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Some Notes on White Workers.

White workers are conscious of their protected status in South African law and also of the privileges that these practices bring them. Their defence of racist labour practices is not a false consciousness, as some revolutionary theorists agree, as these serve their material interests. In another respect, however, there is a false consciousness in their belief and interest in preserving the white apartheid state. They very much see their jobs at stake by blacks who do not belong to "their" South Africa. Whereas this had some validity in the 1920's, given the present alignment of social forces within white South Africa and internationally, defence of the present day apartheid system most definitely is not in their class interests.

The white workers are the first white group whose narrowly defined class interests are being jettisoned by a reactionary solution to the South African problem with wartime apartheid pushing for a final dismemberment of the country.

This satellisation of Southern Africa, with its great central Blankestani feeding and bleeding

disciplined ranks of Bantustans, far from being an embarrassing example of archaism, could become a model for the capitalist world with not much blessing for white workers. Multinationality implies the sacrifice of traditional white privileges to the interests of multinational capital in much the same way that in Europe and the USA national interests are being sacrificed to multinational ones. The white workers, like their black class brothers, will become a focus for the overpowering multinational corporations.

As workers of a modern industrial state the white workers are already beginning to feel the pinch of the crisis in western capitalism - unemployment, inflation, diminishing living standards, a steady attack on democratic rights, and finally, ironically, the gradual collapse of the colour bar and the erosion of petty apartheid.

As time goes the position of the white workers will worsen, even though there may be a temporary respite during the transition period of war time apartheid. White unemployment will find work in the armaments industry which, as the struggle escalates in South Africa and around its borders, will become a boom industry. White unemployed will also be placed in the permanent force of the military so forming a lumpen element fighting the national liberation movement.

The false consciousness amongst the white workers that OKHELA identifies could perhaps better be described as a misplaced consciousness. Workers defend their interests and rights through organising trade unions with a stake in the state. This is the way workers in modern western countries have responded, and likewise in South Africa. However, the South African white workers sacrificed true class bound interests by cutting themselves off from the black workers and subsequently were forced to staking their futures in the apartheid state. Whereas, in terms of narrowly defined white worker interests, this was understandable in the 1920's (in 1924 they got job protection and an industrial labour law) since then conditions have changed. The social forces which recently emerge as predominant in the apartheid state, nationally and internationally, now clearly work against the very privileges that the white workers originally enjoyed. The white worker should now be in a position to deliver a more precise and class oriented judgement on the apartheid social system.

- The question of industrial organisation lies at the very heart of the program to transform the apartheid system. As the white workers form a significant part of the industrial labour force their eventual role is of strategic importance. In spite of where the white

workers are politically at present, there exists the very essence of an OKHELA logos in their not so distant past. In 1914 the white miners of the Rand spoke of setting up a provisional government in the tradition of workers uprisings in Russia and Europe of that time. They almost succeeded in an insurrection against the autocratic and imperialist regime of general Smuts.

Not only were the industrial workers of the early period, mainly the miners but also boer women in the textile and clothing industry, viciously exploited, they also had to contend with absolute powerlessness against the state. The character of the uprising clearly illustrated the national problems they had to contend with as a settler colonial industrial proletariat. They were impoverished boers following the Anglo-Boer War; they were the rabble who flocked from all parts of the world to the gold fields around Johannesburg, then a sort of Mecca of international big-finance hooliganism. The very essence of a brutally exploited proletariat coming to terms with their exploiters under conditions of complete national alienation. The 1914 uprising was crushed by military force.

The 1914 saga was repeated in 1922. The white miners again told Smuts and the big-finance bosses to go to the devil and they called on the soldiers to side

with them. The uprising again ended in bloodshed, leaving 400 dead. Again vicious exploitation was the issue; and again the question of national alienation was a root problem. The fascists solved the national problem by siding against imperialism and Smuts with the white workers and on this basis winning an election in 1924. The white workers won state power to entrench and advance their interests; the nationalists got their way and the true politics of apartheid and dismemberment of South Africa took root.

Under the revolutionary conditions brought about by the national liberation movement the situation is ripe for cultivating a truly patriotic and socialist culture amongst the white workers. OKHELA white worker logos has to reverse the political consequences of 1922 and return to the spirit of 1914 in the wake of the national liberation struggle. OKHELA continues to strive for cell formations within the various white worker organisations which could be the germs for the emergence of a socialist type industrial organisation where the workers are in control, black and white, shoulder to shoulder.

Some Notes on the Role of Whites in the South African Struggle.

Over three hundred years of settler colonialism saw a "vulture culture" weld the whites in South Africa together into a national group based on racial domination and exploitation of the colonised black majority. When the all white Nationalist Party came into power in 1948 it rationalised this exploitation and laid the blueprints for the ultimate dismemberment of the country.

The politics of national domination and exploitation has led to war. It is a war of national liberation. The enemy of the people, the white state in the broad sense of the word, is seen as a foreign oppressor. The dynamics of white oppression involve a firmly entrenched white nation state that will not yield, let alone quit the scene. The whites stand firm against the national aspirations of the colonised people.

The struggle of the indigenous people against settler colonialism is a struggle for socialism against a strongly entrenched capitalist state supported by world imperialism. It envisages maintaining the territorial integrity of the country and gaining control over its resources.

The main antagonists for power in South Africa fall into racial camps. The blue prints laid down by the practitioners of apartheid, the Nationalist Party have become a war manifesto. Their purported objectives are the maintenance of the national identity of the whites, to finally dismember the country in order to continue national domination and exploitation of Southern Africa. The black liberation movement will fight for territorial integrity of the country and majority rule.

Apartheid ideology purports to protect the identity of the whites in South Africa. What in fact it has done is to effectively isolate whites both in their own country and internationally. The whites have become conditioned by their lack of contact with the people of the country, by lack of contact with the South African inside themselves and have been led to civil war.

The harsh reality of war is a concern of all the people of South Africa. As the confrontation escalates white intransigence on the main issues is bound to weaken. The futures of all in South Africa are linked and the present situation can never hold. The key question is: what sort of future and which issues will be yielded to form that future.

Under the present harsh reality in South Africa this question is to be resolved by war and the outcome dependant on whichever interest group, of race or of class is going to impose itself.

On the question on the future for South Africa OKHELA is clear. We are fighting for a socialist future and an accommodation of a white community within a revolutionary program for the transformation of the apartheid social system. Essentially we are competing for the allegiance of significant sections of the whites against the apartheid separatist elements whom we are trying to isolate and expose in the path of the onward march of the national liberation movement. Indeed, if a reasonably sized group amongst the whites joined with those for majority rule, the cause of war will become that much less compelling. Concern for our own people, the white South Africans, motivates OKHELA to work towards fostering such a group as a socialist cause.

Concern for our people is a concern for peace in South Africa. Eradicating national domination and economic exploitation is a necessary condition to peace. If an ultimate dismemberment of the country is the final outcome of the looming war in South Africa it could still leave the white group in control over the economic and human resources of Southern Africa. It would perpetuate imperialist exploitation and would

fail to remove the threat of continued war and international strife around the sub continent. OKHELA therefore addresses the question of national identity and territorial dismemberment as two crucially important issues to expose and oppose within the white group.

Apartheid in its explicit form is a rationalisation of exploitation - class exploitation with class distinctions being reinforced by race laws. This, the segregation dimension of apartheid, effects every conceivable human right, taken for granted in the civilised world, of the black majority. Apartheid ideology in its separatist dimension, expresses the cultural and national differences between white and black. It is the artificially created distance which resulted in the blueprints, already instituted in the establishment of Bantustans, that will lead to the ultimate dismemberment of the country. It expresses the complete denial of national rights to the colonised majority; for the practitioners^{of apartheid} it forms the war cry in the name of "national identity" of the whites.

A crucial task for OKHELA is to analyse and elaborate for the various sectors of the white community what the consequences of a revolutionary transformation of the apartheid social system will mean for them. For example, it is clear that the role of the white army, expressing both the willingness and the ability of the white state to fight, will be crucial.

Something like one third of the entire white labour force is government employed. The existence of an all white government machine is the living reality of separatist South Africa. It is under control of the Nationalist Party. Eventually it may fall under the growing influence of the military.

The question of industrial democracy lies at the very heart of any revolutionary program. It will involve some South African type soviet organisation of industry on a fully integrated basis between white and black workers. Also at the heart of a revolutionary program is the question of landownership. This is essential as in many ways the black-white contradiction in South Africa is manifested in urban-rural contradictions. Expropriation of white farmers and placing the land under control of those who work it will go a far way to redress the imbalance.

When looking at the role of the middle class the international dimension of the South African liberation struggle becomes relevant. Will a white middle class ever accept a socialist South Africa? Or will it be involved in an attempt to impose a "liberal solution" to the South African question with foreign influence and possibly in alliance with a generals clique?

The youth of South Africa have an historic and progressive role to play. In a confrontation the main brunt of the military force depends on the youth. There is much dissent and alienation at high schools and universities and a general craving for renewal in South African life highly controlled by the apartheid state. Many high school youth rebel at the violently fascist indoctrination programmes run by the security police to teach them about the so-called communist threat to the state.

White South Africans are being asked to take up arms and die in defence of the apartheid dreamworld. OKHELA work entails the propagation of an anti-apartheid and genuinely patriotic alternative. OKHELA also provides the only viable channel for militant anti-apartheid activity for white patriots.

Elaborating a theory of revolutionary change in South Africa is an extremely difficult task. On one thing the radical opposition in South Africa speaks with one voice: it is only through extra-legal means that real change can be brought about. A viable military challenge to the apartheid state by the revolutionary movement has yet to be put into effect. Much of the work that has been done to date by the movement has been sheer pragmatism.

Also with the OKHELA program there was a great

deal of pragmatism before it settled on its present course. Its ideology was developed under the difficult security conditions inside the country and in isolation in exile. The test for this ideology is its practical application and the response from the disenchanted in the white community without its being isolated from the progressive elements in the country by the enemy. This was the harsh experience with Breytenbach - the state went all out to destroy the appeal of OKHELA by attacking the professional, political and personal integrity of Breytenbach and all other exposed militants in a desperate attempt to isolate OKHELA as a lunatic fringe group. Fact is the the enemy failed, but the toll was heavy nevertheless.

Much of what Breyten said in court went unnoticed. But one thing that rang chillingly from his statement in court is that he acted out of concern for his people. Coming from the most important Afrikaans writer living this statement will surely be historic. Breyten's concern was one that he felt at a deep personal level. In a brilliant essay written while in exile he described the personality of white South Africa as a settler colonial vulture culture. Much of OKHELA ideology was developed from such fundamentals relating directly to the whites and their inevitably having to come to terms with the national

liberation movement.

There may appear to be a contradiction between the idealism and the clarity of OKHELA logos and the brutal reality of every day apartheid life. Do our hopes within OKHELA indeed tally with the horrendous reality of army and police brutality inside the country? What chance does OKHELA have under these conditions? The contradiction for OKHELA is apparant. On the one hand we really beleive that OKHELA has a case to state to our people and mobilise them; on the other hand every OKHELA militant knows that exposure while underground could result in his or her being torn apart in the most literal sense of the word by the whites on the South African streets.

The harsh realities confirm our guts ideology as being right. The white South African personality that Breyten describes is a brittle one. The reality is harsh on all in South Africa as it is on OKHELA. The fact is that the futures of all are linked and that the present situation can never hold. Vorster is as sure of this as is OKHELA.

OKHELA perseveres knowing full well that the scope and form of its operations are severely restricted by the repression in South Africa and knowing

full well that the state has deployed the death penalty as a deterrent to OKHELA being active. OKHELA is a spark, small but tenacious one, a spark that will not die by water.

Our analysis of the reality in South Africa clearly indicates what must be done; coming to grips with how to do it is the constant work of OKHELA militants.

February 1977.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF OKHELA MILITANT BILL ANDERSON

New York, N.Y., January 6, 1977

Is there any future for whites in South Africa? Can whites do anything about the situation in South Africa, or is it too late? What is the role of whites in the struggle to free South Africa from the grip of apartheid? These are questions which must be addressed by every South African white who loves his or her country.

As a young white South African, I have wrestled with these questions and would like to trace the development of my own convictions on them.

I grew up in a secure and comfortable home with no worries typical of most white homes in South Africa. Until I was 17 I blindly accepted the social conditions around me as normal. There were always two black "servants" in the home to clean up behind us, to be at the beck and call of the white "madam" and "master" whenever necessary. The fact that most of the servants who worked for us saw their families for only a couple of weeks each year didn't strike me as unusual. That was simply the way things had always been.

I went to an elitist private high school where I developed liberal ideals. My awareness of the conditions under which blacks suffered grew, and I became aware of the glaring injustices in the society. This awareness grew, however, within the framework of a South African liberal's approach, which holds that as "civilized, educated" whites, we have a duty towards

the "poor, helpless" blacks.

I then went to the University of Cape Town and began to question these assumptions. For the first time in my life I realized that blacks had forged their own struggle and that their claims were legitimate in their own right--that one person one vote was a basic human right and that the government did not represent all the people. I realized that I had to stand up for these ideals. But my motivation was almost crushed when I discovered that the black students would have nothing to do with any white or multiracial organization. My frustration led me to inactivity.

In July 1975 I was drafted into the army and in November of that year was sent to Angola to fight for my country. Members of my battallion were killed in action. I realized that I was being called upon to defend, perhaps with my life, a system that I abhorred and, moreover, one that I believe is doomed to failure. My disgust grew as I witnessed the brutal way in which this system needs to defend itself. Every night through the months of May and June of last year I went to bed with the screams of innocent men being tortured ringing in my ears. A key question that kept on cropping up in my mind was: If I hate this system so thoroughly, what am I going to do about it? What role could I play, if any, in changing the situation?

In the few newspapers which were circulated in the military operational area towards the end of 1975, alot was written about Breyten Breytenbach, a poet whose work I had greatly admired. There he was, standing trial under the Terrorism Act a soldier of the "enemy," claiming respon-

sibility for his actions, first and foremost as a patriot who cared for his own people. By contrast, here I was, on the borders, a soldier defending something I didn't believe in. Breytenbach made a strong impression on me. Here was an Afrikaner acting outside the "law" to destroy the state because he believed that his own people--those who were condemning and sentencing him--needed to be liberated from their fascist collision course.

In July 1975, with these questions still as yet unresolved in my mind, I left South Africa between terms of military service to study abroad. In London I was approached by OKHLELA. Unknown to me, I had worked with a number of OKHLELA militants in Cape Town and they had briefed the external wing of my position as a potential recruit. It didn't take long for me to realize that OKHLELA provided the answer to the very questions I'd been grappling with, and I was soon recruited into the organization.

Just before my statement on the atrocities perpetrated by the South African military in Angola and Namibia came out in the British press, I wrote a letter to John Vorster telling him that what I was about to do was the act of a patriot who loved his country.

I'd found a political home in OKHLELA. I came in contact with people who had been in exile for years but who were still deeply committed patriots vitally involved in the liberation of their people and their country. Within OKHLELA I found an organizational outlet for my commitment.

The writing on the wall in South Africa is clear. The apartheid regime is doomed to failure, yet most whites live in a make-believe world of false security.

OKHELA is the first organization to realistically approach the question of the role of whites in bringing about change in South Africa and the part they might play in a new society. OKHELA believes that South African whites need to destroy the apartheid regime which for so many years has dehumanized them and is now throwing them headlong into a disastrous bloodbath.

The problem is now a matter of urgency. Sweetly mouthed words of freedom and justice are not enough. It seems clear that the necessary change is not going to come through the system whose tradition lies deep in white superiority and colonial paternalism.

Breytenbach's actions outside the law were a clear example of the approach that is necessary. If whites have any future at all in South Africa it will be determined only by whites committing themselves now to the destruction of the apartheid regime. The Vorster regime is leading us all down a one way road to self-destruction.

As an OKHELA militant I am prepared to die for my country.

In my dreams I am haunted by the screams and courage of the Soweto youth who stood in front of the regime's guns for their belief in the truth of freedom. I am encouraged by the examples of Bram Fischer and Breyten Breytenbach and the many others, black and white, the true leaders, who are rotting in jails. Somehow I have to bridge the gap between these memories and

the vision I have of one day returning to my home. The only way home for me and the only hope for those back home is to fight. It is to that struggle that I have now fully committed myself.

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THE ALIENATION OF WHITE SOUTH AFRICA

BY BREYTEN BREYTENBACH.

Looking into South Africa is like looking into the mirror at midnight when one has pulled a face and a train blew its whistle and one's image stayed there, fixed for all eternity. A horrible face, but one's own.

Apartheid is the state and the condition of being apart. It is the no man's land between peoples. But this gap is not a neutral space. It is the artificially created distance necessary to attenuate, for the practitioners, the very raw reality of racial, economic, social and cultural discrimination and exploitation. It is the space of the White man's being. It is the distance needed to convince himself of his denial of the other's humanity. It ends up denying all humanity of any kind both to the other and to himself.

Apartheid is at the same time the implement of exploitation and the implementation thereof. It is the lion tamer's whip and stool. The lion sees stool, whip and man as one.

For the White man, apartheid is a distance of mind, a state of being, the state of apartness. From the assumption of apartness - from the necessity to stress this apartness, to justify and rationalise it, to obscure that which may strip him naked - White culture in South Africa is born.

Apartheid works. It may not function administratively, its justifications and claims are absurd and it certainly has not succeeded in dehumanising - entirely - the Africans, the Coloureds or the Indians. But it has effectively managed to isolate the White man. He is becoming conditioned by his lack of contact with the people of the country, his lack of contact with the South African inside himself. Even though he has become a mental Special Branch, a BOSS of darkness, he doesn't know what's going on - since he can only relate to the syndrome of his isolation. His windows are painted white to keep the night in.

For the White author or artist it results in less contact with reality. He cannot dare look into himself. He

doesn't wish to be bothered with his responsibilities as a member of the "chosen" and dominating group. He withdraws and longs for the tranquillity of a little intellectual house on the plain by a transparent river. He cannot identify with anyone but his colleagues, any other class but his own White well-to-do one, and with this he probably identifies by default. His culture is used to shield him from an experience, or even an approximation, of the reality of injustices.

The White man has become brutalised. He can permit himself to reason away brutality. And in due course his sensitivity becomes blunted. Man lives through and in man. The writer, the artist who closes his eyes to everyday injustice and inhumanity will without fail see less with his writing or painting eyes too. His work will become barren. When one prefers not to see certain things, when one chooses not to hear certain voices, when one's tongue is used only to justify this choice - then the things one turned away from do not cease to exist, the voices do not stop shouting, but one's eyes become walled, one's ears less sensitive,

therefore deaf, one's tongue will make some decadent clacking noises and one's hands will only be groping over oneself.

The totalitarian regime existing in a hostile environment must draw the noose within which it protects itself from contamination ever tighter ; it must continue to create new and more abominable laws, it must constantly redefine purity or its cultural values - closely identified with its politics - are strangled.

If you write or paint or film as an Afrikaner you have to compromise the only raw material you have, yourself, your own integrity. You become alienated from yourself which is worse than being cut off from the tribe. You become a hack. The fine intelligence you may have possessed becomes a raw wound ; you deaden your insides with money or with editing - and then you are immured into the facade you may once have thought of cracking. You are now stinking while still on your feet. And in turn you become fodder for the tribe, you become part of the pressure which will be brought to bear on fools more audacious than you can permit yourself to be.

Because your corruption must be seen as having a necessary and pragmatic adaptation to the reality of South Africa.

The South African authorities have nothing to fear from its intelligentsia. The boys are good and they will improve as they outgrow this infantile need to rebel.

But the reality of South Africa is not theirs ; the future of the country is in the hands of all its people. There is no other fight for culture that can develop apart from the popular struggle. The cultural death wish of the "representatives of Western culture" will make them the strings on Nero's fiddle.

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25¢

Whites accuse South Africa

By David Anable
Staff correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

New York

What is probably the only white South African underground group of any significance has surfaced here to issue a challenge to the South African Government.

The group, which calls itself "Okhela" (the Zulu word for "spark"), claims that the South African security forces have physically and mentally tortured the renowned South African poet Breyten Breytenbach.

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★ South Africa accused by underground white group

Mr. Breytenbach, who was a co-founder of Okhela in 1972, was jailed for nine years on Nov. 15, 1975, after being captured by South African police when he returned to his country on what Okhela leaders call a "limited mission." He allegedly has been held in solitary confinement ever since.

"Okhela challenges the South African Government to allow an independent outside observer to visit Breytenbach and publicly report on his present condition," says a statement put out by Okhela Jan. 6.

In an interview here, a number of Okhela's members and co-founders elaborated on their subversive organization's goals including their determination to help overthrow the South African Government and their attitudes toward violence.

Among those interviewed was William Anderson, a white South African who left his country last year after serving in the South African forces in Namibia (South-West Africa) and Angola. His eyewitness allegations that South African forces used varying forms of torture on captured Namibians were published widely in Europe and the United States. He says he joined Okhela after arrival in London. The others interviewed requested that their names not be published.

The aim of Okhela, say these members, is to give political and "invisible" support through the white South African community to the black national-liberation movement.

"Although we do not see ourselves as a terrorist organization," Okhela leaders explain, there may be times when violence is necessary: "Okhela is committed to the armed struggle."

"It must be the black majority who destroy the overtly fascist system of apartheid (racial separation) and set up a new society," they say, "but whites should not simply sit back and wait for blacks to free the country."

Okhela has therefore given information it has acquired through its contacts within South Africa's white community to the black African National Congress (ANC), one of the leading liberation movements. A prime example of this, say Okhela leaders, is the documented exposé of alleged West German military and nuclear cooperation with South Africa which was published by the ANC two years ago.

A little earlier, the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement (DAM) published a similar Okhela-sourced exposé, this time of an alleged major network of retail-trade links between Rhodesia and the world via South Africa.

But the most dramatic Okhela coup was the publication last year of a detailed and documented study by the Center for Social Action of the United Church of Christ (with acknowledgements to Okhela) of alleged sanctions-busting on a huge scale by Mobil Oil. Mobil has denied it contravened U.S. restrictions, but undertook a major internal investigation.

The capture of prize-winning Afrikaans Breytenbach was a major blow to the organization, especially when he recanted at his trial. "He spilt a lot of beans," admit Okhela leaders, but they quickly go on to ascribe the back as due to torture and drugging by the security police.

At the trial witnesses told of Okhela's to set up cells within the white community, to smuggle arms, to set up an underground press, to steal government documents, and to tamper with telephones.

"Okhela has certainly participated in illegal activities," say its leaders. Although there are no direct plans to set up an underground press, these sources say, all the activities mentioned above could be included in their projects.

The main thrust, they add, is to win the minds of South Africa's whites "who are in a make-believe world."

"The future of whites in South Africa is going to be determined by the role they play in freeing this society," concludes Bill Anderson.

Okhela to step up struggle

By RICHARD WALKER
NEW YORK. — Okhela, the clandestine White South African group that supports Black rule yesterday emerged in public for the first time to appeal for imprisoned poet Breyten Breytenbach.

And a former South African soldier, Bill Anderson, told a news conference in his New York flat that he had been appointed Okhela's first "above-ground" militant.

The move signalled stepped-up activity both inside and outside South Africa, he said.

Anderson has been touring the US lecturing on conditions in South West Africa and publicising his allegations of torture by South African troops there. At the news conference he was flanked by two colleagues who asked that their names be withheld.

In its first public statement, Okhela accused the South African authorities of savagely mistreating

Breytenbach and challenged the Government to allow an independent observer to visit him and report on his condition.

Quoting "two separate and reliable sources", it said that Breytenbach — who has just completed the first year of a nine-year sentence — is being held in solitary confinement in the psychiatric wing of a Pretoria hospital.

"He has been severely tortured both physically and mentally, has pleaded to be put into a mental asylum and has talked of suicide," it claimed.

Breytenbach's testimony when he stood trial was said to have destroyed Okhela. But the statement said: "Regardless of the fact that he was forced to testify on terms dictated under torture by the Security Police, Okhela will never disown him."

Anderson said Okhela was the first organisation to offer a realistic role for Whites in bringing about change in South Africa. White hopes for the future would rest on full commitment to Black aspirations now.

He said Okhela could infiltrate the South African Government, businesses and trade unions. It could move people in and out of the country at will.

One of Anderson's colleagues said he had returned a number of times and that a "massive security net" had failed to catch him.

RAND DAILY MAIL.

JOHANNESBURG.

8 JANUARY 1977

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FOUR PAGES

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"Okhela has certainly participated in illegal activities," say its leaders. Although there are no direct plans to set up an underground press, these sources say, all the activities mentioned above could be included in their projects.

The main thrust, they add, is to win the minds of South Africa's whites "who are living in a make-believe world."

"The future of whites in South Africa is going to be determined by the role they play in freeing this society," concludes Bill Anderson.

OKHELA Press Statement

New York, N.Y., Thursday, January 6, 1977

Breyten Breytenbach was sentenced to nine years imprisonment on November 15, 1975, under the South African Terrorism Act.

OKHELA has recently received information from two separate and reliable sources concerning his present condition. The organization is deeply concerned about this and is compelled to make public this information.

Breytenbach is still being held in solitary confinement, attached to the psychiatric wing of a Pretoria hospital. He has been severely tortured both physically and mentally, has pleaded for placement in a mental asylum, and has talked of committing suicide.

OKHELA challenges the South African government to allow an independent outside observer to visit Breytenbach and publicly report on his present condition.

Breyten Breytenbach is one of the most respected of Afrikaans writers and artists. He has received the Hertzog Prize, the highest South African literary award, and the P.C. Hooft prize for literature in the Netherlands. He comes from the heart of Afrikanerdom from an ultra conservative family. Given his large following inside South Africa, he poses a serious threat to the regime.

Breytenbach stood in court not as an outside agitator, but as a patriot who dearly loves his own people. Regardless of the fact that he was forced to testify as a "sell-out"

on terms dictated under torture by the security police, OKHELA will never disown him. He is suffering now for his convictions. His witness will always remain on the consciences of many South African whites. More and more whites are coming to realize that he offered the only realistic alternative to their own self-destruction. If whites want any future in South Africa it will be determined by their active role in support of the National Liberation Struggle to destroy the present fascist regime. What he stood for was the total overthrow of the apartheid state, and furthermore, he committed his life to implementing these convictions. OKHELA pledges itself to continue to fight to the end for what he stood for.

O K H E L A P r o j e c t s .

New York January 1977.

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1. Background Notes.

OKHELA was formed in 1972, originally as an invisible support group of the liberation movement. Due to political developments inside South Africa, OKHELA has recently emerged as a group of white South African patriots, committed to the overthrow of the apartheid state, addressing the role of whites in the national liberation struggle.

Blacks have clearly defined their role in the struggle. OKHELA defines its role as working within the white community where the problem of apartheid stems from. The sickness of apartheid must be exposed and eradicated at its very source - in the white society. That is our responsibility and it is a task which we as whites are uniquely equipped to carry out.

During 1975 there was a series of confrontations between OKHELA militants and the South African security police, resulting in the capture of OKHELA co-founder Breyten Breytenbach. This caused a temporary setback, but after re-grouping OKHELA has re-emerged in a stronger position than ever.

The fast changing situation both inside South Africa and around its borders is bringing more and more whites to the realisation that time is running out and that what OKHELA stands for, far from being a threat to

to their identity, provides the only viable alternative for all of our futures.

The time has come now to seek, selectively, open political and financial support from progressive sources in the Western world. The following proposals are some of the projects that are being prepared for by the underground inside South Africa with support and cover from the outside.

As this resistance work is within the overall programme of the national liberation movement, which includes the armed struggle, it is obvious that these must be underground. This fact, together with the severe repressive political climate inside South Africa, determines the basic strategy and tactics reflected in OKHELA projects, i.e. the overriding need for these to become operative under conditions of illegality.

There are both security and political considerations for OKHELA support activities outside of South Africa. OKHELA does much of its training abroad for which there is the constant need to mobilise political and material support. Security-wise it is important to have some sanctuary outside of the reach of the enemy's striking distance. On the basis of its own political programme OKHELA makes what it considers a sound appeal for support from progressive movements

and individuals in the Western World. It is after all in Europe where the problem of settler colonialism originates, and it is the political, economic and military support of western capitalism that keeps the apartheid state going.

Some Key Projects.

Military Project.

Apartheid ideology purports to "protect" the identity of the whites in South Africa. What in fact it has achieved is to effectively isolate whites both in their own country and internationally. The whites have become conditioned by their lack of contact with the people of the country, by lack of contact with the South African inside themselves.

And now the white man is being asked to take up arms and die in defence of this apartheid dream world, to fight for the totalitarian state at a time when this noose of isolation is tightening and its ideology become demonstrably bankrupt.

Among the white youth of South Africa, symptoms of alienation and frustration are endemic and manifest in a lack of the very thing that apartheid culture has conditioned them to do: participate in

the death wish of the apartheid establishment as "representatives of western culture".

In such words Breyten Breytenbach describes the alienation of white South Africa. Today we see a preparedness with progressive white youth to take up arms, not for, but against the apartheid state in defence of the South African inside of them, for the reality in South Africa when its future is in the hands of all of its people.

The OKHELA military project entails the propagation of this anti-apartheid and genuinely patriotic alternative within the military. The call for anti-apartheid resistance in the military is a call to generate anti-fascist thinking within the higher ranks of the armed forces.

Financial needs for the project are made up mainly of training programs for conscripts during the long intervals between military service, and the preparation and distribution of OKHELA literature within the armed forces.

Counter Propaganda Project.

Every white child born into South African society is the victim of a brainwashing process. Education in the schools is geared towards perpetuating the ideology of white supremacy. People are conditioned to think along purely apartheid lines. The churches, television, radio, artists and writers are either directly controlled by the government or heavily censored to prevent freedom of thought or speech. Because the whites constitute a small minority, the apartheid state cannot entertain any dissent within their ranks and seeks desperately to maintain white unity at all costs.

It is thus no wonder that most whites grow up believing in the apartheid system. Their fears have been exploited and they are driven into believing the official line. The whole propaganda machinery is geared towards preventing them from hearing of any other viable alternatives.

It is futile to think of countering the regimes vicious propaganda through established "open" channels inside South Africa. Besides having a host of repressive and restrictive legislation preventing the propagation of any form of open dissent, the brutality of police repression does not stop short of torture and the shooting of hundreds of school

children as we have seen recently. Any counter propaganda efforts will need to be quite obviously outside of the South African law and in complete clandestinity. This requires very specialised forms of training and the development of underground skills.

OKHELA as an underground movement has developed years of experience and skills and is capable of putting such an operation into practice. As whites who have moved out of the heart of the white community OKHELA understands the mentality and mind set of whites and is politically in an unique position to present a viable alternative to the white community in South Africa.

The project involves intensive training in communications, counter propaganda techniques and underground survival. Militants would then be situated on the ground inside the country and capable of issuing communiques, newsletters, comments on current events etc on a regular basis. The continued existence of such an underground propaganda machinery, in a direct attempt to win the minds of the whites, poses a severe threat to the state.

In order to support this project we need to raise the funds from safe, sympathetic sources to cover the costs of transport, training, communications, equipment, underground survival and emergency needs.