

STRAIGHT TALK...

There's a Pattern Here

In 1902 at the close of the Anglo-Boer war, the belligerent parties convened to shake hands and wove due apologies for the carnage and mutually inflicted wounds agreed that henceforth the sole guarantee for their common future would be the treatment of the Black man as an instrument of labour, an item of enterprise and above all, a political nonentity condemned to chase the footfalls of white trusteeship. How arrogantly they wove their satanic schemes way back in 1902.

To our people's cry for accommodation in the constitutional process blazing the way to Union they replied with "segregation in Church and State" in the former Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State, a token qualified non-racial franchise in Natal and a carefully manipulated "pay-as-you-vote" system which only a tiny black minority could afford - by the grace of God Almighty, let it be assumed.

Nay, there is a pattern in racist-colonial behaviour. Once the country became a Union - there had been an All-White National Convention in 1908 at which the Black majority had no representation and were scarcely mentioned except as a "Native Problem" - the white government fervently rode roughshod over remnants of African rights, enacting as they did a galaxy of draconian laws calculated to condemn the people to the outermost margins of South African society. Our people fought back heroically on both sides of the water through their African National Congress, African People's Organisation and the Indian Congress. But White racism was relentless and continued on the warpath.

The Land Act was passed in 1913, later amended and thrown against us in 1936 - the white racists greedily arrogated 87% of our land to themselves, their offspring and coming generations while we received 13% as a gesture of benevolence from the white master, perhaps. The people protested and fought. The Union government then presented us with a "toy telephone", the Native Representative Council (NRC) to cry into whilst the Broederbonders were sowing Apartheid and sounding the chorus of a White Republic in the mould of the old boer republics. In 1948, to correct old omissions, the White-only elections returned the 'Nazified'

Nationalist Party with Malan at the head pointing to the Swastika. The government proceeded with haste to wage war against our political organisations and to legislate against all opposition to official policy - a deliberate ploy calculated to push the Black man further into the background and gag him. We fought back; there was the Defiance Campaign, the Defend Free Speech Convention, the Franchise Action Council, but the enemy was getting ever more vicious - he brought the whole weight of the legislature against all popular opposition.

The time came in 1955 when we declared that "... South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people." Pretoria cried: "Treason!" and 156 men and women amongst whom were the best minds and hearts in leadership the country has ever known were dragged through a marathon trial. Union policy had all along been bad and intransigent, now it had come to worse.

The worse got to the worst in 1961 when in the face of heightened opposition that climaxed with the All-in Pietermaritzburg conference decision to demand a National Convention, white racism stood granite-like and resorted to saracens and sten-guns in mad rage, the purpose of which was to impose a fascist republic and throttle the popular cry for a democratic alternative. Our people have since lived through the hell of the 'republic' for close to 22 years. The history of this period reads like a catalogue of pogroms and the death registers of Buchenwald, to say nothing of the denigration, destitute and hunger that continues to be the lot of the Black man in South Africa.

It is indeed a pattern of genocide that has been unfolding. The regime, in typical colonialist and racist arrogance hardly referred to the feelings nor considered the desires of our people even when hatching the Bantustan programme, euphemistically called the 'Homeland Policy'. They considered none of our sentiments when they decided that the tag 'Plural' would be more 'acceptable' than 'Bantu'. They have never consulted, are not consulting and will never ever consult with our leaders on all socio-economic and political problems of our country.

Their carefully selected catch-phrase of 'constitutional dispensation' has not succeeded to screen off our fascistically ascribed role of beasts of burden. Behind the elevated design of a Presidential Council we can read the graffiti clearly: DIVIDE AND RULE, plus the annexure: the Africans will be allowed to remain in the urban areas "for as long as they continue to minister to the needs of the White man."

The boer-fascists have a one-track mind, their thinking compares to the movement of a locomotive train - once on the rails there's no turning. Thus the sudden trumpeting of a so-called referendum is no turn in Nati-

onalist Party policy, it does not even qualify as reform. Nay, it is a modern aspect of the old pattern. In this direction, therefore, the results of the forthcoming referendum are a fore-gone conclusion. As in 1908, 1948 and 1961 the hardened element within the white group - in fact the majority - will express support for Botha'sso-called constitutional dispensation. What a farce! We spit at this show of boer-fascist prank.

We salute our heroic people who continue to frustrate enemy manoeuvres through mass agitation, organisation and action. We bid them courage. Ours is a rough road fraught with difficulties but we have the elan to blaze it through. We of the African National Congress and Umkhonto we Sizwe will be in the front ranks of the popular fight. Let those who allow themselves to be cogs in the apartheid machine be warned: The tide of revolution sweeps everything that dares to fetter its flow!

Our bedrock continues to be unity and let our watch-word remain UNITED ACTION.




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rse and thus disarm our people of their superior means of hitting the enemy - armed struggle.

Let Gatsha Buthelezi and his ilk be warned! We are not playing at politics and war. In the name of our people and country we have to go on fighting with weapons for the realisations of the demands enshrined in the Freedom Charter. Ours is a just political struggle that employs means including armed struggle. As for those who grow fat at the expense of the people and crown themselves heroes, they are sure to choke. And shame on them for posterity will remember them for their deeds and their children and grand-children will refuse to be called by their names, they will refuse to be associated with traitors.

Voice
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Journal Of The ANC Women's Section