

A CONFERENCE OF ESCALATION



"Those who think the ANC conference will decide on a path other than intensifying armed struggle will be sadly mistaken".

Preparations are going on in virtually all the areas where members of the African National Congress are concentrated, both externally and inside the country.

Experience has shown especially from the base which organises this conference i.e. the National Preparatory Committee that the seriousness of the discussions, the approach of those that are engaged in this conference, belies the hopes of the apartheid regime which is sitting back with its allies and saying to itself

Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General of the ANC

that the results of the National Consultative Conference of the ANC may likely be the destruction of the ANC.

They say so because according to them they have discovered non-existent divisions. They seem to suggest that in the ANC today there is a difference in approach between the old and the young, and that in the ANC there are so-called nationalists and communists. Also that within the ANC there are those who think that it is necessary to work within the programme of so-called reform that has been put before the country by the apartheid regime.

ESCALATION

We are confident that those who think like that have again failed to reckon with the members of the ANC. The forthcoming National Consultative Conference of the ANC can in its aim be summed up as a conference of escalation. This conference of necessity is going to sum up the path we have just traversed and will obviously look at the pitfalls that we have had to jump over in the course of our forward march.

And of course it will discover quite naturally that in a complicated struggle that the ANC is leading it is not out of place to find that somewhere along the line there have been certain obstacles brought about sometimes by lack of appreciation of the strategic line that has been laid down at a particular period in the history of the development of the struggle.

There will be those who perhaps will have said to themselves that the pace at which we are travelling is slightly slower than they would have liked it to be, basing themselves on the fact that the enemy is becoming ever more ruthless and therefore we must match the ruthlessness of the enemy by blindly marching forward.

All these views are going to be assessed at the conference as indeed they are being assessed even now during the course of preparation. And out of all this the ANC will emerge with a strategy and, more than that, with a strategy that will ensure the solid unity of the ranks of the movement.

This is so because everybody will have been convinced that not until this vanguard is united will it be able to pilot the ship along the rough seas that are brought about by the resistance of the fascist regime to the path of democracy that the people are looking forward to it.

Those who think that the ANC conference will decide on a path other than escalating the strategic line of intensifying the armed struggle in our country will be sadly mistaken because every member of the ANC as indeed all revolutionary forces in our country have come to recognise the fact that apartheid cannot be reformed. It must be destroyed.

CONFRONTATION

Of course the ANC has said that to destroy that apartheid regime it is necessary for the people not only to escalate their mass political activity. It is absolutely essential that they pay attention to the question of raising ever to higher levels the armed confrontation with that regime. We are convinced that nothing short of meeting the reactionary violence of that regime with the revolutionary force of the people which must embrace not just a few heroic units of Umkhonto

We Sizwe but a revolutionary force which must become a property of the people as a whole.

That is what the conference will of

The People Wan

Excerpts from an address by Thabo Mbeki, Director of the Department of Information and Publicity of the ANC

Once more the enemy has exacted its blood price as it did 25 years ago. Once more its army and police are on the prowl as they were a quarter of a century back. The apartheid regime acted then the way it did to save itself from destruction, and yet there the similarity ends.

There will not be another 25 years of repression, oppression and exploitation. For we have ourselves defined this as the decade of liberation. Our enemy is on the defensive. It is in a state of confusion. Its policy is in tatters. It does not know which way to turn except towards its arsenal of weapons. Botha thinks of nothing else but how to survive.

After 25 years of trying to destroy the ANC, Botha himself speaks of negotiating with the same ANC. That is an admission of defeat. A realisation forced on the regime by the situation, a realisation that the ANC lives, that the ANC fights on, that the ANC is with us as we march closer to victory.

Two and a half decades of trying to silence the masses of the people have done nothing but bring millions more people into struggle. The leaders of the racist white minority have been forced to admit that even the smallest towns of our country are up in arms. The people want freedom now.