



APDUSA VIEWS

ISSUE No. 48

SEPTEMBER 1993



THE PEACE CAMPAIGN

—
A FARCE

INTRODUCTION

South Africa has finally and officially earned the sickening title of being the most violent country in the world. It is claimed that since the release of Nelson Mandela , more people have been killed in this country than the Americans during their entire war of aggression against the people of Vietnam. The irony, and it is a very tragic one, is that one of the reasons behind Mandela's release was to reduce the tension in South Africa and to scale down the then existing violence.

The 2nd day of September 1993 was declared the Day of Peace throughout the country. The major actors behind this affair were the ruling class, the capitalists, business - big and small-, the ANC, Inkatha, the South African Police, the South African Defence Force and other bodies.

Free strips of light blue ribbon (why light blue?) were offered throughout the country; the whole of South Africa was to come to a standstill for five whole minutes; motorists were urged to pull up at the roadside at the dot of noon (though not near Khayelitsha) or alternatively, to drive with burning lights (like a motorized funeral procession), flags to fly at half mast; hands were to be held; the Peace Song was to be sung; balloons were to be released and for those with a

yen for excitement, doves were to be released.

When the day came it had a gala atmosphere. There was pomp and ceremony. Many naively believed if you did all the things mentioned above, peace would come. This is the kind of expectation the organisers of Peace Day had inculcated in the participants. Many of the latter were innocent people who had nothing further in their minds than violence. Hence their involvement in the activities of Peace Day was not to purge themselves of violent urges but rather to get those behind the violence to emulate them. Undoubtedly, amongst the hand holders and peace singers were those who were deeply involved in the violence. Like the Mafia killers, such people cannot resist the temptation of condoling with the family of the victim whom they had just murdered. They are also noted for sending the largest and most expensive floral wreaths. Such are those with sick minds.

Apart from the gala atmosphere, the whole affair had an aura of absolute fantasy. There was very little in common with reality. The children from middle class homes, office workers, elderly church going women, housewives or school children from a settled environment are not the ones who have caused the violence. There are dark and powerful and sinister forces who are behind the violence. These forces will need more than floating balloons and flying doves to make them

lay down their arms and to put an end to violence.

To be able to combat violence it is absolutely necessary to know who is behind the violence. How can it be possible to combat violence if you do not know who is behind the violence?

WHO IS BEHIND THE VIOLENCE?

Violence in this country comes from many sources, not just from one. The following are the principal sources of violence:

1. The principal source of violence in this country is the State which is the custodian of the system of oppression and exploitation and which system represents the interests of imperialism, capitalism, remnants of feudalism and the privileged whites. The state or the system has all the resources to ensure continuity of violence for as long as it serves its purpose. The state or the system has billions of rands at its disposal. It has under its control the most sophisticated weaponry and in unlimited quantities. It has under its control hundreds of thousands of men

and women through the Defence Force, the Police and the Prison Force. All these man and women would have had a thorough training in the use of arms and therefore in the killing of human beings.

The system will do everything in its power to survive and function. It will take killing casually and in its stride. There is an abundance of evidence that the State has been deeply involved in the many killings and must therefore take the lion's share of the blame for the violence in this country. There is no third force.

2. There is the long, bloody and vicious war going on between Inkatha and the ANC. This slaughter is engaged in by these two factions for the purpose of winning over territory and followers. The war is not a haphazard or impulsive matter. It is going on with the full knowledge and support of the respective leaderships. The leaders of both organisations never lose a chance to tell the public how they love peace and how they hate and condemn the violence. If we were to weigh the sincerity of these pronouncements, we can be certain that the scales will remain motionless.

3. There are sections of the youth who call themselves "Comrades" who through use of terror have held captive entire townships. They act as policeman, prosecutor, judge and executioner. They act in the name of the ANC and justify their actions in the name of the struggle.

4. The Comtsotsis, who claim to be politicians, but who in truth are anti-social elements - the criminals who engage in extortion, assault, rape, murder and robbery. A number of these elements were formerly Comrades, members of the MK and the disastrous Self Defence Units who turned their weapons on the people instead of defending them.

5. A large number of gangs of professional robbers, killers and hitmen who have acquired AK 47's and the skill to use them.

6. The brutalised section of the youth numbering hundreds of thousands who go around terrorising the population. They have acquired firearms and use them with chilling effect to satisfy a psychopathic desire to kill.

These, then, are the main sources of violence. The list does not claim to be exhaustive, but it is sufficient to illustrate what we seek to prove, namely, that violence is not something which has arisen from a misunderstanding or from frayed tempers or any other cause which can be resolved by arbitration or mediation.

THE DECEPTION OF A PEOPLE.

If the above are the main causes of violence in the country, the question is how to get these agencies to change their attitudes or to put an end to their activities?

Remember the system or the state is completely inhuman and robot like in implementing its strategy of violence. The ANC and Inkatha are involved in a power struggle and it is well established that in such a struggle human lives are as expendable as the bullets from their guns. One has merely to cast one's mind on the carnage that is going on in Bosnia or the unbelievable amount of bombardment that Beirut was subjected to.

As for the Comrades, the Comtsotsis, the professional killers and

robbers and the brutalised youth, many of these persons have tasted for the first time the power that comes from having a gun. A gun to them became that marvellous instrument which would allow them to do things and acquire material objects which they could never do or get. The gun became the genie which not only made the possessor equal to others but also the master of the situation. In his hand the possessor held the power of life and death.

Why would such a person want to surrender his gun, the magic wand which made it possible for him to get money, motor vehicles, clothes etc.? Nothing worthwhile awaits him after surrendering his gun. No decent jobs for want of decent jobs and absence of skills. No decent home. No decent wages. He will not want the kind of peace in circumstances which drove him to violence in the first place.

If we then take into account the above factors, we will see how farcical the peace initiatives are. Do the organisers of the peace campaign really believe that by wearing light blue ribbons, holding hands, and singing the peace songs, the various agents of violence will lay down their arms, embrace their former enemies and join in the singing? We don't know what is in their minds. But they are certainly doing all they can to make the ordinary people believe that peace can be achieved by

doing all those things.

In Greek mythology, there is a character by the name of ORPHEUS. He is reputed to have played the lyre (a harp-like instrument) so beautifully that even stones and trees moved and wild beasts stood at peace, listening to his music. Wild beasts, incidentally, kill only if they need food or if they are threatened. Human beings, on the other hand, kill for as many reasons as their brain is capable of formulating.

It is, however, important to separate mythology from the real life. The organisers of the so-called peace initiative, therefore, stand condemned for deceiving the people into believing that peace is something which can be easily and pleasantly achieved.

CAN THE VIOLENCE BE STOPPED?

In real life, peace amongst people is a rare phenomenon. It is one of the most difficult things to achieve. Yet enlightened human beings have striven for peace from time immemorial. And they have never stopped trying.

In the South African scene, the achievement of peace is made all the more difficult because of the different causes and actors of violence.

The state or the system will cease its violence once violence has served its purpose. In this context, the initiative will be left with the system. The alternative is for all peace loving persons to rise and destroy the system or overthrow the state which is causing so much of sorrow and destruction. It is often necessary to use violence to end violence.

The Inkatha-ANC violence will come to a quick end if peace loving people withhold their support from both these organisations. They must get the message loud and clear that people will not tolerate or support organisations that use violence to improve their political positions.

While the State, the ANC and Inkatha have it within their power to put an end to violence for whatever reason, it is quite another matter with organised crime and the brutalised youth. These elements will not voluntarily give up with their present way of life. It will require the vast resources of the state by way of soldiers, policemen, rehabilitation camps and a healthy economy. The latter is an absolute necessity for the process of rehabilitation of the anti-social elements.

To be able to do all this, there has to be a government which is really concerned about people and which cares for persons who have been

physically and psychologically scarred by all the brutality, inhumanity and cruelty to which they have been exposed.

CONCLUSION.

It was stated above that although peace is universally desired, it is one of the most difficult things to achieve. We cannot for a moment underestimate the enormity of the problem of securing peace.

It is wrong, immoral and downright dishonest to over-simplify the process of achieving peace. There are no shortcuts to peace and people must stop playing around with balloons and doves. People must be told the truth about the causes of violence and of the great difficulties confronting peace-loving people. It is only when people become aware of the truth that they will be able to devise ways and means of ending violence.

