

LMN/011/0013/15

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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 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 of the UN declaring 1978 an Anti-Apartheid year whose campaign was launched on the 21st March. That event will also add to the great significance of our 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.

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 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 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 and urban masses are demonstrating that they will not let go the political initiative which has passed over irrevocably into their hands.

The bankruptcy of the so-called Bantustan 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 expressed by the masses of our people. The South African press revealed 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 propaganda machine of the apartheid regime attempted to project a different picture of the stark 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 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 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 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 role 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 rudely shaken the confidence 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 economy and thereby buttressing the apartheid regime. The oppressed masses, especially the Black working class, are reacting to this situation by intensifying their onslaught against the regime and its domestic and international supporters who bear collective responsibility 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 who are calling for the abandonment of this course.

The Vorster Regime, in characteristic 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 political 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 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 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 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 apartheid system. Instead, there has been a growing tendency towards seeking greater unity amongst all sections of the Black community as a fitting rebuff to the Vorster regime's schemes of divide and oppress.

Not all is well within the ranks of the racist minority. Despite the fact that the November 1977 so-called general elections presented a picture of acceptance of the disastrous policies of the ruling National Party by the white population, the existence of political instability within this section of the population cannot be successfully swept under the carpet. The rate of emmigration has continued to be a factor of concern for the regime as it represents a measure of unease within the white population.

Replacements for those whites fleeing South Africa has come mainly from Smith's Rhodesia. The unstable immigrant force is itself fleeing from the wrath of the Patriotic Front and the revolutionary masses of Zimbabwe and is not likely to stake itself for the defence of South African fascism as our struggle intensifies.

A growing number of white youth are refusing to be inducted into the white racist army in spite of the fact that the number of those brought before the courts for this crime draft dodging is increasing. Some of these young people have found their way into the outside world where they seek political asylum, mainly in Britain and the Netherlands. The future does not hold any hope for relaxation of this concept especially as the possibility of actually dying in the battlefield for a cause the white youth does not see its way clear to supporting, increases. The more radical of the white youth see the way out of the present crisis in participating in many different ways in the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed people as they become more and more convinced that an essential pre-requisite for peace and stability in South Africa lies in the destruction of the system that shackles millions of their fellow citizens.

The international relations of the fascist regime have suffered further setbacks in the past 9 months. The hey-days of the short-lived "success" of the policy of so-called detente in Southern Africa have gone never to return. The independent peoples of Africa through the Organisation of African Unity are now fully geared to giving all the necessary and possible support to the armed struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa.

The Vorster regime has during the past 9 months gone through the traumatic shock of losing the support of some countries in Western Europe which it had regarded as its traditional allies. This is the case with Holland whose Governmental leaders received a delegation of the African National Congress in October last year. The discussions that took place did not only result in a clearer understanding of the positions of the African National Congress, but at the same time an agreement was reached whereby the Dutch Government would channel various forms of humanitarian assistance to the African National Congress. This was indeed a very important development as it conclusively proved that it was possible to break the wall of imperialist support for the Vorster regime by winning over some of the smaller countries of Western Europe.

It is common knowledge that before these developments some Scandinavian countries, notably Sweden, had already established very close fraternal relations with the African National Congress. We must attribute these developments to the growing strength of the solidarity movements in a growing number of countries of Western Europe.

The United Nations Security Council finally adopted a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. Of course the African National Congress is not naively sitting back satisfied that all is well after this event. Recent developments have shown that the merchants (of war) are still pursuing their business through intermediaries and conduits such as Isreal, Iran, Chile and the other corterie of fascist regimes, especially in Latin America.

This accounts for the rapidly strengthening relations between South Africa and Isreal and it is no longer a secret that this development has brought about close military ties and nuclear collaboration between the fascist task-forces of international imperialism.

The United Nations Security Council decision on an arms embargo does, however, show that it is no longer possible for imperialism to totally ignore the pressure of democratic forces within the UN. After all, the Carter administration cannot pretend that it is interested in the well-being of the underdog through its demagogic shouts of so-called defense of human rights when it will be seen to be actually and openly supporting the fascist regimes that continuously pose a threat to the peace and stability of the newly independent states. This poses an

increasing dilemma for international imperialism and at the same time it opens up new possibilities for the peace-loving to successfully press ahead in the struggle to effectively isolate the regimes of terror in Southern Africa.

It must also been borne in mind that an urgent question before the peace-loving international community is the growing nuclear capability of the Vorster regime. This was further emphasised by the exposure of the Vorster Regime's plans for testing a nuclear device last year. We must not be taken in by the denials which poured forth from Pretoria after the publication of the Soviet News Agency statement exposing the advancement of the Vorster regime's nuclear plans.

We must point out that the African National Congress has forseen the dangers of the nuclear collaboration between the imperialist countries, especially the Federal Republic of Germany and the fascist regime of South Africa. In no less than two publications and in numerous press statements our organisation has gone on record in the past condemning the treachery of West German imperialism and mobilising world public opinion to denounce the dangerous collaboration - This we did in the interests of peace and security on the African continent and in the world as a whole.

The acquiescence and even the support of the international imperialist system for the racist, fascist regimes in Southern Africa has emboldened them to carry out persistently aggressive acts particularly against the front-line African countries of Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho. These countries are being punished for their consistent and vital support for the national liberation movements of the oppressed (people) whilst at the same time it is clear that their progressive internal socio-economic and political policies, especially in the new Republics of Angola and Mozambique are seen as posing a direct threat to the vast economic, strategic and political interests of the imperialist system.

It will be recalled that the most recent aggression against the Republic of Zambia was carried out by the Smith regime whilst its Black stooges were touring some Western European countries including the USA canvassing for support for the so-called settlement scheme agreed to between Ian Smith and the 3 puppets -Rev. Sithole, Bishop Muzorewa and Chief Chirau.

The World Conference Against Apartheid, Racism and Colonialism which met in Lisbon, Portugal, from the 16th to 19th June 1977 adopted a programme of action which is still valid to the present day. We would like, however, to mention some few points which will take into account some of the new developments since the historic conference.

We would like to summarise our demands as follows:

- (1) The international community should intensify its efforts to isolate the regimes of terror in Southern Africa.
Following the adoption of a UN Arms Embargo against South Africa last year, all efforts must be made to extend the arms embargo resolution to embrace mandatory economic sanctions including all other forms of support for the Vorster regime. The international democratic forces must ensure that all violations of the arms embargo which is obligatory on all member states of the United Nations must be exposed and the violators internationally condemned.
- (2) Urgent campaigns for the release of all political prisoners in Southern Africa must be embarked upon without delay. Those already condemned to death must be reprieved and given their freedom.
- (3) We demand that freedom fighters captured on the battlefield must be accorded prisoners-of-war status in terms of the relevant Geneva Conventions.
- (4) All creations of the Bantustan policies of separate development must be isolated and denied international recognition.
- (5) The growing South African nuclear potential must be exposed and condemned and pressure brought to bear on all the imperialist countries that collaborate with the Vorster regime in the nuclear field to cease such collaboration without delay. Specifically, we recommend that an international campaign be launched against South Africa's nuclear enrichment project.

- (6) The countries that share borders with the racist-fascist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia must be given all possible assistance by the international community in order to increase their capacity to repel the repeated aggression by these terror regimes.
- (7) We call for non-recognition of the fraudulent manoeuvre by Ian Smith and his puppets.
- (8) The growing collaboration between the fascist regime of Johannes Vorster and Israel should be condemned as posing a serious and continuing threat to the peace and security of the African and Arab regions and directed against the national liberation movement of the African and Arab people, in particular the Palestinian resistance under the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.
- (9) The liberation movements in Southern Africa - The Patriotic Front, SWAPO and the African National Congress - must be given all-round assistance to increase their striking power against their common enemies and for the liberation of the oppressed peoples in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The ultimate victory of our revolutionary struggles leading to the creation of just and democratic societies in Southern Africa will call for more sacrifice on the part of the oppressed peoples. The course to that victory is clearly along the intensification of the armed revolutionary struggle. Nothing will divert us from this course. We pay tribute to all our supporters in Africa, the Soviet Union, Cuba and other Socialist countries, the democratic and progressive movements in Western Europe, America and Asia. We are confident that the results of the current meeting will consolidate and extend that support.

VICTORY IS CERTAIN!

AMANDLA NGAWETHU!

MATLA KE ARONA!

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!