

FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PREP. COMMITTEES.

The Socio-Political and Economic Crisis in the Apartheid System.

Introduction:

The present socio-economic crisis in South Africa is characterised by the following general features:

1. Major contradictions in the enemy ranks which are a result of class differentiation within the white settler minority. The fundamental cause of this class differentiation, and its socio-political manifestations is the rapid concentration and centralisation of the wealth of our country into fewer and fewer hands of the white ruling class.
2. The development in recent years by the enemy of a strategy to try and contain the crisis in order to save the apartheid system. This strategy is characterised by an attempt to rationalise the whole system, making it less wasteful and more effective. Some of the most important aspects of this strategy are:
  - a) the trade union reforms which are essentially geared to control and muzzle the militant worker's movement.
  - b) the constitutional reforms whose aim objective is to consolidate apartheid colonialism and white power in our country.
  - c) the creation of a black middle class whose function will be to serve the interests of the ruling elite. In return this black middle class will enjoy certain privileges.
  - d) the consolidation of the bantustans and reinforcing tribalism. The main thrust of this aspect is to make the majority of the africans foreigners in the land of their birth. The purpose here is to transform almost all africans into migrants even those living in the townships will not be excluded.
  - e) the development of a formula that will include certain groups of urban africans into a "fourth chamber" of parliament, where, together with their bantustan counter-parts, they will be used as a buffer against the rest of the african population.
  - f) the destabilisation of the front line states both militarily and economically. The objective here is to prevent the ANC from receiving support for the execution of the struggle inside South Africa since in the final analysis it is the escalation of the political and armed struggle waged by the ANC which has contributed in a large measure to the present crisis. Economically the Front Line States are seen by the boers as a ready source of cheap labour and raw materials and as a market for the surplus of manufactures goods which the apartheid economy cannot absorb because of the low salaries paid to blacks.

g) the attempts to create a third-political force among blacks, in particular among the urban africans, which will be used to neutralise the popularity that the ANC enjoys at the moment. This tactic will also be used to discredit the democratic movement at home.

Recent events have shown that the above mentioned strategy is failing hopelessly. Rather than contain the crisis engendered by the struggle the strategy of the boers seems only to have aggravated the crisis and intensified the struggle forcing the fascist regime to reveal its true nature. Today there is tacit recognition in the white ruling class that the situation is hopeless. This is becoming more evident, especially to the white capitalists, as the economic crisis bites even deeper, together with the rest of the white bourgeoisie they are clamouring for talks with the ANC. While this is a recognition that there can be no peace in South Africa without the ANC, they are also expressing the hope that an accomodation with the ANC at this stage might save their interests.

In the meantime the racist regime is using this political climate to try and measure the mood of the white electorate for a future accomodation of the urban african into the present political framework. The regime wants to prepare the minds of the white electorate by using the question of talks with the ANC. While this is the most extreme position on the regime it is hoping that at least the white minority will be prepared to accept, what seems to be, the more acceptable alternative of a fourth chamber of urban africans. The question of talks with the ANC is only being used as a diversionary tactic by the regime to hoodwink the white electorate into supporting the so-called "new dispensation for urban africans" which is being presented as the lesser of the two evils.

Furthermore, the regime is also hoping that by throwing out this bait it might attract some members of the liberation Movement onto its side thus dividing the movement against apartheid colonialism.

While we cannot ignore the manoeuvres of the enemy we must be aware that as in the past, these tactics are bound to fail because the reasons for the present crisis cannot be wished away. What are some of these reasons? They are:

- a) the socio-political factors which contribute to the crisis, the most important of which are; the rising political consciousness of the black workers, the devastating effect and impact of the combined armed struggle and political struggle waged by the ANC, and the high economic and socio-political cost of maintaining the apartheid system in its present form and
- b) the economic crisis which was aggravated by the crisis of international capitalism.

The South African economy is so related to imperialism that any international crisis of the world capitalist system is bound to affect the South African economy. These factors are beyond the control of the racist regime and other elements of the ruling class. It is this helplessness in the face of impending disaster which is going to make the regime even more ruthless in its response to the forces of liberation in our country.

Let us now look at some of these points in details.

A brief summary of class differentiation in the white settler community will read as follows:

- For many year English speaking whites controlled mining and industrial capital while the afrikaner (boer) controlled 80% of agricultural capital. Crisis in the Agricultural sector forced many white farmers into a state of poverty and turned them into a jobless mass who become known as the "poor whites". These were quickly absorbed into the mining, manufacturing sector and the apartheid administration.
- The Afrikaner agriculturing bourgeoisie soon mobilised these "poor whites" unto a united racts and fascist front which won political power under the Nationalist Party in 1948.
- By this mechanism the boer section of the white bourgeoisie was able to consolidate its political and economic power. This was achieved by reinforcing colonialism by instituting a whole series of apartheid laws which were fascist in their application and racist in nature.
- The former "poor whites" began to play the role of junior partners in the exploitation and oppression of the black people.

- The introduction and institutionalisation of racist laws which curtailed the labour, political, economic and other democratic right of the black people confirmed the colonial nature of the South African state in its present form. Apartheid was the term chosen by the boers to describe these colonial policies. Therefore, in South Africa, apartheid is the concrete expression of colonialism.
  - Over the past 36 years, the consolidation of influx control and pass laws, job reservation, bantustan policies, group areas act etc, has made it possible for one fraction of the afrikaner community to become equal partners with the rest of the capitalist class.
  - Today these different capitalists groupings control the South African economy by their ownership of at least 12 of the largest monopolies in South Africa. Some of them are multinationals in their own right.
  - It is the afrikaner fraction in the above grouping that control the state machinery in South Africa. They are represented by the Botha/Malan clique.
  - This new alliance of some boers with other industrial capitalists has created divisions in the afrikaner community. This has resulted in a disaffected group of boers who represent the interests of the Afrikaner agricultural capitalists, small businessmen, professionals and the white wage earners. All of them feel betrayed by the afrikaner industrial capitalist in coalition with the top brass of the army for the following reasons:
    - a) they feel that their privileged position are being threatened as the afrikanner industrialists in power realise that a rationalised apartheid economy is less wasteful than old-style apartheid.
    - b) they feel that industrial capitalism, especially manufacturing industry and consumerism, is destroying their traditional way of life.
    - c) they feel that manufacturing industry is bound to draw more black workers into the urban areas thus threatening their jobs and standard of living as black labour is cheaper to use than white labour.
- This group is represented by the so-called "verkrampte" and right-wing alliance in the afrikaner community. They are led by the Mulder-Turnicht clique and the HNP.
- On the socio-political front the liberal bourgeoisie and the capitalist class as a whole have come to realise that old style apartheid is suicidal. They are trying to find a way out of this bottleneck. Many of the youth, students and churches in this group are even refusing to support the military defence of apartheid. Along with other similar acts of opposition to the regime there is now a moral crisis in the white community which is threatening to split it wide open.



- This crisis is reflected in the press, in particular the afrikaner press, which recently called for a dialogue with the ANC albeit a conditional one.
- The impact of the consumer society and exposure to the outside world, via television and other means, has slowly destroyed the so-called "superior moral values" of the afrikaner. This is seen especially amongst a growing number of white youth who are refusing the out-dated and irrelevant moral limitations on their development.
- In other words, the "white laager" is slowly breaking up under the impact of the objective and subjective socio-economic factors.
- Nevertheless whites are going to fight very hard to keep and maintain their unity. This fight will be a bitter one for which we have to be prepared.
- The enemy's tactics for survival will be based on two principles:-
  - d) Having attained the tribal and ethnic division of blacks the enemy is now trying to divide blacks on class lines.

This principle has two objectives; one is to create a black middle class that will have a vested interest in the apartheid system and, secondly, it is to disguise the racial and colonial nature of the apartheid system; presenting our struggle as a struggle for civil rights and welfare benefits. In the next part of this paper we will discuss some of the concrete ways in which the enemy is this strategy.

## II The Enemy's Strategy for Survival.

We have already mentioned some of the tactics for survival in the introduction of this paper. Briefly they are:

- 1) Trade Union reforms to control and muzzle the black workers.
- 2) Constitutional reforms to consolidate apartheid colonialism and create a black middle class.
- 3) The consolidation of the bantustans thus generalising the practise of migrant labour.
- 4) The economic and military destabilisation of the Front Line States
- 5) The creation of a third political force to "represent" urban africans
- 6) A re-alignment of white class interests, i.e. all whites having the same class interests will join together across ethnic lines.

In examining these tactics we find that the first two, and, in particular the second is crucial to the enemy's strategy. The need for reforms in general and constitutional reforms in particular can be traced back to the beginning of the 1970's. The decade of the seventies was characterised by a deepening socio-economic and political crisis in South Africa and Internationally. The scenario

internationally presents a background to understanding the crisis in South Africa. Thus, the government of the USA under Nixon was encountering serious economic and social problems because of the disastrous consequences of the war in Vietnam. United States imperialism soon realised that it was losing the war. The whole war effort was too costly in lives and in dollars.

But capitalism was not interested in saving lives, it was interested in saving the dollar which was fast losing its value. International capitalism began to have less confidence in the dollar. Since the dollar could be exchanged for gold other capitalist rushed to exchange their dollars. In order to prevent a massive flight of gold from the USA. Nixon passed a law making it impossible to exchange dollars for gold. This soon caused problems for South Africa because gold now had to be sold on the open market and was subject to the laws of supply and demand. As a consequence of this the Rand slowly began to lose its value in relation to the dollar. While the Rand depended primarily on South Africa's export of gold, the dollar depended on the USA's industrial output. As America's industrial output and exports increased the dollar gained in value. As the demands for gold fell on the open market so too Rand fell in value. This was aggravated by two important factors.

Firstly South Africa's imports increased dramatically with the rapid rise in the price of oil in 1973 and the continuing impact of the international oil boycott. This had a negative effect on the economy as oil sanctions made oil price even higher for South Africa. The result for South Africa was a rapid increase in prices for South Africa. The result for South Africa was a rapid increase in prices for all goods forcing up the rate of inflation. Furthermore in order to boost its industrial production South Africa had to increase its imports of technology, equipment and other machinery. As manufacturing industry became the most dynamic sector there was a greater need for energy and technology imports.

Secondly, manufacturing industry in South Africa created a greater need for a stable work force as opposed to a migrant work force. The need for such a work force based in the industrial centres was bound to clash with the system of pass laws and bantustans. While Africans were encouraged by industry to come into towns, the police and army tried to force them back.

Nevertheless the dominance of manufacturing industry in South Africa posed the most serious threat yet to Apartheid colonialism. The whole economy increasingly came to be dependent on a politicalised african proletariat. Even the mining sector was affected by this phenomenon as the neighbouring countries reduced their supply of migrants. As they became independent they became more hostile to the racist regime.

Thus we find that with the rising cost of living, denial of political rights and the extreme repression of the boers in trying to control the influx of africans to their industrial areas developed a deep contradiction which the regime could not solve. This contradiction was soon to explode in the 1972/73 worker's strikes in Natal, Transvaal and Namibia. This militant action by the South African Student's Organisation (SASO). These events prepared the ground for the massive 1976 uprisings of the black community as a whole. The violent and brutal repression by the racist regime only served to fuel the militancy of the oppressed people of South Africa. This continuing socio-political crisis was aggravated by increasing unemployment and the fact that former militant students and pupils were joining the work force as workers or trade unionists. Consequently the struggle for national liberation became a confrontation between black workers, students and other democrats as against the apartheid regime in alliance with industrial capital. Thus capitalism in South Africa is creating the seeds of its own destruction.

In the final analysis it is this crisis which has brought about the serious divisions in the white ruling class—especially amongst the boers. In the Nationalist government those representing industrial capital (the Anton Ruperts, Jan Marais, Ackermans, Ect) realised that their future lay in manufacturing industry. Politically they are represented by the Botha/Malan clique. They were able, with the support of the army, to win the fight against the representatives of agricultural capital which is the base of the right wing afrikanners. This latter group is represented by the Mulder/Trunicht/Hertzog clique. The "information scandal" was used by the Botha/Malan clique to defeat the Mulder clique.

The army had an interest in supporting "Afrikaner industrial capital" because the latter could assure the production of armaments which were the object of an international arms embargo. Furthermore manufacturing industry attracted foreign investments from multinationals. These investments also included the possibility of technology much needed in the arms industry. This was borne out in a recent book by Prof. Phillip Frankel and reviewed in an article in the Sunday Tribute (6.5.84) Dr. Frankel said, "whole set of relations have developed between the

corporate sector and the military since the UN arms embargo forced the country to look internally and redirect capital investment. The corporate establishment has an important role to play, not just in supplying military hardware, but also software. There are enormous numbers of companies who sell everything from plastic cups and shoes to shelving systems to the military establishment and are dependent on it. It is not a coincidence, therefore, the present regime is known as the Botha/Malan clique.

It is this regime therefore that has a vested interest in developing a strategy to counteract the present crisis which is creating the conditions for revolution. The growth of this revolutionary climate is being further enhanced by the political and armed actions of the ANC whose undisputed role as the van-guard movement for liberation in South Africa is even being recognised by the enemy and its imperialist allies.

### III The "Total Strategy" and its application.

The enemy manoeuvres to counteract the revolutionary tide is called the enemy's "total strategy". We have already listed some of these tactics as they apply generally. The specific ways in which they can be concretely used or are being used may be explained as follows.

1. to win the support of other sections of the business community the regime will have to reduce state interference in the economy, reduce company taxes, remove subsidies for boer farmers, control the money supply, rationalise and make the apartheid administration less wasteful, stabilise, and remove import and price controls. If the regime tries to do all these things it will antagonise a large section of afrikaner community.
2. The legislation concerning black trade unions, discussed earlier on.
3. The introduction of Constitutional reforms the political structure of the country so as to facilitate effective control of the apartheid state by the ruling clique.
4. The introduction of constitutional reforms to win the support of urban africans, coloured and indians thus causing divisions in the unity of black forces opposed to the system.
5. Develop the armed forces, police and other repressive institutions so that they support the present regime. In the article quoted earlier on Dr. Frankel said "...if the new reform formula does not work out, because of complexity or lack of political support, the executive will look for other methods to push reform through and bring the military into the executive. There are many



ways to do this. The cabinet working in conjunction with a military council, or half the cabinet being military officers. Any future government leader will have to ally himself with the military to win office."

6. Consolidation of bantustans and the incorporation of townships into bantustans so as to reduce the number with rights to be in urban areas.

7. Internationally to present itself as a reasonable, peaceful government by calling for negotiations with the ANC if the ANC abandons armed struggle; its alliance with the South African Communist Party; its ties with Socialist countries, and recognises the sovereignty of the apartheid state. This tactic is used to cause divisions in our ranks.

8. Develop a foreign policy which will get South Africa out of its international isolation and, regionally, to try and control the neighbouring states both politically and economically. Obviously the other fractions of the white community are not going to give up without a fight. The present conflicts and disputes in whites politics is but a reflection of this contradiction in the enemy ranks. The regime will not be able to maintain a united white or boer laager for much longer. The boer farmers, petty bourgeoisie and boer wage earners are beginning to see no role for themselves while the established business community is howling for the regime to negotiate with the ANC before the situation becomes too radical and they lose everything. In the meantime the coloured and Indian youth and a growing minority of white youth are fast realising that their only chance for survival is to join with the forces of liberation. Already they are deserting the army. Very soon, as the struggle intensifies, many more will leave the army or refuse to join it.

These then are the contradictions and strategies adopted by the regime. How to counteract them will be the task of the next section of this paper.

#### IV How to out-manoevre the enemy.

In order to combat and out-manoevre the enemy, the following tactics should be strongly considered.

1) Maximum unity of all democratic and progressive forces both inside and outside the country.

2) Presenting the ANC an alternative government representing the interests of all South Africans irrespective of race, tribe or colour.

- 3) Developing and propagating a clear, cohesive and comprehensive ideological position and programme of action which should explain in the anti-colonial nature of our struggle and which should popularise the Freedom Charter as being the minimum basis for the establishment of a just and democratic South Africa.
- 4) All attempts should be made to expose the contradictions in the enemy ranks and thus break the white laager. Whites, in particular Afrikaners, should be made aware that their interests will best be served in an independent and free South Africa. We should deliberately aggravate and deepen the socio-political and economic crisis while at the same time trying to win over as many whites as possible onto our side. We must break the hold of fear that the regime has over the whites, coloured and Indians, Similar tactics have proved successful in Algeria, Vietnam, Angola and Mozambique.
- 5) We need to have a firm and principled position when it comes to negotiations with the boers. While we have long presented our conditions for such negotiations, we must refuse to compromise on any the conditions put forward by the boers. In our own ranks, in order to have a united and uniform position we must;
- a) fight to preserve the unity of our alliance with the SACP, SACTU and other members of the Congress Alliance. In particular we need to combat all tendencies which want to discredit and minimise the role of the communists and worker's representatives within our movement.
  - b) We need to combat all tendencies which want to isolate us from our natural allies internationally, especially the Socialist Countries led by the Soviet Union, the African countries and other progressive international forces.
  - c) We need to re-emphasise the need for armed struggle and fight any tendency which tries to discredit MK (Umkhonto We Sizwe) and its cadres and which tries to belittle the role of armed struggle and Umkhonto. We also need to educate our people to the relationship between armed struggle and political struggle. Showing them that the high level reached now in our struggle is due to the continuation of armed struggle and political mobilisation. We need to show our people and our allies (in particular the Front Line States) that if the enemy wants to negotiate now it is because of the intensification of the armed struggle and not in spite of it. We must be aware that if we give up armed struggle we will lose our strongest bargaining weapon.

d) In developing a correct perspective of the anti-colonial nature of our struggle we must never recognise the sovereignty of the apartheid state. To do so will be to legitimise apartheid colonialism and be party to our own oppression. We should always expose the illegality of the present regime because it does not represent the interests of all South Africans. Our struggle is a struggle for national self determination first and foremost. This should be made clear to our allies so that our struggle is not confused with a civil rights struggle.

6) We need to be vigilant at all times against enemy manoeuvres to divide or destroy us. In conjunction with imperialism the apartheid regime will put economic, political and military pressure on the Front Line States to try and persuade us to accept the so-called conditions for negotiations. Through devious means they will also try and influence some of us to pressurise our leadership to accept these conditions. We must be strong and vigilant and be aware of any such influences. Similarly they will try and influence us to attack communists, democrats and other sympathisers. We need to become self-reliant so as to avoid becoming too dependent on western aid donors who might be used against us. We need to be vigilant against all anti-Soviet and anti-democratic tendencies. We must be careful of not being used to undermine the morale and fighting capacity of our people's army, MK. Whatever problems that we face should be discussed within the structures provided for by the ANC

7) We need to fight all attempts by the enemy to create a third-force which will be used to mobilise at home and abroad to such an extent that there must be no doubt that the ANC is the sole reflected in all international organisations. Similarly we must work for the de-recognition of the apartheid state in these very same organisations and elsewhere.

8) The apartheid economy is in a deep crisis. We need to make an in-depth study of this crisis so as to exploit the contradictions within the system. The recent strikes, stay aways, boycotts and demonstrations have proved beyond any doubt that our workers can destroy the economy. We therefore need to make a concerted effort together with the SACP and SACTU to mobilise the workers especially in those sectors which are crucial for the enemy. We need to wage a sustained campaign to make economic sectors, institutions and infrastructures unworkable thus creating a climate of insecurity which will scare away potential investors and plunge the economy into a deeper crisis.

9) We need to instil a greater sense of confidence in our workers by creating Worker's Defence Committees or brigades which will protect the interests of the workers against unfair and unjust practises of the bosses, managers, directors and companies.

These people must not be allowed to kill, maim, deport, fine or lay-off our workers. They must be forced to pay a living wage. The workers defence committee must take it upon themselves to punish those bosses who do not respect the rights of the workers. We should not allow managements to get away with dismissals and deportations as was the case recently with the SASOL management following the stay-away. The workers must know that the movement is there to help them defend themselves. This will inspire them to act with greater courage and determination. The capitalist must be made to realise that they must either pay-up or close-up. This combination of a strong workers defence and ever increasing African economy into a perpetual crisis-especially if it is backed by international economic sanctions and a systematic and sustained campaign of sabotage and armed actions against weak points in the economy.

10) We need to strengthen the inter-relationship between worker's struggle and armed struggle. More workers need to be trained in politico-military work so that all workers actions can be backed up with armed struggle. By so doing we will be creating the basis for people's war, because in our country a people's war and a people's army must necessarily be based amongst the workers be they in the urban areas or in the country side.

#### CONCLUSION:

If we want to win our war in liberation all progressive forces to close ranks against enemy manoeuvres and reactionary elements out to sow confusion and disunity. Some people, pretending to be involved in our struggle, are consciously working for the enemy using primitive emotionalism based on fear and greed to divide us. Others are unwittingly and unconsciously being used by the enemy and enemy agents to create and destroy us. They are being used to exploit even the slightest problems we might be having. We can defeat these manoeuvres by making a genuine attempts to solve our problems in a comradely and constructive manner. Let us bury all petty differences and build a solid, progressive and united revolutionary organisation in order to defeat the enemy.

Close ranks as we move forward in the year of the Cadre.

Amandla! Matla!