related to China's almost "morbid" opposition to any association with the organizations with which at one time she

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41. ZANU's Chairman, Nkomo Sithole, went to China in December 1963 to January 1964. The author was privileged to have travelled together with him. On Mr. Sithole's return to Rhodesia from China, he was arrested by the settler authorities, jailed and then detained. He is still under detention. Emmanuel N. Dube, in his essay, "Relations between Liberation Movements and the OAU", inter alia states: "The Sino-Soviet split also manifests itself in the differences between ZAPU and ZANU. Of late Peking appears to be backing ZANU and Russia, ZAPU". See Dube's essay in Shamuyarira, op.cit., p.51
  42. Of all these movements, only the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Zimbabwe African National Union are taken seriously in Africa. They both enjoy legitimacy within the Organization of African Unity as they are recognized as liberation movements like their counterparts - the ANC of South Africa and Zapu of Southern Rhodesia respectively. The rest are not recognized by the OAU.
  43. Walter Sisulu, later to become the Secretary General of the African National Congress, visited Peking in the early 1950s. And Moses Kotane, later to become the ANC's representative in Dar es Salaam, attended the Bandung Conference and made contacts with Chinese leaders. Larkin, op.cit., pp. 15 and 17.



was actively involved. These include AAPSO, the World Peace Council and the Afro-Asian-Latin American Solidarity Organization (OSPAAL) which is based in Havana. China has sought to extend its opposition at the United Nations whenever either AAPSO or WPC extends an invitation to any of the organs to which China is a member. While Peking's own opposition is understandable since it is common knowledge that these organizations are heavily subsidized by the USSR and they in turn pursue pro-Soviet policies, her failure to appreciate the fact that other countries and liberation movements cannot oppose these organizations for "Chinese reasons" sometimes baffle even the closest of China's Afro-Asian friends. <sup>44</sup>

44. See statements by the Chinese Representatives in the Special Committee of 24 opposing the acceptance by the Committee of an invitation by the World Peace Council to send a delegation to a meeting organized by the Council in which problems of decolonization and the struggle against racism and apartheid will be considered. Verbatim Records of the United Nations Special Committee on the Granting of Independence to Colonial countries and Peoples. A/AC.109/PV.903, 911, 915 (in 1973).

The most recent opposition to AAPSO in the Special Committee on Decolonization took place on March 15, 1974. Expressing his delegation's reservations to the invitation extended to the Committee to participate in the AAPSO executive Council scheduled to be held in Baghdad, Iraq from March 24 to 27, 1974, the Representative of China, Mr. Wu, declared:

"The Chinese delegation maintains that the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization has thus far been controlled by a super-power, which is giving sham support but actually undermining national liberation movements and opposing the anti-colonialist cause.

"Therefore, the Chinese delegation has serious reservations on the invitation of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization. We request that this serious reservation of the Chinese delegation will be reflected in the record of our meeting". (A/AC.109/PV.960, p.6).

This denunciation of AAPSO by the Chinese representative led the Representative of Iraq, Mr. Araim to come to the Organization's defence. The latter stated:

"I should like to say that the role of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization in decolonization is very well known to the Committee, which decided on several occasions to send representatives to its meetings. I think that by co-operating with such progressive organizations we can serve the cause of decolonization". (Ibid).



In a way it can be said that the famous "one line" theory propounded by Mao Tse-tung in his treatise "On Peoples Democratic Dictatorship", has currently been juxtaposed to define China's attitude towards others in the latter's relationship with the Soviet Union. At the same time however, Larkin is right in pointing out that it would be wrong to argue as some tend to do, that "China's African policy is a little more than a by-product of Sino-Soviet disagreements".<sup>45</sup> Rather, it would appear that in consistent with all Chinese foreign policy, "Peking's policy in Africa illustrates worsening relations with Moscow. It is more than a mere reaction to Soviet hostility, however, and demands a more complex understanding".<sup>46</sup>

#### Current Trends

One of the most significant characteristic features of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa in the 1970s and more particularly in the last two years has been the apparent recognition by both the Soviet Union and China that the liberation movements have their own preoccupations than to get engulfed in the Sino-Soviet conflict. For with an exception of one or two organizations they have made it quite clear that they intend to steer away from the confrontation between Moscow and Peking.<sup>47</sup>

It would appear that both Peking and Moscow have come to accept the fact that the liberation movements have their own problems,

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45. Larkin, *op.cit.*, p.8.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Not insignificantly among the exceptions are the liberation movements in South Africa. The African National Congress is even more closely identified with Moscow while the Pan Africanist Congress utters pro-Peking rhetoric. In fact, the latter's Acting President, Potlako Leballo went to the extent of open denunciation of Moscow at the Meetings of the Security Council held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January/February, 1972.



objectives, requirements and perspectives. In this context Professor Dutt's comments would seem to be particularly relevant: "...They [the African nationalists] are not interested in playing somebody else's game and resent any outside attempt, even if made by Peking [or by Moscow] to assume leadership of their movements".<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the liberation movements, by and large, have no intention of settling either Peking's or Moscow's private scores.

To the African freedom fighters, both China and the Soviet Union, are important for their liberation struggle. Their strategy is to maximise friends and supporters and minimise opponents.

Earlier in this paper we had identified a number of questions (e.g. similarity of experience) which should bring the African Liberation Movement closer to Peking. Yet, notwithstanding this seeming ties of "affinity", it is quite clear that throughout, the liberation movements, particularly those serious ones who are actively engaged in military warfare, have tended to determine their own strategic and tactical concepts without shying away from making use of the rich experience of the Chinese where such experience was relevant and beneficial but at the same time without swallowing hook, line and sinker from every quotation of Chairman Mao! One example would particularly elucidate this trend.

Prior to the Sino-Soviet dispute, Peking used to emphasize the need to oppose US imperialism characterising it as the "enemy number one" of the peoples of the world. China, and to a lesser extent, the USSR, sought energetically the imbibing of this theory by the African liberation movements. Yet, while not under-estimating

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48. Dutt, op.cit., pp. 293 - 294



the negative role of the United States in Southern Africa, the liberation movements clearly projected their own "enemies number one". Thus, to those struggling against Portuguese colonialism, the Lisbon regime was its "enemy number one", the Zimbabweans (Rhodesians) considered the United Kingdom with the minority settler regime in Salisbury as the "enemy number one" while the Namibians made no secret of their conception of the South African apartheid regime as the arch enemy. Similarly, however, "legitimate" the Chinese leadership's complaints against Moscow, it is inconceivable that the freedom fighters would accept the thesis that the USSR has now become their "enemy number one" as Peking's propaganda would have it. The same premise is equally valid in terms of any attempts by Moscow to project a "miserable" image of China.

This refusal of the liberation movement to follow either the Chinese or Soviet line can also be understood in the light of the different circumstances prevailing in the theatres of war. Thus while the variable of "shared experience" between China and the liberation movement in Africa is important it would be erroneous to

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49. *It is unrealistic for example to expect the PAIGC to criticize the Soviet Union, far be it to consider her as the enemy, when the liberation movement receives the bulk of its assistance both military and otherwise from Moscow. The noted British African historian, Basil Davidson reports quoting Amilcar Cabral that in October 1967, about 470 PAIGC cadres were under training in the Soviet Union in different fields. Basil Davidson, The Liberation of Guinea; Aspects of African Revolution, Penguin African Library, Middlessex, England, 1972, p.85. Following the proclamation of the Republic of Guinea Bissau in September 24, 1973, Mr. Louis Cabral, brother of the slain leader of the PAIGC and Chairman of the State Council of the new Republic chose to visit Moscow as the first non-African State. There he was received with full honours befitting a Head of State with President Podgorny leading the list of Soviet dignitaries who were at the airport to receive this freedom fighter cum statesman.*



exaggerate its relevance and significance. For there also vast dissimilarities between the Chinese and the Southern African experiences. One of the important of these relate to the structure of the liberation movements as compared to the Chinese Communist Party. The latter had a clear ideological orientation. The liberation movements in Southern Africa, on the other hand, do not seem to have clear ideological commitments which could serve as a cohesive and stabilising force within the movements.<sup>50</sup> This in turn has led the liberation movements to be vulnerable to the "grave problem of fragmentation due to a high degree of factionalism, tribalism and regionalism".<sup>51</sup>

Indeed it is interesting to observe that even those movements which can be said to have some ideological commitment and clarity are sometimes beset with factionalism and tribalism. In this connection the case of the MPLA of Angola is a clear illustration.<sup>52</sup> The Chinese Communist Party as the vanguard of the Chinese revolution did not have to reckon with such problems.

Let us briefly examine some of the ramifications of this "awareness"<sup>53</sup> on the part of the principal antagonists on the

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50. Shamuyarira, *op.cit.*, p.ix

51. *Ibid.*

52. The tribal and factional contradictions within the MPLA have currently assumed serious proportions. Both President Neto's faction and the faction led by Central Committee Member Chipenda accuse each other of promoting tribalism. The result of the current feud has been to seriously affect the liberation struggle in Angola as corroborated by the recent decision of the Portuguese High Command to transfer about 10,000 of its troops from Angola to Mozambique where the liberation movement, FRELIMO, has been particularly effective in the recent months. For information about the shifting of troops from Angola to Mozambique, see report in the Financial Times, London, February 22, 1974.

53. It is important not to over exaggerate this "awareness" and "recognition" however. The struggle for influence goes on unabated. What has changed however, is the trend to expect the African liberation movement to take sides in the Sino-Soviet conflict.



essentially independent nature of the liberation movements.

In terms of the overall situation in Southern Africa as well as Guinea-Bissau, there has been a marked increase in assistance being rendered to the liberation movements both by the Soviet Union and China. This increase is particularly conspicuous in case of the liberation movements in the Portuguese-dominated territories. Thus the Soviet Union has not only supplied the liberation movements with small arms but also 122mm rocket launchers and SA-7 ground to air missile (which have incidentally proved to be particularly effective in the fourth Arab-Israeli war of October 1973). China has also reinforced its military and other logistic assistance to these movements. In addition, Wilkinson makes the following observations: "The recent improvement in the planning and fighting abilities of the insurgents is considered to be a reflection of growing Chinese involvement both in terms of supply of small arms and in training".<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, whereas in the past Chinese financial and material assistance used to be dispatched generally to the PAC, COREMO, SWANU AND ZANU - the rivals of the "Khartoum Alliance" effective assistance is now channeled to the major Liberation Movements of the Portuguese colonies, namely, FRELIMO and MPLA as well as PAIGC. In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that all the three top leaders of these movements visited China in 1972 and were given a red carpet treatment. The President of FRELIMO, Samora Machel visited Peking in June 1972 and was received in person by Chairman Mao Tse-tung - an undisputable high honour. Two months later,

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54. Wilkinson, op.cit., p.26.



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Amilcar Cabral, Secretary General of the PAIGC, followed suit while the President of the MPLA, Dr. Agostinho Neto was in China in September. The result of all these visits has been the inte-  
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nsification of practical assistance by China to these movements.

China's relations with the independent African States bordering those territories where wars of national liberation have been raging have at times influenced Peking's role and attitude with respect to the liberation movements of the territories concerned. Thus, although the factor of "recognition" of "independence" of the liberation movement must have been one of the determining elements which ultimately dictated the terms of China's role and its position vis-a-vis the "serious" liberation movements in Africa, there is no doubt that the role and attitude of the neighbouring African States in the same context have not been taken lightly by the authorities in Peking. In this connection, it is not an idle speculation to state that China's decision to assist effectively FRELIMO in Mozambique and the MPLA in Angola has been "strongly encouraged" by Tanzania and Zambia. These two States which are among China's closest friends in Africa, solidly support FRELIMO. Both also support the MPLA.

In the light of the highly successful state visit by the President of Zaire, General Mobutu to China in January this year,

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55. Cabral, one of the most respected African Liberation Movement leaders died in Conakry in January, 1973 at the hands of assassins. He was given a full state funeral in Guinea attended by representatives of Governments and Liberation Movements from different parts of the world.
56. This information was obtained not only through publications on the visits but also from discussions which the author had with representatives of the Liberation Movements concerned.

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many observers are speculating on the possible support by China of the Kinshasa based National Liberation Front of Angola - Still referred to by others as the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile - GRAE<sup>7</sup>. The Zairian leader is the staunchest supporter of this liberation movement and it is considered probable that in his discussions with the Chinese leaders he might have brought up the question of China's support for that movement. Furthermore, the fact that Zaire together with Zambia, Congo (Brazzaville) and Tanzania (all friendly to China) were instrumental at the OAU behest to bring some reconciliation between that movement and the MPLA, may prompt Peking to extend its support and assistance to it. It has already been pointed out that Peking, notwithstanding its general proclamations of support, it normally selective and very cautious in its handling of various African Liberation Movements. In this connection, while all along China supported and assisted UNITA and more recently MPLA, she has refrained from having any dealings with the FLNA. Indeed, the movement seems to appear nowhere in Chinese utterances or publications. In short, to all intents and purposes, the impression is created that the movement did not exist as far as China was concerned. Viewed against this background, the statement made by the representative of China in the UN Special Committee of 24 on Thursday, March 7, 1974 would appear to be very significant. Mr. Wu, inter alia stated as follows:

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"Since the merger of the People's Movement for Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Liberation Front of Angola (FLNA), progress has been made in their armed struggle" 57

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57. VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 24 - A/AC.109/PV.954, March 7, 1974, p.26.



Many observers who have studied previous Chinese statements and attitudes consider this statement as a harbinger of possible change of Peking's recognition of and support for the FLNA.

In examining China's role in support of the struggle for African liberation, it is important to take cognisance of the fact that this support has not been confined to financial, military or material only. Perhaps it is even more true to state that Peking has been particularly vociferous in her moral and political support and correspondingly in her denunciation of colonialism and apartheid. This type of support has been projected in different fora, and utilising various instrumentalities at the disposal of the Chinese authorities. These include mass media, such as Radio Peking (which has regular broadcasts in more than fifteen languages including SWAHILI, HAUSA, ENGLISH and FRENCH), People's Daily - RENMIN RIBAO, PEKING REVIEW, CHINA PICTORIAL and New China News Agency-HSINHUA with its multitude of correspondents throughout Africa.

Peking has been no less active in the diplomatic field. Consequent to the "restoration of her lawful rights" in the United Nations and the expulsion of the representatives of the Chiang Kai-shek regime, China displayed active interest in the problems of decolonization in the United Nations. Indeed, while the new men from Peking at the United Nations, adopted a rather low profile and generally very cautious approach in their participation of most issues on the agenda of the General Assembly and its related committees, no such low key approach was projected on the issue of decolonization. China desired and was appointed to serve in the United Nations Committee

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of 24. She is also a member of the United Nations Council for Namibia (South West Africa). Furthermore, a Chinese national, Mr. Tang Ming-chao was appointed by the Secretary-General to the post of Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs and Decolonization - a post which incorporates overall responsibilities at the level of the United Nations Secretariat of all matters pertaining to decolonization and Trusteeship.  
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CONCLUSION

It is now more than ten years since Premier Chou En-lai made his famous and controversial statement in Somalia in February 1964,

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58. Official Records of the General Assembly: Twenty-Sixth Session A/PV.2028. China began serving her tenure of membership in the committee in 1972.
59. References ought to be made also to China's first and current man at the United Nations. Ambassador Huang Hua is a diplomat with vast African experience. He attended the Bandung Conference; represented his country in many special missions to Africa including participation the Tanzania independence celebrations in 1961. The Chinese Permanent Representative also served as his country's envoy to Ghana during the days of Kwame Nkrumah and then proceeded to Cairo where he earned the unique distinction of having been the only Chinese Ambassador who was not recalled home during the course of the turbulent Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution. His stay in Cairo enabled him and through him the Chinese leadership, to maintain continuous contact with the African liberation movements even after the Sino-Soviet confrontation and China's withdrawal from AAPS0 since most liberation movements had offices in Cairo. Ambassador Huang Hua and his Mission have therefore not surprisingly been very active on colonial and apartheid problems in the United Nations. Chinese spokesmen in the General Assembly, in the Fourth Committee and in the Special Committee of 24 besides the Security Council have delivered many addresses in support of the struggle against colonialism and racism in Southern Africa. (For most recent statements see UN Documents A/AC.109/PV.907; A/AC.109/923 and A/AC.109/PV.954).



that "revolutionary prospects are excellent in the African Continent",<sup>60</sup> a statement which he was more or less to reiterate in Tanzania during his state visit there in 1965 when he asserted, "an exceedingly favourable situation for revolution prevails today not only in Africa but also in Asia and Latin America".<sup>61</sup> In these ten years, there have been a number of significant developments both in China and Africa. The Africans, south of the Zambezi have lost thousands of their compatriots in the struggle for liberation while China had its/cultural/revolution, with its occasional violent and even fatal ramifications. But if the unpredictabilities of military fortunes in the case of the African Liberation Movements or of social 'upheaval' in China has had different impacts on the two situations; one thing has remained constant. This is the consistent interest in and involvement with the liberation struggle in Southern Africa by the Peoples Republic of China under Mao Tse-tung.

Both in the era of extreme anti-Chinese Communist hysteria of the fifties and sixties and in the present period of "fraternization" and even "sinophilia" on the part of the western world, there has been a misleading tendency to exaggerate or to over simplify China's relations with Africa. Such has been particularly the case in respect of the reading and understanding of the PRC's relations with the Liberation Movements in Africa. Too often have the

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60. *Afro-Asian Solidarity Against Imperialism*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1964, p.274. Quoted by Peter Van Ness, *op.cit.*, p.139.

61. Premier Chou En-lai's speech at a mass rally in Dar es Salaam during the Chinese Prime Minister's visit to Tanzania in 1965. George T. Yu, *CHINA AND TANZANIA: A study in Cooperative Interaction*, a publication of the Centre for Chinese Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1970, p.88.



western media projected an image of 'dependency' relations between the Liberation Movements and the Communist leaders in Peking; it is uncommon, for example, to read of the "great influence" and even "control" that China exercises over the African Liberation Movements. In the course of the present study the important role played by China in the Southern African confrontation has been described in full. Distinction has been drawn between China's support for the African Liberation Movement and the limitations of her "influence" over their orientation contrary to popular belief in the western world.

What does the future hold?

Without over indulging in pure conjecture, certain elements are clearly discernible given current policies and trends as well as the objective and subjective conditions prevailing in Southern Africa.

The armed struggle in that part of the African continent is bound to go on for at least several years to come.<sup>62</sup> The confrontation is likely to assume more dangerous proportions. Given China's deliberate policy of wooing and identifying with the Third World, it is logical to expect a more involved commitment and role on the part of Peking in support for the Liberation Movement. Indeed, the first quarter of 1974 has brought into focus that trend; in less than three months, four African Heads of State whose countries play a vitally important role in the liberation of Africa have visited

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62. *With the anticipated earlier than scheduled conclusion of the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway built with Chinese assistance the strategic situation in the area will be significantly altered in favour of the liberation movements and the "front line" States, particularly Zambia which will no longer have to depend on the Southern routes for its economic lifeline.*



China in succession. President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire visited China from 10 - 20 January; Presidents Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Houari Boumediene of Algeria literally followed each other to <sup>63</sup> Peking in February while President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania has visited China from March 24 - 29, 1974. Clearly, one of the fundamental outcome of the visits of the African leaders would be greater commitment to and support for the African Liberation Movement on the part of the PRC leaders.

China's emergence as a Great Power is no longer a matter for debate. With its growing economic, military and political power - aside from its immense human resources - China is undoubtedly destined to play a major role in international politics. And given present indications, its role in the Southern African conflict is likely to increase in importance.

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63. President Kaunda who arrived in Peking on February 21, left the city for the visit of the provinces on the evening of February 24. President Boumediene arrived in Peking on February 25. Peking Review, Vol. 17, No. 9, March 1, 1974, pp.4 - 5.



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