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A statement of the African National Congress
of South Africa at a conference of the
Continuation Committee of the Lisbon Inter-
national Conference in support of the
peoples of Southern Africa. - London.

It is now 9 months since the Lisbon Conference in support of the peoples of Southern Africa was held. In a way, the developments that have taken place, ^{since then} especially in the field of international solidarity, are closely associated with the results of this conference.

This is particularly the case in Western Europe, some of whose governments continue to act as a serious obstacle to the efforts of the rest of democratic mankind in support of the heroic struggles of the peoples in the Southern Africa region, by either giving direct support to the Vorster and Smith regimes, or by engaging in diverse political and diplomatic manoeuvres, which ~~when~~ in the final analysis only help to shore up these regimes and perpetuate their stranglehold over millions of oppressed people in the area.

The African National Congress views this current meeting as a particularly important event for the international solidarity movement with the liberation movements in Southern Africa and we are confident that at the end far-reaching decisions in support of the common struggle against imperialist and colonialist ^{aggression} ~~and~~ exploitation and racial bigotry will be arrived at. Our current meeting must also live up to the ~~decision~~ ^{event} of the UN declaring 1978 an Anti-Apartheid year whose campaign was launched on the 21st March. ^{that} ~~will~~ also add to the great significance of our ~~activities~~ ^{deliberations.}

The Situation in South Africa.

The situation in the southern Africa region as a whole has been characterised by a steady intensification of the struggle of the peoples and this has been the main determining ^{factor} and driving force behind the intensive political developments that were witnessed in

Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa itself.

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In Namibia and Zimbabwe the search for political alternatives to the course set by the revolutionary representatives of the peoples in these countries continues to occupy the attention of the Smith and Vorster regimes and their international allies.

The group of 5 western members of the UN Security Council, Britain, France, the USA, Canada and West Germany - intensified their contact with the Vorster regime whose aim, international public was informed, was to eventually bring about an internationally recognised and accepted solution of the Namibian problem. On the other hand, the South African regime has refused to even consider Swapo as the sole legitimate spokesman of the people of Namibia, despite the fact that it is clear to all concerned that no solution can ever be brought about without the participation of Swapo whose call for the withdrawal of the South African occupation forces has always been clear and consistent.

The Smith regime, in alliance with African stooges in Zimbabwe, - the Rev Sithole, Bishop Muzorewa, and Chief Chirau, - announced a settlement in terms of which so-called majority rule would be declared ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ Zimbabwe by the end of December 1978. Under normal circumstances this fraudulent settlement plan should have been condemned without difficulty by all those who have all along professed to be working for a just solution in Zimbabwe.

The prevarication of the British and American ruling circles on this question has been clearly noticable and it is obvious that it is now only a matter of time before ^{they and their allies give} public support ~~is given~~ to the sell-out settlement scheme of the "Gang of 4" in Rhodesia.

It is at a meeting such as this one that we should come out with a categorical position in support of the clearly-stated stand of the Patriotic Front which continues to rally and lead the people of Zimbabwe in a struggle for genuine independence.

In South Africa, the bastion of imperialist reaction on the African continent, the struggle of the oppressed people under the leadership of the African National Congress, continued to steadily intensify during the past months, drawing in to the arena of political activity ever-growing sections of the oppressed population both in the urban centres and in the rural backwaters of our country.

Indeed, never in the history of white minority domination has the regime of terror been faced with a dilemma of such magnitude. In the face of naked terror and ever-tightening administrative control, the super-exploited Black workers, the youth, ^{the revolutionary intellectuals} the rural masses are demonstrating that they will not let go the ^{political} initiative which has passed over ^{and unless} irrevocably into their hands.

Bantustan

The bankruptcy of the so-called solution on which the regime has staked the hopes for mobilising the oppressed masses ^{over to its side has been} clearly exposed. During the final preparations for the emergence of the Bophuthatswana Bantustan towards the end of last year, the clear unacceptability of this form of 'independence' was ^{unequivocally exposed} ~~clearly exposed~~ ^{by the masses of our people.} The South African ~~press revealed~~ ^{propaganda machine} the fact that fewer than 20% of the eligible "voters" in this Bantustan cast their vote. But of course, in order to justify the whole farce, the ~~news media~~ ^{propaganda machine} of the apartheid regime attempted to project a different picture of ^{the stark} acceptance reality.

Other organs of remote control such as the Community Councils, which are replacing the Urban Bantu Councils, have come into trouble. Not so long ago the citizens of Soweto almost massively boycotted elections to these councils. This led even some Afrikaner intellectuals to publicly state that the African people will only be satisfied with full independence, thereby demonstrating their ^{somewhat reluctant} understanding of the clear writing on the wall.

The paralysis of the Bantu Education system has continued even though the regime had naively hoped that the mere dropping of the

word "Bantu" would overnight change the complexion and the nature of the education which our people are rejecting in favour of universal and equal education for all.

It is, however, clear that immediate ^{steps} ~~efforts~~ are necessary to provide an alternative to the thousands of children who, because of their courageous stand, are presently roaming the streets.

The African National Congress has entered into agreements with some African countries for possibilities of setting up schools to meet the ~~need~~ current emergency in this field and we call upon the international community to assist us to realise our plans to meet the urgent educational needs of our people.

There has been a steady growth of the ^{strength and combat capacity of the} underground African National Congress and its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. The evidence of the growing strength of our revolutionary movement has been testified to by the increasing number of sabotage actions that have taken place in various parts of the country, the overwhelming majority of which have not been reported in the South African press. The activity of the urban ^{combat} units of our military wing have increased to such an extent that even ^{some} ~~certain~~ other leaders of the fascist regime have joined James Kruger, the Minister of Police, in soberly assessing the impossibility of crushing and destroying the African National Congress. In areas such as Port Elizabeth the police have publicly stated that they are working round the clock to discover the units of the African National Congress responsible for recent acts of sabotage. ^{A number of enemy agents and spies have been eliminated. Some of those eliminated are former members of our revolutionary movement.} The underground actions of the African National Congress and her revolutionary allies are accompanied by a steady stream of propaganda both through underground leaflets and also through radio broadcasts, thanks to the assistance of an increasing number of African countries in this field.

It should be noted that the United Nations has recently entered the field of radio propaganda into South Africa. It will, however, be important that the ANC, should play a major rôle in directing this form of propaganda into South Africa, otherwise it can be self-defeating and dangerous to the uninterrupted progress of our

struggle.

The economic crisis facing "South Africa has continued to deepen as a direct consequence of the steadily intensifying struggle of our people. The permanently disturbed political climate and the intensified activity of the international community in support of our struggle, have ~~taken their toll on the growing~~ ^{radely shaken the confidence} ~~recitation~~ of the overseas investors ^{in the omnipotent strength of the Vorster regime and its ability to protect the vast economic interests of the international capitalist monopolies.}

Whilst it is true that the growing economic crisis has imposed a heavier burden on the shoulders of the Black people through rising ^{spiralling prices of essential commodities, rising transport costs, high rents etc.} unemployment, the suggestion that because of this factor it is unrealistic to continue to call for an economic boycott of South Africa, must be rejected as playing into the hands of the international monopolies that enjoy super-profits through their activity in the apartheid ⁱⁿ economy and ~~they~~ thereby buttress the apartheid regime. The oppressed masses, especially the Black working class, are reacting to this situation by intensifying their onslaught ^{and the domestic and international upholders who bear collective} against the regime ~~which is~~ responsible for their plight.

That is why our people are supporting the growing calls for imposition of economic sanctions against the regime and are branding as traitors those amongst them ~~xxxx~~ who are calling for the abandonment of this course.

The Vorster Regime, in characteristic ^A reaction to the growing struggle of the people has intensified its repression whilst at the same time it has also continued to seek ways of weakening the united resistance of the Black community.

^{a blow was struck against a number of Black politicians, organisations and newspapers.}

More people have been murdered by the Vorster regime either in the streets of our ghettos or in detention. ^{during the past 9 months} With unparalleled cynicism, the murder of detainees has been shrugged off by the courts of law and consequently the police, responsible for these crimes, have ^{escaped} ~~gone~~ unscathed. Such were the verdicts in the court cases involving murdered detainees like Mzizi, Hoosen Haffeejee, Steve Biko and many others.

Many political trials are continuing in South Africa involving ~~many~~ ^{scores of} freedom fighters. This includes the trial of the Pretoria 12, who from the beginning of this year are being re-tried following the death of the first trial judge. A great number of our people were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment last year.

The African National Congress would like, however, to emphasise the urgent question of Solomon Mahlangu who was sentenced to death recently following a shooting incident in Goch Street, Johannesburg, last year. In the course of the trial Comrade Mahlangu was referred to as a member of the African National Congress who had entered South Africa after receiving military training in Angola.

The court had alleged that he had entered South Africa for the purpose of killing whites, evidently deliberately ~~destroying~~ ^{distorting} the revolutionary aims of our national liberation struggle and seeking justification for the death sentence which was imposed on him at the end of the trial.

Solomon Mahlangu is not a criminal but a patriot who, like hundreds upon hundreds of his compatriots, had answered the call of the African National Congress and its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. He is a prisoner of war and must be treated under the relevant Geneva Conventions. At the same time we solemnly warn the Vorster regime that their monopoly of capturing and dealing with impunity with those that fall into their hands in the field of battle will soon be over.

During the second half of last year the Vorster regime introduced its grand strategy for seeking to promote the divisions within the Black community by announcing its intentions to introduce 3 "separate and equal" parliaments for ^{the} white, Coloured and Indian sections of our population. The rationale for this new scheme was that the 3 communities share a common fatherland to the exclusion of the African people who are supposed to have their own separate "fatherlands" ^{the Bantustan tribal enclaves.} This action has of course been rejected by the Black communities on the grounds that it seeks to entrench the