

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES - DISCUSSION STATEMENT

1.

Undoubtedly the liberation movement has suffered some serious reverses and disappointments. To some extent these arose out of errors of under-estimation of the enemy; to some extent from objective developments in South Africa and abroad. We have confidence in our people and our cause; it is unthinkable that white domination can survive for many years in this era of the African revolution and the world upsurge against colonialism. This revolutionary optimism is historically justified; it is this that gives the people's forces the will to rally from reverses and go on fighting until victory. But over-confidence and optimism based on illusions do not help us; they can only cause disappointments which can, in some cases, lead to demoralisation and despair. It is therefore important at this stage to make a realistic and sober assessment of the situation, so that we can methodically rebuild our forces and prepare for the new round of hard struggles ahead.

2.

It is natural that we should be keenly aware of the international implications of our struggle. South Africa is a crucial area in the world-wide struggle between the forces of imperialism and the forces of national liberation and progress. Every victory for the progressive anti-colonialist movements in Africa and the rest of the world favours and encourages the movements for resistance and revolution in South Africa; every setback for the progressive forces hampers our struggle and strengthens the fascist Verwoerd régime. In the same way, our own struggles at home are an important contribution to the victory of all peoples.

We are going through a period of a world-wide, major offensive of imperialism. Open military aggression in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic and the Congo, is accompanied by intensified economic and military intervention and penetration by US and other imperialists and their agents, especially in Africa and other developing areas.

The imperialist powers have reduced the United Nations to its lowest level of effectiveness and authority since its foundation twenty years ago. At this time when aggression against Vietnam poses a major threat to world peace, the UN has been reduced to almost total impotence. This weakening of the UN cannot but dampen hopes that - with the proceedings on South-West Africa reaching their climax at the World Court - more effective international action would be taken against the apartheid régime.



In the ranks of the newly-independent countries, some divisions have been brought about by the intrigues of the imperialists. Some African states are challenging the basis and the integrity of the Organisation of African Unity and are even supporting the Tshombe régime. In some other African countries we may also observe rightward trends resulting from imperialist pressures, or reactionary internal groups. For example, in Kenya, the assassination of the noted fighter against imperialism, Pio Pinto, has been followed by several governmental moves against the radical and progressive elements. Fighters for African unity, independence and socialism have also been seriously disturbed by the military coup in Algeria resulting in the removal of President Ben Bella.

This international imperialist offensive calls for the greatest unity and solidarity among the forces that stand for peace, socialism and national freedom - the socialist countries, the countries newly liberated from colonialism and those still fighting for independence, and the world-wide working class and progressive movement. Regrettably such unity is still far from achievement, even in the ranks of the world Communist movement, the vanguard of the liberation front.

No doubt, all these negative developments hamper our struggle and that of all fighters against imperialism. They lead to difficulties which must be faced and overcome.

But they do not mean that the imperialists can for long succeed in stemming the African revolution and the world-wide struggle for national independence, democracy and socialism.

Nor do they mean that the past efforts of our national liberation movements to mobilise world support for our struggle have been in vain or misdirected. On the contrary, international campaigns to arouse understanding and condemnation of apartheid, to press for sanctions and boycotts of all kinds, have been and continue to be of the greatest importance and value. These campaigns have made the fight against apartheid a crucial world issue, isolating and exposing the imperialists and uniting all progressive forces.

### 3.

As we have always said: the main factor on which we rely for the liberation of South Africa is not the sympathy and assistance of our well-wishers and brothers on the African continent and all over the world; but on our own strength, the mass, revolutionary action of the South Africans themselves.

Although we place great store on supporting any solidarity actions, especially those which can cut off the Verwoerd régime from its economic and military bases in the imperialist countries, the key to the liberation of South Africa is in reorganisation and intensification of the revolutionary struggle inside the country. Tendencies to rely on outside can only result in disillusionment and despair. Only when the real mass struggle in South



Africa makes itself felt and heard throughout the world can we really hope for and expect more effective support.

Some people are pessimistic about the prospects of our struggle at the present time. They point to -

the flourishing condition of the South African economy, the thorough-going security machinery of the régime, militarisation, armaments purchases and manufacture, etc.

strong fascist tendencies among the white population, students, workers and others, reflected in more support for the Nationalist party by English-speaking voters, continuing Rightward swing of the United Party, etc.

the apparent failure or slowness of the liberation movement to find ways of demonstrating and counter-attacking, or even reaching the masses with propaganda, in the prevailing conditions of fascist repression, loss of leading personnel, and other difficulties.

These are real factors which cannot be overlooked in a current assessment of the present South African situation. They are emphasised by the government which continuously makes propaganda claiming that the structure of the country is stable, peaceful and prosperous. But such claims are based merely on temporary features of the position in the country. These factors do not alter the radical contradictions and imbalances in the structure of white supremacy; the fundamental instability and insecurity of a régime which depends on more and more militaristic and dictatorial methods to keep power. Those who speak glibly of 'boom' conditions in the country fail to see the significance of the contradiction between talk of a flourishing economy, on the one hand, and of the recurrent famines which have again swept the Transkei and Transvaal areas, with the efforts of charitable organisations desperately trying to avert mass starvation. Restrictions on the export of capital, influx of foreign capital, eager to take advantage of the high profit rates prevailing in the Republic, and expanded arms production, have indeed led to an acute shortage of white labour for skilled jobs; attempts by employers on the mines and elsewhere - even by the state on the SAR and the postal services - to modify the rigid colour bars to meet this problem are meeting with bitter resistance from white workers determined to preserve their racial monopoly of highly-paid skilled jobs.

The inflationary tendencies are steadily forcing prices of consumer goods up. But non-white workers, especially Africans, with all industrial action illegal and their trade unions virtually forced underground by repression, cannot secure wage increases in any commensurate with the rise in prices. So the 'wave of prosperity' in South Africa in fact serves to increase the gap between white and non-white wage-earners, and to impose fresh hardships on the Africans.



Vorster's boast that his police have smashed the liberation movements is belied by his demanding, and obtaining, yet further fascist laws from Parliament, especially the replacing of the universally-condemned 90-day clause with the almost identical new "180-day" clause. Instead of calling a political detainee a person suspected of having information, they now insult him by calling him a state witness; the object of the detention is to try to force him to become exactly that, by torture, solitary confinement and every other means the police have learnt from the '90-day' detentions.

If the government really believed, as they keep saying, that the revolutionary movements have all been crushed, that the non-whites now accept apartheid, that peace and security reign in the country, they would have no need to keep bringing in still more drastic laws to quell resistance, and allocating further huge amounts for security and defence. They are fully aware that the spirit of the people, the spirit of resistance, is by no means crushed.

The Rivonia trial, the Fischer trial and many other trials, big and small, of the past year have seen many of the finest leaders of the resistance movement sentenced to long years of brutal imprisonment. Some even like Mini, Mkaba, Khayinga, Bongco, Saloojee and Looksmart Solwandle, were sent to their death. No doubt, these were heavy losses, causes for grief and anger among the people. But our leaders have not suffered a political defeat. Apart from a few miserable traitors, the Beylevelds and the Mtolos, who sold their comrades to save their own skins, our leaders conducted themselves with courage and defiance. They have given the people cause to be proud of them, cause for confidence in the Congress movement and the Communist Party.

The very conditions of life of the people, the hardships and degradation of the colonialist society, inevitably arouse the revolutionary determination and resistance of the people. In spite of the loss of thousands of their most experienced leaders, in spite of the prevailing fascist terror, recent events show that the people and the liberation forces have the will and the ability to fight back. Though they may not have been on the scale of similar events in past years, the recent Steeldale bus boycott, the holding of a public conference by SACTU, and the issuing of a June 26 leaflet by the liberation movement represent truly heroic efforts in Vorster's present-day police state. It is significant, too, that official figures of political detentions in the Transkei show a steady rise.

There is no doubt that in the end, however long it may take and in spite of all the wealth, the armaments and barbarous repressions of the white minority dictatorship, the will and the patriotic spirit of the majority will prevail.

4.

It is no secret that, as the Rivonia trial revealed, the liberation movements abandoned the reliance on exclusively non-violent means of struggle



which served their role in the past, and were actively preparing for the armed overthrow of the white supremacy state.

The correctness and feasibility of this general policy decision were not and are not dependent on the success or failure of any particular scheme or operation. Looked at in broad perspective it remains true that the freedom of our country will have to be wrested in armed struggle; and that preparation for such struggle is essential to victory.

It would therefore be an error to harbour illusions that non-violent means of struggle alone will suffice. But it would also be an error to reason that because of this, or because the innumerable laws and police measures of the state have made mass activities of any kind so difficult and hazardous, we should therefore abandon all efforts at propaganda and organisation, at mobilising the masses of workers, peasants, youth, women and other sections to take mass action around their immediate demands. Indeed, it should rather be said that without constant efforts to arouse the resistance and patriotic spirit of the people, activities of a purely military character will become isolated from the people and bound therefore to fail. The real advantage of the liberation forces over all the planes, armoured cars and other superior equipment of the enemy, is the support of the masses. That is our decisive weapon, without which we cannot win.

It follows that the liberation organisations of South Africa must find the organisational and political resources to rally from the severe blows they have suffered, draw all the necessary lessons from past setbacks, and reorganise their forces to become stronger and more effective than ever before.

## 5.

To do this, new organisational methods are required. With the struggle itself approaching a new peak of intensity, with the government employing all-out Nazi methods to terrorise the liberation movement, destroy its personnel physically and psychologically, infiltrate its organisation with agents and spies, it is clear that new approaches are needed, and that there is no room for amateurish security and reliance on personnel who are sitting targets for surveillance, arrest and torture.

This does not mean that the organisations which have developed historically and proved the most suitable for conditions in our country are no longer of value. On the contrary, these organisations which have earned the trust and confidence of the people are all essential now as never before; it is of the greatest importance that they should be rebuilt and grow stronger than ever before.

South Africa needs the African National Congress and its partners in the tested Congress alliance, the Indian and Coloured People's Congresses and the Congress of Democrats. The workers need the Congress of Trade Unions, the only principled, non-racial trade union federation. The



country needs the Communist Party. It needs the fighting organisation, Umkonto we Sizwe. It needs the liberationist movements of women and of youth. And present-day conditions demand that all these militant organisations of liberation should be re-established more firmly than ever before; that they should renew their vital roots among the masses; that they should work in the closest harmony and unity of purpose with one another, and in cooperation with all organisations and sections of the people who are sincerely determined to end the curse of apartheid.

All our liberation organisations have proved that their members have the qualities necessary for victory: courage, determination and readiness for any sacrifice. But to survive and grow stronger in today's tough conditions they will have to devise new skills. Personnel should be preserved from useless casualties and sacrifices. Those who are unable or unwilling to adapt themselves to the new and taxing demands and conditions should be restricted to activities in which they cannot endanger others. From the best elements among the working people of town and country and the patriotic youth, new people must be recruited, trained and drawn into the movement.

We must get down to these tasks now, seriously, thoughtfully and methodically, and fight hard against all tendencies to defeatism and pessimism in our ranks or among the people. We must maintain and build stronger than ever before the unity of the progressive movement in our country, especially the solidarity of the Congress alliance and the Communist Party, upon which the future depends. We must work harder than ever before to strengthen and extend the international movement for solidarity with our people in the struggle against apartheid, and for the exposure and curbing of those imperialist forces abroad who profit from and who sustain white supremacy in southern Africa.

We call on all South African Communists, whether at home or in exile, to give practical leadership in the fulfilment of these tasks by setting an example of devotion, seriousness of purpose and confidence in the people's victory.

---