

THE LEAKS

W-7-92
IN THE LOGIC OF THE LEAKED DOCUMENTS

A RASH OF CONFIDENTIAL ANC-ALLIANCE DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN LEAKED TO THE PRESS OVER THE PAST WEEK. IVOR POWELL LOOKS A BIT MORE CLOSELY AT THREE OF THEM, WHILE HE WONDERERS WHO IS PUNCHING HOLES IN WHAT IS ALREADY A SIEVE, AND WHY

EVERY time the government comes under threat from the ANC and its allies, a steady stream of "confidential" ANC and SACP strategy documents flows from somewhere mysterious to the desks of the editors of the conservative press.

Said documents are sometimes fictional, they are sometimes irrelevant to the issue they are meant to address, they are usually twisted out of context - and they are always hysterically seized upon first by the press and then by government spokespeople as proof of the putatively secret (usually communist-inspired) and nefarious designs which lie beneath the ANC's affable exterior.

And as a result the government is perceived as being: fully justified in not acceding to ANC demands/not only justified but also duty-bound to institute clampdowns/less guilty than the ANC-alliance in not promoting democratic solutions/off the hook over one or other outrages in relation to which it is being brought to book/simply out of the hot seat, which is now in the same gesture occupied by the ANC alliance leadership.

The tactic is of course not one peculiar to the South African government (nor to the pro-negotiations leadership of the ANC which has used it with equal gusto in the past when their pre-eminence within the ANC alliance caucus was under threat). It is used by governments everywhere against their opponents - and by opponents against their governments.

But the recent spate of "exposés" regarding the supposed insurrectionary path being masterminded by the ANC and the SACP through their programme of mass action must be considered as scraping the bottom of the barrel...

OFFENDER NUMBER ONE in this regard was the progressive Weekly Mail, which last week under the banner headline, SHOW-DOWN, alluded to a secret ANC document which according to "Weekly Mail Reporter" "gives the first clear indication of how the movement intends to bring the government down if it does not relinquish power". Included in the supposed ANC plan of action are various forms of economic terrorism, like disrupting communications

DRAFT PAPER FOR PRESENTATION TO
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THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PAPER DO NOT REPRESENT THE SACP OR ANY STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANISATION.

This paper is being circulated now, despite its having certain weaknesses. It has not been possible to remedy these because of time constraints. It is hoped that a revised version will be available at the time of presentation. If not, it is hoped that the discussion at the conference will help improve on some of the analyses presented here.

THE BOAT, THE TAP AND THE LEIPZIG WAY: A CRITIQUE OF SOME STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS IN OUR RANKS

[Please note - this is a draft discussion paper. For the moment it is an individual contribution. It does not represent the views of the SACP, the ANC or any section of these formations.]

services, deliberate sabotage of the general transport system by various means including the mobilisation of taxi-drivers to precipitate traffic foul-ups; prolonged general strikes; deliberate economic disruption. The goal of such activity, the document spelled out, was to lead to the breaking of the negotiations deadlock or even the total removal of the government from power. The thrust, the newspaper claimed, was to force the government to relinquish power and in this regard mention is made of the Leipzig option - popular action reaching such a pitch that it results in a total collapse of the ruling government.

Shock! Horror! Headline!

Or at least that would be the case if the document, with all its irresponsible, shoot-ourselves-in-the-national-foot militancy, did in fact reflect ANC strategy.

But it doesn't. In fact the document, while it does exist, has in various successive versions, been a source of some embarrassment and more amusement in most sectors of the ANC which have in fact been exposed to it - for the nearly two years it has been in existence.

Nor has it ever, as the Weekly Mail understands, "been canvassed at the high levels of the ANC's leadership".

As it quite clearly says, the document (in its latest version, dated June 1992, but essentially the same as an earlier paper from 1990) is "by no means conclusive"

and merely claims to "raise a number of statements and considerations that need to be borne in mind".

And it is clearly stated at the end that it has been "prepared by the ANC Youth League National Campaigns Committee, Johannesburg" - a fact which the Weekly Mail nowhere feels it is incumbent to mention - and not by the ANC itself.

Now, as at least the senior journalists on the Weekly Mail know quite well, the ANC and the ANC Youth League are far from being the same thing, and their respective approaches to policy issues are seldom in step. Not only that, they themselves last year published an earlier "exposé" of one of the authors of the document, ANCYL leader Peter Mokaba, in which he was accused of being a police spy.

And the disussion paper, far from being canvassed at top leadership level, has in fact never been considered by the ANC's National Executive Committee at all. Approached for comment, spokesperson Gill Marcus (who sits on the NEC) told VWB she had never even read the Youth League document, and asked that we provide her with one in order that she might find out at first hand what it says.

WHILE ONE CAN ONLY assume that in some way a newspaper of the undoubted integrity of the Weekly Mail has somehow been duped into ascribing a status to the ANCYL draft paper that it simply does not have,

analysis

the same is unlikely to be true of Sunday Times editor Ken Owen's foray into the murky world of leaked documents at the weekend.

Owen's agenda is clear, and is spelt out in his concluding paragraphs. He invokes the Leipzig option again which is intended to "demoralise society and weaken the instruments of government to the point where power passes quite painlessly to the organised labour and its political allies" and on this basis argues: "That is why President De Klerk has, soberly but firmly, drawn his line in the dust. To yield now to the pressures of mass action, or to the anger of Boipatong, or to the concerns of business, would simply add momentum to the campaign. All he can do now is govern his way out of trouble."

What exactly governing his way out of trouble means, Owen does not specify. But surely in the face of such a threat measures like the imposition of states of emergency, large scale detentions, "firm" security forces action against protestors, that sort of thing, would be no more than what was demanded by the circumstances.

Owen's entire argument is as full of holes as it is essentially undemocratic as it is basically nauseating, but this is not the place to debate it. Instead let us look at how he arrived at his sweeping judgements, and here the key element is a "Draft Paper for Presentation to SACP consultative Conference, June 20 1992", which, he says, arrived on his desk under the signature of "Democratic socialists within the SACP".

The document is a genuine one - and in fact need not have been dispatched in such a cloak and dagger way: it has been widely circulated among SACP regional and local structures and is freely available on request. What makes Owen's explanation odd though, is the fact that it was authored not by those opposing the democratic socialist position in the SACP, but in fact by one of that position's major proponents.

Even odder is the fact that directly beneath the title which Owen quotes, there appears on the document the following in underlined capitals: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PAPER DO NOT REPRESENT THE SACP OR ANY STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANISATION.

Owen does not seem to feel the need to mention this, and blithely proceeds to note that "it is in circulation and it sets out views which are substantially echoed by spokesmen for Cosatu and by various other figures in the ANC alliance". Hence he arrives at the conclusion that "the possibility must be borne in mind that the campaign has a hidden as well as a public agenda" - which in turn is what demands that the government not give in.

He has also not read the document with very much attention to detail. While the phrases Owen chooses to quote, phrases like "mass struggle as a permanent feature of South African life" and "seizure and control of state power through a series of incremental steps") do in fact occur in the paper, the author yet acknowledges the centrality of negotiations as a means to realising a democratic society: "Essential to this issue

BETOOG SÓ, SÊ KENNNERS

DIE MULTINASIONALE PANEEL OOR WETTIGE BEHEER OOR BETOGINGS IN SUID-AFRIKA HET GISTER IN KAAPSTAD SY EERSTE OPENBARE TERUGVOER AAN DIE GOLDSTONE KOMMISSIE VAN ONDERSOEK NA DIE VOORKOMING VAN OPENBARE GEWELD EN INTIMIDASIE GEGEE. CHRISTELLE TERREBLANCHE DOEN VERSLAG

► (economic reconstruction), as with Codesa, the NPA and many other processes is that we negotiate adversaries - either in the state alone or capital alone or capital and the state. But we negotiate with the understanding in all of these cases that the winning (of) our full demands is a process.)"

The paper also quite explicitly cautions against excessive zeal for the Leipzig option or the armed overthrow of the regime, and instead looks to creating a "deeper democracy" in which the people will be directly involved in governing; this is really what the paper is about, and if it has a hidden agenda, it is precisely to caution against rash and irresponsible militancy.

IF THE Weekly Mail and Ken Owen are in effect serving to do little more than whip up hysteria and reaction around the campaign of mass action, there is also a more devious end to the disinformation.

In the Sowetan this week, for instance, alleged minutes from a briefing given to Cosatu delegates on May 17 by ANC Secretary General Cyril Ramaphosa, were quoted to the effect that the ANC still believed that Codesa provided the only solution to this country's problems.

Codesa negotiations remained essential to ANC strategy, Ramaphosa is quoted as saying. Moreover, he claimed, it was the ANC who had precipitated the deadlock in Codesa 2 "so our people could see we are dealing with an enemy that will not give in easily".

Ramaphosa has since denied saying that there was no alternative to Codesa, and while acknowledging that the briefing took place also insisted that note be taken of the timing: the briefing took place before the hardening of ANC attitudes after the Boipatong massacre.

Ramaphosa, put on the line by anti-Codesa elements, was thus doing no more than saving face when he claimed the ANC had precipitated the Codesa deadlock; no more than wanting to save the negotiations day when he insisted on the ANC's continued commitment to Codesa.

As it happens, the Cosatu position, which has little patience with the way Codesa proceeded, is the one which currently holds sway, and the future of Codesa remains very much in jeopardy. But, sources confirmed, the issue is one which is still being debated within alliance structures, with opposing viewpoints not yet resolved into coherent policy.

BUT THIS IS NOT really the point. What needs to be asked here is why the minutes are suddenly made available now, nearly two months after the event.

There are two possible answers. One that the Sowetan or its source is desperately keen to impart some credibility to the increasingly discredited negotiating forum - thus the prestigious name of Ramaphosa in an overwhelmingly black-read newspaper.

The other is that somebody is trying to drive a wedge between Cosatu and the ANC and in the long run to manufacture divisions between the ANC and its allies.

We don't know how successful this will prove, nor how successful the opposing disinformation strategy of painting the ANC and its allies as raving revolutionaries.

The proof of the pudding will come in the first case if serious and debilitating divisions grow up in the ANC's alliance.

In the second, the issue is the moral high ground, and who occupies it. If the government can sell the idea of a dangerously out of control revolutionary mob waiting to storm the homes of innocent women and children, or alternatively wreck the economy, then it will appear justified in harsh clampdowns, in continued repression and in hanging onto the reins of power. Crucially it will regain some support - dangerously eroded in recent months - for its reform plans and the notion of power sharing.

But for the moment - and immediately this is more important - it can throw up a smokescreen between itself and the essential reasonableness of the demands on which the mass action campaign is being launched.

'N UNIVERSELE verbod op die dra van wapens by betogings moet sonder uitsondering aanvaar word, sê prof Philip Heymann, voorsitter van die paneel.

Wat die optrede van die owerheid betref, sê hy: "Demonstrasies is daarop ingestel om mense te bereik, en kan daarom normaalweg potensieel ontwrigtend wees. Die idee is dat die minimum aanwending van mag te alle tye gebruik word om die ontwrigting te stop."

Die komitee lê die "reg tot protes" as 'n grondbeginsel vir sy aanbevelings neer en sê selfs ná die Boipatong-massamoord moet betogings in dié gebied toegelaat word.

Heymann, van die Harvard Universiteit in Amerika, is voorsitter van die groep van tien mense wat in April 1992 aangestel is om aanbevelings aan die Goldstone-kommissie te doen oor maniere om demonstrasies en betogings te hanteer teen die agtergrond van die eiesoortige omstandighede in die land asook die metodes wat in ander lande as aanvaarbaar beskou word.

Die komitee se aanbevelings raak drie aspekte: die gebeure wat 'n betoging voorafgaan; die gebruik van mag in die polisiëring van demonstrasies; en die organisatoriese en opleidingsimplikasies van die aanbevelings.

Die paneel se grondbeginsels in die aanbevelings behels die reg tot protes en die fasilitering daarvan, die onderverdeling van verantwoordelikhede vir 'n betoging deur drie partye (die organiseerders, die polisie en die plaaslike owerheid), onderhandeling en 'n ooreenkoms oor koördinerende deur die drie partye en die "uiterste beheersing in die aanwending van mag", met 'n feitlik totale weerhouding van dodelike mag (lethal force).

Heymann maak melding van die "sorgwekkendste gebruik van dodelike mag in SA" en beveel ook onderhandelings tussen die drie partye tydens 'n betoging aan.

Die komitee het ander lande met die probleme van "endemiese en epidemiese geweld", soos Noord-Ierland, geraadpleeg in sy ondersoek.

Onder die aanbevelings is 'n sterk argument deur die komitee dat die gebrekkige toerekenbaarheid van die polisie in Suid-Afrika aangespreek moet word. "Reëls vir effektiewe polisiëring is nie baie effektief as dit nie gemonitor word nie", sê Heymann. "Daarom maak dit sin om magte te gee aan 'n stelsel van monitoring." Die kommissie sien dit as 'n belangrike vorm van aanspreeklikheid en stel ook voor dat die pers by alle situasies toegelaat word, selfs al is dit gevaarlik.

Die komitee steun 'n voorstel deur die ANC dat monitoring op versoek plaasvind en meen die voorstelle vir onderhandelinge vóór 'n betoging moet opgevolg word deur 'n oorsig ná die tyd waarin die moniteringsliggaam probleme en welslae uitspel. "Dit sal sowel die polisie as betogers help om uit ondervinding

te leer." Wat die polisie se rol betref, word kategorieë uitgespel dat uiterste geweld om 'n skare te beheer net in die grootste uitsondering gebruik mag word. Dit sluit maksimum nie-dodelike geweld, soos die gebruik van rubberkoeëls en donshael in.

'n Spontane betoging sonder kennisgewing of skending van ooreenkomste tel nie onder uitsonderings wat die gebruik van mag regverdig nie. Net wanneer die betogers self optree op 'n wyse wat die lewens van ander in gevaar stel, mag tot die aanwending van mag oorgegaan word.

Ten opsigte van "dodelike mag" beveel die komitee aan dat die polisie geen besondere magte kry buiten die gewone wetgewing wat stipuleer dat 'n individu ter selfverdediging dodelike mag kan aanwend, of ter beskerming van ander se lewens of baie ernstige geweldadige oortredings. Spesiale opleiding om skares te hanteer word vir die SAP aanbeveel.

Wat die reëlins vóór 'n betoging betref, beveel die komitee onder meer aan dat internasionaal-aanvaarde gebruik van kennisgewing (nie aansoek om verlof nie) aan die SAP en die plaaslike owerheid gegee word. 'n Hooggeregshof-appel kan in die tyd aangeteken word indien enige van die partye die betoging afkeur. Net enkele uitsonderings mag geld indien 'n betoging verbied word.

Teenstanders van die organiseerders behoort nie die reg te hê om 'n stokkie voor 'n betoging te steek nie, omdat dit op intimidasie kan neerkom. Betogers behoort ook die reg te hê om in "vyandelike" areas te protesteer.

Oor die vraag of 'n betoging wat daarop gemik is om haat teenoor 'n ander groep of persoon aan te stig, toegelaat moet word, is kennis geneem van ander lande se sanksionering daarvan. Die paneel het egter eenparig gemeen dat dit te gevaarlik vir die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie is. Die komitee het ook eenparig saamgestem dat aangesien betogings meestal deur die maglose en arm groepe in 'n land gehou word, die eis vir 'n verband deur die organiseerders nie sin uitmaak nie.

Regter Goldstone het in die begin van die openbare sitting sy standpunt herhaal dat die reg om te betoog veral belangrik is op 'n tydperk waarin die meeste Suid-Afrikaners geen alternatiewe vreedsame manier van politieke optrede het nie. "Terselfdertyd erken die kommissie dat in terme van politieke spanning, openbare betogings die potensiaal vir geweld inhou."

Goldstone beklemtoon ook dat sedert 2 Februarie 1990 duisende openbare betogings en optogte gehou is en dat geweldpleging net met 'n handjievol daarvan gepaard gegaan het.

Hy het gevra dat belanghebbende partye in die volgende week ten volle gebruik maak van die paneel se kundigheid en om voorleggings te doen, soos reeds ontvang van die meeste politieke organisasies. Lede van die publiek sal volgende Donderdag die kans kry om die paneel aan te spreek.