

The Strategic Debate in the ANC.

1.0. Negotiations is a key aspect of ANC strategy at this time. The ANC has done more to keep the process on course with a combination of pressure on the regime and its skill in the negotiation process itself. No one in the ANC wants to see them fail. Our anxiety to ensure that the die-hard racists and ultra-right do not derail the process, should not however tempt us to arrive at too hasty an agreement. While it is true that we will not get at the table what we have not won on other fronts, we should exercise equal care not give away what we have won on these fronts at the negotiating table.

I fear "Strategic Perspective" tilts too far in that direction by proposing ill-conceived compromises that we have no reason to expect to succeed.

1.1. The national liberation project has as its core objective the creation of a democratic state. This crucially requires the dismemberment of the racist state whose key components are its coercive arm (the army, police, the law courts, the prisons) and its persuasive arm (the civil administration, civil service, the state ideological apparatus such as SABC, schools, etc). It is precisely these organs of White minority state power that the regime hopes to retain, and if possible compel us to carry over into the democratic future.

The NP will of course concede the need to employ more Blacks in top level civil service positions; a degree of integration of Mk into the SADF, etc. These will be essentially reforming the existing racist state structures and not uprooting them.

2.0. It was the combined impact of the many prongs of the ANC's strategy that compelled the enemy to accept negotiations. Quite correctly, we claim that as a victory! We proceeded from there and said that the challenge facing the ANC was to skillfully employ negotiations to expedite the transfer of power to the people. Understood in this sense, negotiations were regarded as a phase we had reached in the unfolding of the struggle.

The actual process has been characterised by an ebb and flow, forwards

and backwards (the Groote Schuur Minute; the Pretoria Minute; the spread of the violence to the PWV; the D.F. Malan Minute; the suspension of talks in 1991; the National Peace Accord; CODESA I; the deadlock at CODESA II; the Boipatong Massacre; the suspension of talks in 1992., etc) we have however been able to marshal internal and external pressures to force the regime to yield.

We nonetheless always acknowledged that we had not won everything we set out to achieve through the years of struggle. We were exploring the path of negotiations in order to consolidate our gains and also to forge ahead under new circumstances. In that sense, negotiations are also an aspect of our strategy for liberation.

2.1 The commencement of the negotiation process was structured by two realities:

2.1.1 The ANC had not defeated the Pretoria regime but neither had the Pretoria regime defeated the ANC.

2.1.2. A changed international balance of forces resulting in the collapse of one of the ANC's principal bulwarks of support and the end of the cold war which deprived Pretoria of its chief legitimation as a bastion against "Communism".

2.2. By June 1990, the ANC had registered a number of very significant victories. These included:

2.2.1. The legalisation of the banned peoples organisations and MK.

2.2.2. The lifting of the State of Emergency in all parts of the country save Natal.

2.2.3. The withdrawal of the SADF forces from the African townships.

2.2.4. The release of Nelson Mandela and a number of other political prisoners.

2.2.5. The signing of the Groote Schuur Minute.

These achievements marked the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the liberation struggle by a regime that had done everything to crush it and failed.

2.3. The regime however retained the key elements of its power and reversed some of the damage our struggle had inflicted. These were:

2.3.1. The repressive machinery of the regime remained intact as did the rest of the state structures.

2.3.2. De Klerk had consolidated the position of his party as the leading force amongst Whites and stopped the hemorrhage to its left.

2.3.3. De Klerk improved the regimes international standing and set the stage to break out of isolation.

The continued incumbency of the regime meant that whatever the outcome of negotiations would be, it would have to take account of the power that the regime still wielded.

3.0. When we entered the negotiation process our purpose was not to find an accommodation with the regime but rather to find the speediest route to ending White minority rule. We therefore set as the strategic objective:

3.1. The adoption of a democratic constitution by an elected constitution-making body.

3.2. The transfer of power from the White minority to the democratic majority.

3.3. The creation of a non-racial democratic state.

3.4. To attain these we required a transitional arrangement that would afford the ANC (and other peoples organisation) the opportunity to chart a peaceful road to victory by institutionalising free political activity and the holding of free, fair and open elections.

Negotiations, understood in this sense would be the mechanism for effecting the transfer of power.

3.5. Negotiations, as conceived by the movement therefore have three inter-penetrating features: they are an aspect of the movements strategy for liberation, which became a phase in the resolution of the contradiction between oppressor and oppressed, whose efficacy is that it can be mechanism to effect the transfer of power to the oppressed.

4.0. The ANC never excluded negotiations from its strategy even while it pursued the four pillars of its strategy. When negotiations came on to our agenda in a serious fashion, the ANC said they are a terrain of struggle, no different from the others. Hence, contrary to what "Strategic Perspective" implies, we saw no contradiction between waging armed struggle and negotiations. Equally we saw no contradiction between continuing underground work, mass mobilisation and negotiations.

4.1. Since the negotiation process we have entered is essentially about power, it is implicit in it that one party or the other must come out on top. The extent to which the winning party attains its objectives will in turn be defined by the capacity of the losing party to resist further encroachments on its power.

4.2. The theoretical understanding that must frame the negotiation process therefore is that we have entered it to achieve our longstanding strategic objective, but employing other means. It follows logically also that the regime seeks to defeat our strategic objectives, but employing other means.

5.0. The enemy's strategic aims are:

5.1. To arrive at a democracy that is so conditional that the minority has the ability to thwart the will of the majority constitutionally.

5.2. To arrive at a constitutional arrangement that will afford adequate protection for the accumulated racial privileges.

5.3. To postpone for as long as is possible any meaningful redistribution

that could adversely affect the whites.

6.0. The present conjuncture: The collapse of the Total Strategy, signalled by De Klerk's February second speech, is analogous to the decisive turning point in a war. However, there are two scenarios that are relevant. The first is Stalingrad, where the Nazi armies lost the battle and were forced onto the strategic retreat, even though they were still capable of mounting formidable rear-guard actions. The second is Dien Bien-phu, where the French colonial forces' defeat spelt the end of French colonialism in Indo-China. To continue the military analogy, we are dealing with a Stalingrad scenario and the determined resistance from the NP and other defenders of the old order we are encountering - in the form of the violence; delaying tactics; destabilisation, etc - is likely to continue throughout the transition.

The resistance of the regime indicates that it still has not come to terms with the logic of the negotiation process, its inevitable outcome is the regime's loss of power.

6.1. During the course of the latter half of 1991 and the greater part of 1992, the ANC has clearly seized the initiative, captured and held the moral high ground, despite the handful of diplomatic successes that de Klerk has won.

6.1.1. The successful holding of CODESA I, one of the objectives the ANC set itself for 1991, acceptance of the Declaration of Intent by all the participants save the IFP and Bophutatswana, were significant victories scored against the regime.

6.1.2. Though CODESA II deadlocked, the context and issues over which it deadlocked were such that the ANC retained the high-ground and was seen by the world to have been as accommodative as it could be.

6.1.3. The Boipatong massacre and the events surrounding it, including the withdrawal of the ANC from talks was a severe reversal for the diplomatic foray de Klerk was attempting to mount.

6.1.4. Our unprecedented mass action not only demonstrated the power and

support of our movement, it also enabled us to create a significant fissure in the bloc de Klerk has thus far been able to hold together between monopoly capital and the regime. Its immediate outcome was the Record of Understanding, which objectively regarded was the ANC compelling the de Klerk regime to accept our terms. This was a victory!

6.1.5. By securing the release of some of the remaining and most prominent political prisoners and the defeat of the regime's attempt to link this to an amnesty for its own forces the ANC isolated the regime, compelling it to try to win an amnesty through parliament. That attempt to was defeated because the movement had galvanised opinion in opposition to it.

6.1.6. It is important to recognise that these are victories is that de Klerk could quite easily have denied us by taking formative action himself. He has consequently been seen by his constituents and his allies as submitting to the ANC alliance's agenda. This own goal can also be counted a significant victory for the movement.

Our movement stands at the head of a series of victories. We have the enemy on the ropes! Is this the moment to relax the pressure?

6.2. I have often questioned the realistic prospect of the regime embarking on serious negotiations, in the full realization that their inevitable result must be the loss of power. I have consequently insisted that the alliance must take seriously De Klerk's words that *he seeks to reach an accommodation about sharing power, and not to surrender power.*

In other words, the regime would like to arrive at a formula that would force us to accept an indefinite lengthy transition.

The de Klerk regime obviously has not come to terms with the inevitable outcome of serious negotiations. It has not arrived at the seminal political decision that it must give up power. Our task today, including in the negotiation process, is to compel the regime to take that important decision.

Z. Pallo Jordan. November 1992.