

"ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION."

THE GENERAL SITUATION

During the past 18 months we have witnessed new developments in southern Africa, particularly in South Africa, with regards to the political situation that prevails there. On June 16th, 1976 we witnessed the eruption to the surface of highly organized political activities, spearheaded by black students and black workers throughout South Africa. What has today come to be known as the SOWETO UPRISINGS was a manifestation of the high degree of political organization and mobilization that has been going on in South Africa for the past nine years. The Soweto Uprisings that erupted to the surface on June 16th, 1976 were (not a spontaneous movement). On the contrary, the Soweto Uprisings can be correctly regarded as a mature stage of political organization and mass mobilization that has been ushered to the South African scene, by the emergence and rapid growth of the Black Consciousness Movement.

Since the formation of the all-black student organization, the South African Students Organization (SASO), mass political mobilization in South Africa has taken new forms. The founding of the Black People's Convention (BPC) in 1971 was a political expression of these new forms of organization. I say so because, within the last few years the Black Consciousness Movement has become a mass political movement embracing all sections of the black community students, workers and the black intelligensia. The extent to which the Black Consciousness Movement has established itself as a mass organization, was clearly demonstrated by the massive strikes, demonstrations and other co-ordinated activities, throughout South Africa, from June 1976. It was further demonstrated during the funeral of the BPC Honorary President, Stephen Bantu Biko, on September 25th (1977) last year. More than 20,000 mourners converged at his funeral, and thousands were prevented by the South African army from reaching King Williamstown, where our great leader was laid to rest.

The significance of these developments can be interpreted as the broadening of the liberation movement in South Africa. This in itself, indicates the intensification and the deepening of the struggle for national liberation in South Africa, that had in the past been spearheaded by organizations like the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Because of the obvious limitations of underground activities of the ANC and PAC, the Black Consciousness Movement was complimentary to these limitations and fulfilled the important role of mass mobilization,

In the meantime the political situation in South Africa has been rapidly changing. The cold-blooded murder of our great and heroic leader, Steve Biko, on September 12th, 1977, coupled with the bannings of the Black People's Convention and 17 other black organizations, on October 19th of the same year, the mass arrests, bannings of persons as well as the assassination of a liberal white, Richard Turner, and the farce at the Biko inquest - all these events have heralded a new era in the history of the struggle in South Africa. The brutality of the South African apartheid state has once again become number one target of the world's criticism and condemnation. The harsh repression on black peoples'

organizations has been condemned even at the highest international forum - at the United Nations! All these developments have put the struggle for national liberation in South Africa as the first item on the agenda, throughout the peace-and-freedom loving communities the world over! The question that now faces the liberation movement is: What is to be done?

On the part of the liberation movement in South Africa, our task is to intensify our struggle until victory is accomplished! I wish to assure you that we are well aware of the tremendous tough challenges that face us. We have however long prepared ourselves for the inevitable mountainous road we have to travel towards the liberation of our people. From our long tradition of struggle and sacrifice, we have gained abundant confidence and faith in the invincibility of the masses-in-struggle! That we have to pay the high price of freedom is a fact we cannot run away from. Our wise and great leader, Steve Biko, confirmed this when he said: "A STRUGGLE WITHOUT CASUALTIES IS NO STRUGGLE!" These wise words of our great leader, Steve Biko, serve to strengthen our determination to fight to the bitter end until our people emerge victorious!

POLITICAL TRENDS IN NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE

At this stage I believe it is proper for me to briefly say something about current political trends in Namibia and Zimbabwe. I am convinced that this is essential since the struggles of the peoples' of Namibia and Zimbabwe are intimately related to our struggle in South Africa. Our struggles are intimately related for the simple reason that the people of Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa are all subjected to barbarous racial oppression and brutal economic exploitation. This is by no accident of history. Our people in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa are victims of colonialism, racism, capitalism and imperialism!

In Namibia the colonial regime of South Africa is intensifying its efforts to maintain the oppression and exploitation of the Namibian people. The occupational forces of South Africa have all the time succeeded in doing this because of the vast economic and military support and assistance it enjoys from the Western world. Without this assistance, the liberation forces in Namibia would have long ago freed their country from the yoke of colonial occupation.

Whilst we welcome the "initiative" of the five Western countries -- U.S., West Germany, France, Britain and Canada, which constitutes an attempt to "normalize" the political situation in Namibia, we maintain the right to be doubtful about the sincerity of these attempts. I say this simply because it is again the "big 5" (U.S., W. Germany, Britain, Canada and France) that continue to actively support the oppressive South African regime, economically and militarily. To us this constitutes a serious contradiction! No one should therefore be surprised if we remain suspicious of the present moves by the five western countries. We have a long history behind us! (At the very best the Namibian "initiative" can be designed to end direct occupation by the colonial regime of South Africa, whilst seeking guarantees for the security of the economic interests of western imperialism.) This also entails the efforts to undermine the liberation forces in that country, led by the South West Africa Peoples' Organization (SWAPO).

This became obvious to us and in the eyes of the progressive international community when racist South Africa attempted to install a puppet, neo-colonial state through the "Turnhalle Group". This evil attempt is condemned contemptuously, by all progressive forces as well as by all peace-and-freedom-loving nations and communities, throughout the world!

In Zimbabwe we are close witnesses of similar "peace" efforts, spearheaded by the Anglo-American "peace-proposals", which so far has not achieved the desired ends. We particularly welcome the Carter Administration's efforts in these "peace" efforts, as long as Mr. Carter and his government are seeking genuine peace. On the other hand, we will always outrightly condemn any attempt, by all those involved, to install a puppet government on Zimbabwe territory. In that case we will have no choice, but to give continued moral and political support to the patriotic and revolutionary masses of Zimbabwe, led by the Patriotic Front Alliance.

The so-called, on going "internal settlement" talks, staged by Ian Douglas Smith are nothing else but a political circus, devoid of reality! These so-called "talks" can only serve to delay the attainment of liberation in that region, but can never deter the determination of the people of Zimbabwe to win the freedom they have paid for by their own blood!

In SOUTH AFRICA itself, we reject the imposed Bantustan policy that establishes phony, puppet isolated states and have no other course, but to view them as a grand imperialist strategy to keep the black masses in South Africa in permanent slavery and poverty. We in the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC) view them (Bantustans) for what they are - cheap labour reservoirs and slavery camps!

We categorically reject all bogus solutions and negotiations that attempt to forestall the full liberation of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

ON U.S. INVESTMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The stand of the Black Peoples' Convention with regards to U.S. and other foreign investments (U.S. multi-national corporations and financial institutions - banks etc.) and their involvement in the South African economy is quite clear and is best illustrated by the BPC resolution, adopted at the national conference of the BPC on the 17th December, 1972 (Hammankraal, near Pretoria):

"That this congress noting;

1. The vital role played by foreign investors (multi-national corporations and financial institutions --- banks) in maintaining and supporting the economic system of South Africa,
2. That the system is designed for maximum exploitation of black people,
3. That the riches and resources of this country belong to the people of South Africa as their birthright, and further noting
4. That foreign investors (in South Africa) claim that their presence in this country contributes towards the development of the black community,
5. That this claim is disputed by the reality of the black experience in South Africa,

THERE RESOLVES:

TO REJECT THE INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN INVESTORS IN THE EXPLOITATIVE ECONOMY OF SOUTH AFRICA --- (Res. 20/72).

As a follow up to this resolution, the BPC Secretary General, on 31st January 1973 communicated the contents to major foreign corporations demanding their withdrawal from South Africa. Some of the foreign corporations contacted were IBM, IT&T, KODAK POLAROID, FORD, CHRYSLER, GENERAL MOTORS, SHELL, MOBIL, FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK, etc.

The BPC still maintains this position and will continue to do so in the future, as long as our people are oppressed and suffer from the brutal exploitation they have been subjected to for more than a century.

THE PRESENT TASKS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT

face tough challenges that lie ahead. Inside South Africa the BPC and the entire Black Consciousness Movement face severe restrictions imposed by the repressive bannings of October 19th, 1977. The bannings of the BPC and other organizations are not only directed at these organizations, but a calculated attempt to crush the entire liberation movement, in other words, to forestall the struggle for national liberation struggle in South Africa.

Under the present circumstances all the patriots of our struggle should answer the question I posed at the very beginning: WHAT IS TO BE DONE? The first task to be accomplished is a complete reappraisal of the very nature of our struggle. Whilst our goal is very clear to all of us - the goal being national liberation, we have to reassess and identify the forces of liberation that exist in our country. As soon as we have identified these forces, the next step is to strive for unity of purpose and unity-in-struggle. On my part I, therefore, call for the unity of all our patriots-in-struggle! I also call upon all our friends, the U.S. support movement to assist us in this task. They should not help divide us but to unite the South African liberation forces. In this regard they will have done the struggle a great service indeed. I am certain that our efforts to forge unity of our people will succeed!

To those who support our struggle we have a common task to perform - the establishment, strengthening and solidifying our mutual solidarity links, in order to ensure the success of the liberation struggle in South Africa.

The major task of the liberation movement in South Africa today is to intensify the struggle until victory is accomplished. To us who are currently engaged in the struggle we are well aware of the difficult times that lie ahead. Our determination to fight and win is strengthened by the successes we have so far achieved. As our great leader Steve Biko said: "We have set out on a quest for a true humanity, and somewhere on the distant horizon we can see the glittering prize. LET US MARCH WITH COURAGE AND DETERMINATION, DRAWING STRENGTH FROM OUR COMMON PLIGHT AND BROTHERHOOD. In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible - A HUMAN FACE!"

OUR VICTORY IS CERTAIN!!!