

INSTITUUT VIR EIETJDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat



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TO THE POINT

Jg. 9 Nr. 24 P. 10 Dat.

SOUTH AFRICA

The heat is on!

In the weeks preceding the anniversary of the Soweto riots of 1976 — June 16 — South Africa has been rocked by acts of violence ranging from stone-throwing school-children to sabotage at its Sasol plants. June 16 remains an emotive date, for Whites and moderates alike — a day when law and order was thrown overboard. For militants, however, June 16 symbolises a start in the "Black liberation struggle". Yet the concerted offensive against South Africa started well in advance of 1976 and despite government initiatives in the fields of Black and Coloured education, housing and labour, grievances within the socio-economic sphere have provided Communist-inspired organisations with opportunities to incite violence and unrest. The Sasol inferno which lit up the night at Sasolburg forcibly brought home the fact that redressing social grievances has little to do with the ultimate communist objective — the overthrow of the South African government.

With a sigh of relief South Africans heard Sasol managing director Johannes Stegmann give the assurance that production at the country's oil-from-coal plant is not affected by the terrorist attacks.

But reaction was sharp when confronted with the fact that terrorists were able to enter Sasol premises and lay their bombs.

Both reactions are symptomatic of the unrest that is bedevilling the period of transition South Africa is going through.

Key elements of this transition include:

- Changes to the constitution to pave the way for a president's council consisting of White, Coloured, Indian and Chinese members
- A Black council to act in a consultative capacity with the president's council
- A change of strategy in the economic development of the country which in turn will give greater impetus to homeland development
- Better utilisation of labour of all races following the Riekert and Wiehahn reports
- Massive State inputs to improve education (see box) and solve the housing shortage

CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE IS CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED FROM OUTSIDE

- A commitment by the Government to remove discrimination based solely on colour and race.

But it is pointed out that what the country needs to bring these programmes to fulfilment is time — a priceless commodity that the Communist world is determined to withhold from South Africa. And part of the onslaught is the incisively shrewd ploy of using the West's soft underbelly of human rights consciousness to

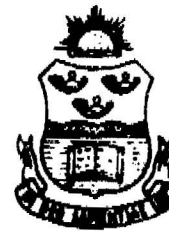
TREFWOORDE

- 1 Soweto
- 2 Gewelddadigheid
- 3 Gedenkdaag
- 4 Swartes
- 5 Klearlinge
- 6 Opvoeding
- 7 Bulletoek
- 8 Meewerke
- 9 Kewerke
- 10 Verandering

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TO THE POINT

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vilify South Africa continually.

The pressure is considerable, so much so that the African National Congress (ANC) (banned in South Africa) quite proudly announces that the Sasol inferno is but one act in its armed struggle against the South African regime "until final victory".

The UN Security Council is hardly likely to view the ANC's violence as a threat to peace. That condemnation is reserved for the South African political system.

That is why the ANC's East African representative, Reddy Mazimba, feels secure in issuing statements praising the success of the Sasol raid and paying tribute to the ANC's military wing "Umkhonto We Sizwe".

And to top it all he glibly draws implicit support for the ANC's violent action from the Western world by calling on "the democratic and progressive international community to redouble its solidarity with the people of southern Africa and to exert pressure on the major Western powers to support the demands of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the non-

aligned and progressive Western countries".

A good example of the pressure exerted on South Africa by the world community under the white banner of human rights is the recent hearing of the US Subcommittee on Africa and International Organisations. The testimony of Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs speaks for itself: "Human rights in South Africa", she leads off, is a "crucial and timely subject.

"Firstly, in recent weeks, tens of thousands of Coloured students have been engaging in a massive school boycott protesting against the inferior education system. Several hundred have been detained, and the system for the Black student is even worse.

"Secondly, South Africa's policy of institutionalised and legalised racism is one of the cruellest forms of human rights abuse in the world today. Under the apartheid system the Black, Coloured and Asian South African majority suffers pervasive discrimination in all areas of life. Protest against this discriminatory racial system is punishable by law.

"Thirdly, apartheid remains among the most persistent human rights abuse before the world community. The United Nations has focused on this issue from its inception. Although considerable achievements in combating racial discrimination have taken place in many nations, there has been rooted resistance to change in South Africa.

"Fourthly, time is running out for the prospects of peaceful change in South Africa. Dissatisfaction and resentment on the part of Black South Africans has never been more wide-

spread than today. As a result of the suppression of the Soweto demonstrations in 1976, several hundred Black South Africans died while others fled to neighbouring countries in search of military training. Others were sentenced to prison terms."

That is only the introduction. After a lengthy detailing of all the wrongs in South Africa, Derian finally comes to an amazing conclusion: "Our policies must encourage rapid, peaceful and significant change in South Africa. The government of South Africa will remain in violation of its human rights obligations under

the charter as long as participation in the political process without distinction based on race is denied. We further must persist vigorously to seek an end to the use of violence and force by the government of South Africa to maintain apartheid. Such practices could in turn lead to a resort to violence by the victims of apartheid."

Cutting away the clouded rhetoric, the real meaning is that action by the Government to maintain law and order is a violation of human rights, while militant action by protesters (as long as they are anti-government and also preferably non-White) is an acceptable route along the path of Black liberation.

Thus there is a silence when real grievances of Coloured school-children are faced up to by education authorities, and a loud outcry when education grievances pass into violence necessitating police action. The deaths of two Coloured youths in Elsies River near Cape Town have not achieved higher pass rates in the Coloured schools, but they have served the ANC's aims well in drumming up support from the UN and OAU for its campaign against democratic process in South Africa.

The real grievances of Coloured school-children centred on the supply of text-books, the condition of school buildings (after widespread vandalism last year), school fees, uniforms and student councils.

Minister of Coloured Affairs Marais Steyn then stated that:

- The department was aware of the problems in connection with the supply of text-books and its financing

- Decisions regarding school uniforms and fees are the responsibility of school boards and the schools themselves, with the understanding that regulations should not be so strict as to prevent children of poorer parents from attending schools

- There is no departmental opposition to the creation of school pupil councils and school principals are free to decide the matter with school committees.

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While the authorities were aware of shortcomings in Coloured education, he added, it was also necessary to point out that the number of scholars had increased from 491 679 in 1969 to 736 494 today, while the number of teachers had increased from 14 871 to 25 146. The matriculation pass figure increased in the same period from 1 301 to 6 778 and Steyn also pointed out that compulsory education this year included all 16-year-olds.

Why then, in the face of calls for non-violence and no confrontation with the police by the Committee of 81 (the body co-ordinating and controlling the Coloured school boycott) did the Coloured protest fan out across the entire country? How did the unrest and dissension spread to Black institutions, universities, strikes by meat workers and bus boycotts by commuters?

Police Minister Louis Le Grange supplied most of the answers in his reaction to the Sasol inferno.

The sabotage at Sasol I and II, he said, is the work of the ANC supported by the Kremlin and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Indeed, the ANC lost no time in claiming responsibility for the sabotage which has cost South Africa R5.8 million in lost petrol and other fuel reserves.

The ANC involvement, says Le Grange, came as no surprise to the South African Police as they had for some time been aware that the Kremlin had placed the listed South African Communist, Joseph (Joe) Slovo, in Maputo to

co-ordinate the Communist onslaught against the country.

"The placing of Joe Slovo in Mozambique is a well-considered plan of the SACP and the ANC to bring him as close as possible to the Republic from where he can exercise control over terrorists directed against the Republic.

"He is also closer and within easier reach of those who enter the country secretly on spy missions and have to leave it in order to make reports. He is there specifically to co-ordinate and plan action."

Le Grange also points out that the Russian ambassador in Lusaka, Dr Vassily Solodovnikov, is playing an important role in the intricate planning of ANC and Communist strategy.

When events in recent and not-so-recent

months are taken into account, the strategy unfolds according to a well orchestrated plan of action.

A good departure date is January last year when Oliver Tambo, the ANC's Marxist leader, announced a three-year plan for the "internal struggle" until the "final victory" of the overthrow of the South African government is achieved.

Tambo's three year programme is to culminate in January 1982 — the 70th anniversary of the ANC

Last year was designated the "Year of the Spear", this year is a joint "Year of Action" and "Year of the Freedom Charter".

Key elements of the programme are the mobilisation of students and teachers in a protest action against Black education and the exploitation of "workers, peasants, women, intelligentsia and other social forces" in the armed struggle.

There has also been a regrouping of Black Consciousness movements since the Government clampdown on radical organisations and movements in September 1977. Organisations formed since then have closely aligned themselves with the Black liberation struggle.

Last year the Writers' Association of South Africa (an all-Black journalists' trade union), ended their annual conference with a pledge of allegiance to the Black Consciousness movement.

And to fill the void left by the closing of Steve Biko's Black Peoples' Convention, the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (Azapo) was formed followed by the Congress of South African Students (Cusas), with students at high schools making up its membership, and the Azanian Students' Organisation (Azaso) catering for university students as the banned South African Students' Organisation (Saso) had done.

Disclosures by Security Branch agent Captain Craig Williamson after he had infiltrated the International University Exchange Fund in Geneva show that organisations involved in the "internal struggle" are heavily funded by the pro-Soviet group as well as socialist states of the Western group, UN agencies, the US and international agencies in general.

So the onslaught mounts. And with every incident South Africa is dragged across the world's headlines with outside observers urging the country to "change".

But change in itself will not deter

Communist-inspired terrorist attacks. As Chief of the Defence Force General Magnus Malan warned earlier this year after an attack on the Booyens police station: "It is not a phony war. There are 20 000 Cubans, 2 000 East Germans and a great number of Soviet advisers in Angola, 10 000 Cubans in Mozambique and Cubans and East Germans in Zambia."

Malan also warned that the attack on the Booyens police station is typical of the pattern which will be adopted by the country's enemies in the future and that "South Africans must guard against being lulled into a false sense of security".

The Booyens attack was the fourth on police stations in the past two years. In May last year the Moroka station was attacked and one

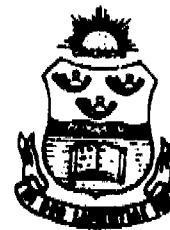
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policeman killed, Orlando was attacked in November leaving one policeman dead and two injured and in January this year the Soekmeaar station in the northern Transvaal was attacked but without anyone being injured.

All the attacks have been the work of the ANC.

Other incidents of urban unrest and protest include the Port Elizabeth factory strikes and muscle flexing by the newly formed Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (Pecco), the Silverton siege, (where three ANC terrorists were killed) and then the Coloured schools boycott. Significantly the schools issue seemed to be dying down rapidly when Black and Indian schools followed suit amidst demands that Nelson Mandela be freed from Robben

Island and the first public demonstration of church activism.

In the face of disruption of law and order, the Government is compelled to take action, first to restore calm and then to move forward with political and socio-economic developments.

Le Grange says the police "will leave no stone unturned" in maintaining law and order and bringing terrorists to book. The internal security of South Africa "and all its people" is of paramount importance.

The due process of law and South Africa's fundamental commitment to democratic principles are the guarantees that "change" will take place. But the Sasol inferno serves only to highlight the actions of forces which in the end have nothing to do with democratic freedom.

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