

FACTS ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND WHAT IS TO BE DONE

The current situation prevailing in South Africa is critical and needs a careful and tactful analysis and approach. There is no need to deal at length with the political impasse in the country as it will only amount to duplication of what has been repeatedly said by progressive-minded individuals; institutions, and organizations. What is needed is how to handle the delicate situation.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME

The illegal South African regime led by the pro-Nazi John Vorster has categorically declared that it is not prepared to submit to the demands of the people of South Africa led by the African National Congress; the leading Liberation Movement of South Africa.

Vorster has been playing cat-and-mouse tactics. When there was pressure from almost every angle urging his illegal regime to abandon its inhuman apartheid policy, he asked to be given chance, and said he would make changes within a reasonable space of time. He then went on and made a few changes affecting only petty Apartheid. That is, the "Whites Only" signs on park benches were removed, even then, reluctantly. At no time has he addressed himself to the actual bone of contention, the status quo. Although some people and even Governments were deceived by his cunningness, the ANC did not allow itself to be hoodwinked by the baseless concept of "change of heart". That the ANC was correct in its assessment that the fascist heart had in fact not changed, is borne out by events in South Africa in the last year or so. If anything, the comparison with Nazi Germany has become more and more appropriate and crystal clear.

The closure of some mining industries in South Africa has added another insult to injury. Some "Native Compounds" like Modder B in the East Rand have been turned into concentration camps where political detainees are indefinitely detained, tortured and even murdered. Yet, as recent as last month the Anglo-American Chairman, Harry Oppenheimer, still had the guts to tell the world about "prospects for change in Southern Africa" and that Vorster's election was "a clear sign that South Africa is at a turning point".

In the past, South Africa has been criticized for being a state prison. This criticism is today not only more fitting, it has in fact

become an understatement now. That South Africa prisons are overflowing with political prisoners is no longer contested or doubted, even by Vorster's allies. What is more disturbing in the recent developments is the fact that the number of children in these prisons is increasing at an alarming rate. The brutal treatment, torture and murder of political prisoners are to such an extent that to come out of these prisons not maimed and still alive has become an exception. Will these young political prisoners come out alive and not maimed? Or, will they also join the growing statistics of those who according to J. Kruger, Justice Minister "threw themselves out of the window", "hanged themselves in the cells" and so on. The notorious John Vorster Square, named after Vorster himself, is one such place where these children and hundreds of other opponents of the South African regime are tortured and murdered in cold blood. Humanitarian considerations aside, this calculated destruction of our people and youth robs the Liberation Movement of committed cadres.

In his latest pronouncements, Vorster has categorically declared that the African majority should abandon any idea of a democratic change based on one man, one vote. Instead, he is steadfastly proceeding with the establishment of what he euphemistically refers to as 'Black States'. First, the Transkei, then Bophuthatswana, then Lebowa, and so forth. Vorster is clearly determined to fragment and balkanize the country so as to perpetuate White Minority Rule, to consolidate the fascist status quo, as well as to ensure continued exploitation of African labour and the resources of the country.

Pursuant to this, and with the willing assistance of its Western allies, this illegal regime has also armed itself to the tooth. In its vigilance, the ANC has exposed, for example, the West German nuclear collaboration with South Africa. Under the circumstances, the intended effects of the belated arms embargo will be seriously minimised.

Nor is this military preparation limited to the Whites. The regime is also creating and training armies for the Bantustans, ostensibly so as to defend themselves against enemies. Normally, an army is created to protect the security of a country against both internal and external enemies. But Bantustans not being normal, it is pertinent to ask who their enemies are supposed to be. The very African people, are the intended enemies because they have continually opposed the Bantustans.

For the ANC, the question is: What should be done about these Bantustan armies? One way is to ignore them. But at what cost in terms of African lives? As African will be killing African, the dirty work of the fascist regime will now be done by these Bantustan armies. The other way is for the ANC to infiltrate these armies, whilst simultaneously keeping up propaganda against them. Planted inside these armies, our cadres could undermine and ultimately render them ineffective.

In the light of the above, the ANC's open commitment to the armed struggle should be vigorously implemented. It is true war which is the greatest crime against humanity; but in this situation where the majority of the people have been compelled by the intransigence of the fascist minority regime to take up arms against oppression, the ANC and its armed cadres are the only force to bring the enemy to its knees.

Therefore, in waging and intensifying the armed struggle, the ANC was not reckless. It was indeed both answering to the demands of the situation, as well as living up to its unwavering commitment to liberate South Africa from the clutches of the ruthless illegal regime and its allies. As shown above, the regime has unequivocally demonstrated that any hope for a peaceful change in the near and distant future is at best a pipe dream.

Further, developments in the country show very clearly that the situation is now very definitely ripe for the armed struggle. Our people are ready to make the ultimate sacrifice to free the country. What is urgently needed now is for the ANC to effectively step in and take the initiative to direct the energies and the readiness of the people into constructive channels and encounters. This is what the people are yearning for. This is what the people expect of the ANC.

Pursuant to this, it is necessary to look at some aspects of significance in the current situation in South Africa, and what the ANC should do about them.

THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT

The critical moments which occurred in the early sixties when the ANC was banned, created a temporary political vacuum which deluded the regime into believing it had at last destroyed the ANC. As such, the regime accelerated the implementation of its inhuman apartheid

policy. The laws were tightened. People were intimidated and brutalised. The chiefs of different ethnic groups, some of whom were already puppets of the regime, were further coerced into being willing instruments of the apartheid policy.

It did not take long, however, for the people particularly the youth, to realize the evil machinations and intent of the Government. The revolutionary language and activities of the ANC being forcibly suppressed, the Bantustan "political parties" were quickly created and imposed upon the people. Neither these parties nor their Bantustan leaders sought total liberation. Consonant with Bantustanism, they were seeking tribal enclaves which would sooner or later be wrenched from South Africa as "independent states". In rejecting this, as well as White supremacy and its brutality, the young generation started the Black Consciousness Movements.

It can neither be claimed that these Movements were wholly ANC, nor that they wholly rejected the ANC. What seems to have been the case is that (1) some of their members were committed members of the ANC who, due to its banning, operated under cover of the Black Consciousness Movements; (2) Others, though not members of the ANC as such, had indeed been politically influenced by its policy, programmes, and activities; and (3) still others were spontaneously involved in the activities of these Movements.

The brief period of their existence shows some parallel to the ANC. At the initial stage, these Movements advocated peaceful change in South Africa, as indeed the ANC had done from its formation in 1912 until 1961, when, due to the obstinacy of the fascist regime, the ANC resorted to the armed struggle. So, it was not much of a surprise that the Black Consciousness Movements soon realized the futility of peaceful solution in the South African context. Thus, in June 1976 they also resorted to violent confrontation with the enemy. But so far, goes the parallel.

Like the degenerating PAC, some elements within these Movements regarded Black Consciousness Movements as political alternatives to the ANC. This misconception was given sustenance and prominence by local Liberals and neo-colonial foreign forces, who do not seem to tire in their search for puppet African leadership to replace the dynamism of the ANC. As such, opportunistic elements motivated by expediency rather than principle, jumped on the Black Consciousness bandwagon which then seemed to be gaining momentum. These elements

failed to understand one characteristic feature of a situation like South Africa. That is, some of our people still lack political clarity, despite their objective suffering. Such people without fully comprehending the political motives and objectives, get involved and carried away by any action, or spontaneously join any organization, that seems to be opposed to the enemy. This is what gave the Black Consciousness Movements the appearance of being or becoming viable political alternatives to the ANC.

That they all misjudged the situation has become obvious. If anything, the ANC is winning over even greater numbers of followers. Indeed, it is becoming more and more difficult for anyone to openly reject the policy of the ANC without getting solid criticism from the people. That is why, in an effort to be accepted as a leader, Buthelezi is lately trying desperately to sound as if he speaks the language of the ANC. The difficult years through which the ANC has gone are bearing fruit, and it will take much more than expediency and opportunism to undo or replace the ANC.

Although the ANC is enjoying a position of popular support and strength, it should however not rest on its laurels, lest it be overtaken by events. It should now call upon the Black Consciousness Movements, or what remains of them, to rally behind it in the common course. It should embark on a deliberate politicising of these Movements. The onus is on the ANC to create even more conducive conditions for militant operations inside the country. It cannot afford to leave this to chance without thereby relinquishing its leadership role in the revolutionary struggle.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE ANC DURING THE YEARS OF REACTION

The present situation in South Africa is very crucial, not the least for the ANC itself. It is going to be even more so in the coming years. This should, nonetheless, not propel the ANC into a state of panick, of confusion, or of overreaction. Since its inception, the ANC has not only survived crises and difficulties, it has indeed come out of them much stronger.

In its development, any organization from time to time finds amongst its membership elements that later prove to be inimical to itself, and that create some turbulence. Being a broad-based mass organization, the ANC could not but experience this phenomenon also.

This phenomenon manifested itself in the events and personalities that led to the formation of both PAC in 1959 and the 'ANC (Nationalists)' in 1976. What were the implications of this for ANC?

Impurities in water make it lose its natural taste and some of its properties. To bring it to its original taste, water must be distilled and the impurities discarded. Similarly, after the above episodes of turbulence, the ANC rid itself of the politically impure elements. Some broke away to form PAC in 1959, and the others calling themselves ANC (Nationalists) had to and were expelled in 1976 for disruptive and counter-revolutionary activities.

What is now left of the ANC is what could be referred to as a PURIFIED ANC, a politically stronger ANC, an ANC that broods no nonsense in its commitment to liberation struggle. As such, the unlamented departure of the above-mentioned inimical elements was a welcome good riddance. In the absence of these disruptive distractions, the ANC can now fully address itself to the genuine demands of the Struggle.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH, STUDENTS, AND TEACHERS

On 16 June 1976, Soweto exploded. High School Students created a new situation that left South Africa completely different from what it had been before that date. This explosion against tyranny and fascism was not restricted in terms of the geographic locality nor in terms of the age of the combatants. Thus, similar explosions soon occurred in Pretoria, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Bloemfontein and other places. Further, parents and teachers also joined the youth in revolting. In Soweto for instance, some seven hundred teachers resigned their posts. Though the regime wanted to regard this as insignificant, the teachers' resignation was another political breakthrough for the struggle. Since the coming to power of the fascist regime, and despite its tight control of the teachers, not so many teachers ever undertook such a resolute action.

For the ANC, it is necessary to analyse the role of the teachers in this situation as well as its political significance. Did they, for instance, resign because of the intimidation by the students and youth? Or, was their resignation motivated politically; that is, by the conviction that type of education they had been forced to disseminate was not the right one? Even if we may not have all information at hand, one thing certain is that teachers have also at last come out openly against the unbearable system of Bantu Education.

Whether the regime likes it or not, it can no longer take the loyalty of the teachers for granted.

What does the ANC intend to do not only about the teachers who resigned, but indeed about the role of teachers in general? This is a central role, which, if properly utilised politically, is bound to have far reaching effects. The level of political awareness displayed by the students since Soweto is unbelievably high for their age given the stultifying effects of Bantu Education and the near impossible political conditions in South Africa. Some of this awareness must certainly be attributed to the African teachers, who, despite the trying work conditions, police intimidation and harassment, must have imparted some right political messages to the youth.

The ANC must therefore call upon all teachers not to relapse back to being mere spectators and helpless fence-seaters in a struggle that directly affects them and their people. A concerted mobilisation of teachers throughout South Africa must be undertaken. They should be brought within the fold of the ANC, not merely to boost ANC membership numbers, but even more significantly, in recognition of the vital role teachers can play politically if properly utilised. The ANC has for long neglected the teachers, and now finds itself in the embarrassing position of having merely to react after events. It is time the ANC took the initiative and set the pace for the teachers as for all others.

Though perhaps to a less extent, the ANC was nevertheless caught unawares by Soweto and its aftermath. True, some of the students and youth involved in the Soweto and other incidents were ANC cadres. However, it would have been self-praise to claim complete responsibility for these happenings. Fortunately, because it is noble and responsible, the ANC did not. But the point is, at this stage of the struggle, the ANC should have in fact been the moving spirit and organization that engineered the Sowetos. The ANC has the capability to dictate and direct the political activities of our youth and students.

Had the ANC been effectively in the forefront, it would have not only anticipated the student exodus consequent upon Soweto, but it would have been saved the state of unpreparedness and near-chaos when these students arrived outside South Africa. We did not have ready programmes and plans for these students, and were forced to adopt ad hoc solutions. Fortunately, we managed to salvage the situation, but not without disillusioning even some of our cadres to some extent.

In the light of the present political temper of the people in South Africa, in the light of the practical difficulties and constraints that the ANC often encounters in its work in the neighbouring African countries, in the light of the determination of the fascist regime and its allies to crush the ANC, and in the light of the paucity of scholarship opportunities abroad for our youth, the ANC must now strive for a far higher organizational capability and planning. Nothing should and can be left to chance. The establishment of the ANC school in Morogoro is a welcome step in the right direction. More determined efforts are required to streamline our work regarding both the militant training and education of our youth.

THE ANC THE NEWLY BANNED ORGANIZATIONS

The following eighteen organizations were banned on 19 October 1977:-

1. Black Peoples' Convention (BPC) - committed to universal franchise, to be achieved non-violently.
2. Black Parents' Association:- grew out of Soweto Parents' Association, formed during last year's schools strike which ended in June 16 upheavals. Chaired by Bishop Manas Buthelezi, it hoped to act as a link between students and the authorities.
3. S. A. Students' Organization (SASO) - founded by Steven Biko after the breakaway from NUSAS. Dedicated to developing black consciousness philosophy and a "specific black education policy".
4. Soweto SRC - formed in the aftermath of June 1976 to represent Soweto pupils. Consists of two representatives from each Soweto secondary school.
5. S. A. Students' Movement (SASM) - high school equivalent of SASO. Committed to formulating an alternative to Bantu Education "to meet the needs of the black student."
6. Black Community Programmes (BCP) - self-help group concerned with "developing black pride and self-reliance" through community programmes such as clinics, creches, literary projects.
7. Black Women's Federation of S.A. - umbrella body of about sixty women's organizations, chaired by Social Worker Deborah Mabiletsa; has taken a strong stand on squatters, Bantu Education and the provision of preschool facilities.

8. Christian Institute of Southern Africa - formed as an ecumenical group by Dutch Reformed ministers who argued apartheid was incompatible with Christianity. Its monthly political and theological journal, Pro Veritate, has also been banned.
9. Association for the Educational Advancement of African People - a conservative educational body rejected by many blacks as too moderate. Mainly supported by more wealth Africans and founded by ex-World editor Manneseh Moerane.
10. Medupe Writers' Association - association to which virtually all black writers belong. Sympathetic to the black consciousness philosophy.
11. Union of Black Journalists - formed in the early Seventies to promote the interests of black journalists. Has had a number of publications banned. Its president, Joe Tlholoe, and five other members are in detention.
12. Zimele Trust Fund - set up by Biko to provide aid to families of black political detainees and prisoners. Assisted by at least one large mining house.
13. National Youth Organization (NYO) - a youth black consciousness group.
14. Transvall Youth Organization - offshoot of NYO
15. Natal Youth Organization - offshoot of NYO
16. Border Youth Organization - offshoot of NYO
17. E.Cape Youth Organization - offshoot of NYO
18. W. Cape Youth Organization - offshoot of NYO.

Together with these organisations, two papers were also banned: World, second largest daily in SA, with a daily circulation of 147 183 and a readership of 891,000; Weekend World with sales of 204,207 and a readership of 1,788,000. Both are owned by Argus. But exactly whom did these serve? Why did the World survive earlier bannings when newspapers like the Guardian and the New Age were banned? And why has the regime now found it necessary to ban it?

The World has all along been serving the interests of both the internal and external enemies of the people of South Africa, be these enemies the Argus newspaper empire (its owners), or the various White minority Governments. Historically, the World never fully, if at all, allied itself with the struggle to rid the country of fascism. Further, its existence gave credence to the

regime's claim of a free press in the country. For these and other reasons, this paper continued to circulate.

However, like many other institutions and organizations, the World was forced to change its tactics in keeping with the explosive political situation in South Africa. It found it more and more difficult to evade reflecting the mood of the people, which mood had become more and more critical of the political status quo. Reluctantly, therefore, it found itself having to report and write about things unpalatable for and critical of the regime. This being anathema to the Government, the World finally got its ban.

The banning of the eighteen organizations clearly shows the desperate state of mind in which Vorster and his Government are. In the past, Vorster banned organizations and publications on the grounds that they were communist and propagated a violent overthrow of the Government. The overwhelming majority of these eighteen organizations have gone on record as being devoutly anti-communist and non-violent. No, their banning only and clearly demonstrates the fact that the regime can no longer contain the political situation, despite its claims to the contrary. Being in a critical state of panick and insecurity, the regime now shuts down anything that expresses even the mildest of criticism. Indeed, some of these organizations were in fact innocuous.

The banning of these organizations has yet another implication for the ANC. In spite of the myriads of repressive laws, the regime never succeeded to block all loopholes. A number of organizations and papers managed to exist by carefully exploiting these tenuous loopholes which served as legal platforms to express discontent with and at times criticism, of the system. The ANC must utilise the still existing legal platform to the maximum. Our cadres must use such legal platforms as churches, sports, social clubs, and similar organizations as outlets for political work. Where they do not exist, the organization must help create them. We have lately seen how some of the church institutions in Zimbabwe have played a constructive role in the struggle - exposing Smith's atrocities that could have probably passed unnoticed, as well as assisting freedom fighters.

As for the eighteen banned organizations, they should now be called upon, individually or collectively, to support the ANC policy and programmes. Left alone, and for fear of further reprisals by the regime, they may revert to reactionarism. If mobilised and given proper direction by the ANC, they are likely to engage in good work underground. In doing this, however, the ANC must take maximum care not to change its policy of armed struggle. The aversion to armed struggle by some of these organizations should not be expected to wear off suddenly. But with time and proper handling, these organizations will be won over to accepting the armed struggle as the only way of achieving a genuine change in South Africa.

Connected with these bannings, is the untimely and brutal death of Steve Biko, a contemplated murder which the ANC has openly condemned. The aftermath of this tragedy also revealed the evil machinations of the imperialists. We recall how the imperialist forces excelled themselves in condemning the South African regime for this murder. We recall also that McHenry, the U.S. Deputy Representative at the U.N., not only attended the funeral, but also that the only wreath on Biko's coffin was McHenry's. Why in this particular case did the imperialist forces shout so loud against the South African regime, when indeed there have been so many similar political murders perpetrated by the same fascist regime without a murmur from the imperialists? To allege humanitarian consideration is to add insult to injury. No, the imperialist forces abused this tragic incident to hoodwink our people into believing that the imperialists were on their side. Their crocodile tears can never erase from our memory, the fact that their being willing accomplices before and after the fact.

INKATHA AND BUTHELEZI

It is significant that Buthelezi's Inkatha is not among the recently banned organizations, despite the fact that he wants the world to believe he is an ardent opponent of the fascist regime. Some of the criticism he has levelled at the Apartheid regime should have long landed him in prison. Indeed, some of them are the very criticisms that lead to sentences of life imprisonment imposed on the Mandelas, Sisulus and many other leaders of our people. Yet, even the bannings do not affect him or his Inkatha.

Grave doubts are now being raised as to whether or not Buthelezi is in collusion with the South African Government he purports to oppose. His role has been deliberately carved out to confuse our people, the struggle and its supporters. It is not surprising, therefore, that even some progressive governments, organisations and individuals regard Buthelezi as a long-time outspoken opponent of the South African regime. His criticisms of the regime, which he is even permitted to take abroad without hindrance, are well planned by his mentors for national and international consumption.

Buthelezi is nothing else but a tool of the fascist regime. How could he be anything else when he wears, not without relish, the crown of Chief Minister of a Homeland? The only difference between him and his fellow-Bantustan leaders is that he is calculating and cunning. Whilst they went the whole-hog and fully embraced Bantustanism, he did the same thing but sugar-coated it in revolutionary sounding terms. Thereby, he hoped to win our people to his side and ultimately to emerge as the political alternative to the ANC. If successful, this would kill two birds with one stone for Vorster. Firstly, this would pacify the revolutionary mood of the people. Secondly, this would be the death-knell of the ANC.

As could be expected, these plans have boomeranged. The urban youth of Natal, his own Zulus, have openly criticised him and challenged him to resign from the so-called Kwa Zulu Cabinet, if he is genuinely opposed to apartheid. Even James Kruger admits this when he says of Buthelezi: "He is trying to get back into the black fold, but he cannot do that as long as he is a homeland leader." He was also rebuffed by the people of Soweto when he opportunistically attempted to mediate between them and the forces of oppression last year.

Buthelezi can no longer be treated with kid gloves. His role can no longer be taken lightly for it has got serious national and international implications for the struggle. He can no longer be discussed in isolation from Inkatha, nor can Inkatha be discussed in isolation from him. The ANC can no longer deal with Buthelezi quietly inside four walls. Confusion abounds amongst our cadres and supporters regarding the ANC's attitude to this man and his role. Time has come for the ANC to openly define its attitude towards Buthelezi

and his contradictory position. The day he proves himself to be truly genuine, he can always be invited to join the ANC.