

**DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT VAN SUIDER-AFRIKA
THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE MEMORANDUM ON ALTERNATIVE POLICIES
IN SOUTH AFRICA** **APRIL 1977**

Recent discussions in Johannesburg with black leaders have prompted this report on the situation.

1. The suggestion of a federation of enlarged "homeland" type states, with full rights for all within different sections of a divided South Africa, supported by American dollars, is totally rejected. With the exception of some blocks in the structure of the apartheid system of Homelands and Urban Bantu Councils, there is no support whatsoever for a divided country.
2. Requests for S. A. blacks to spell out their policy in steps which Pretoria could accept have only one answer. Pretoria must talk to the real leaders of the black people. There is no alternative.

Any attempts to discuss any steps with anybody else for any alternative solution is met with total and unequivocal rejection. The realities of politics demand that any movements towards change or plans for the future can only be discussed with Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Robert Sobukwe, Steve Biko, and their colleagues on Robben Island, in detention, under banning orders, in exile, or temporary freedom.

Pressure upon Pretoria must be to produce such discussions: other matters can only be achieved there.

Conversations with Homeland leaders from Matanzima to Buthelezi are irrelevant talks within apartheid unless they lead to such discussions with the real leaders.

No other proposals are serious.

3. The matter must be considered in the light of the real situation in South Africa.

Most whites have an unreal view of affairs – whether they be South African politicians, industrialists, or churchmen, or overseas diplomats, visitors, or members of the press corps. It is this ignorance of the actual pressures and feelings in South Africa that is most appalling to those of us in C. I.

Many well meaning liberal whites talk of change in terms of a reasonableness, encouraging Pretoria to ease the burden on blacks, accelerate its changes of policy in a controlled manner to avoid creating a disruption of the economy, and proceeding year by year towards majority rule. Such people, after discussion with Government officials or the leaders of commerce or the church, believe they must give Government as much support as possible lest the Communists stir up the under-developed blacks yet further. Such restrictions as continue to exist, they say, are necessary for peaceful change to be continued. This is a false view.

The real view as expressed and experienced by blacks is that for 25 years an oppressive war has been waged on blacks by the white regime. Ten miles from the prosperity and peace of the lounges, board rooms and clubs of Johannesburg, the people of Soweto have a constant personal awareness of the brutality to which they are subjected by the system which wages war upon them.

Every family suffers constantly under the official laws of the country.
Nearly every family has had someone killed, or knows someone killed, by the security forces enforcing apartheid.
Nearly every family has personal knowledge of people who have been tortured.
Every family has members out of work with no prospect of getting a job.

Few families own their own home.
Few families have escaped imprisonment or fines under the Pass Laws.
No family has any expectation of security in its old age.
No family has access to a single voice in Parliament.
No family enjoys the rights of a typical family in America or Europe.

Twenty million black South Africans live every day under more acute personal war pressures than any American knew during the time of Vietnam; and they are not interested in ways to make the war load lighter; they want to end the war; thus they insist that the only way to end this war is by talking to their leaders.

If the West wishes to concern itself with the morality of human rights in Azania, or to protect its investment, or to obtain minerals, it must relinquish its understandable but false impression that the power with which it must come to terms is represented by suave well-spoken well-suited gentlemen in Washington or Pretoria. The real power is represented by a man with broken nails stitching post-bags and carrying quarry stones on Robben Island; by a girl infested with lice being kicked by a white police officer's boots during 4 months solitary confinement; by a boy unable to be released from prison because his face is so heavily marked; by those who tell stories of corpses secretly buried; by the experience of a massive oppressive system which dominates your life and sweats money out of you with the support of Britain and America. These sound emotional words: to 20 million blacks they are simply the facts of life, which can only be dealt with by their real leaders.

South African blacks can no longer be fooled by gestures which purport to change the system but in fact perpetuate it, whilst they watch another generation of their leaders and the hopes they represent languish in jail.

4. What sort of demands would be made by black leaders at such a Conference?
 - 4.1 Whatever the demands, they are factors that must be faced and resolved, and neither peace nor prosperity can ensue until such a Conference has taken place.
 - 4.2 The fear of black demands has been carefully nurtured by the white Government and bears little relationship to the good sense of blacks. Talk of driving the whites into the sea; of wholesale massacres; of a reversed racism; of another Idi Amin, is white emotional election-

mongering: it does not come from South African blacks.

South African blacks are a hard-headed bunch of realists who have no wish to repeat the mistakes of either the colonialists or the first generation of black states to the north, and no intention of being dominated by either West or East. Inevitably, there will be some initial personal backlash against whites: but none of the plans or proposals that have been discussed even consider a South Africa without whites playing a full and responsible part as citizens of Azania. White fears are derived from white guilt, not black threats, and will be lost in the reality of forming a new country - as they have been elsewhere. It is from this black conviction that the question of minority protection can be considered.

- 4.3 A programme for a new Azania cannot be spelt out until the black leaders are permitted to meet. Guarantees can only be decided by them. Quite rightly, Steve Biko refuses to be involved in such discussions until Mandela and Sobukwe can be there. No one will discuss detailed programmes until the leading thinkers, the men most able to design such policies, are able to make their contribution together.
5. A final vital consideration should be mentioned.

It is well known that the approach to life in Washington or London is not the same as it is in the Kremlin, nor in Kenya, Lusaka, or Dar-es-Salaam.

The South African black, under his long oppression, is developing a new psychological and sociological approach to life which is different from all the rest. This emerging life style is summed up in such phrases as Black Consciousness, Black Communalism, and Black Theology, and the black leaders of South Africa know that what they have here is of infinite worth. They would not trade the new life being born for what already exists in the States, or Europe, or the rest of Africa.

Most people feel it in their blood: the intelligensia are seeking to understand it, spell it out, and formulate it into a political system. They will not trade it for dollars.

6. If the West can find the political sagacity, moral courage, and financial acumen to make the release of black leaders the crux of its communications with Pretoria it will earn respect from Black South Africa and the friendship of Azania. No one denies it will be difficult, that sacrifices will be called for, and the struggle will be hard: that happens in every war, and it happens in the war being waged against South African blacks here and now. We are willing to take it.

7. There is total conviction that the struggle for liberation will be won, whether the West assists or not. Those who live near the pain and the hunger and the killing know that in the long run they will win without America and the West, if necessary.

The West has great material resources but needs our minerals, our political support, and our theological and sociological insights.

There would be great delight if the mutual interests of both peoples could be served by the leaders of America insisting that they deal with all the leaders of Azania.
and Europe