

Apartheidqâ\200\231vSoufh Afgg:  
COLONIALISM OF

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Statement of. the Lisbon Conference  
March 1977

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token vote they enjoyed in the Cape was abolished. Instead 234 Africans were relegated to a communal voters roll, through which they could elect six white representatives and two White Senators to represent their interests in the South African parliament. The Native Land Trust reaffirmed the principles contained in the 1913 Land Act and placed a ceiling on any further land acquisition for Africans at 13% Of the land area of our country.

The pattern continues into the 1950s and 1960s, during which the Coloureds were disenfranchised in 1955. The creation of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 came with the abolition of even the white Native representatives in the South African parliament.

The linkages, in time, between the increasing juridical independence of South Africa and the consolidation of colonial domination over the black majority is neither accidental nor fortuitous. White supremacy, white overlordship, apartheid, 'Separate development' or whatever other fancy name the racist ruling circles choose to call it - is the absolute negation of independence and the principle of national self-determination.

Colonialism is not monolithic. Within the African continent and particularly in Southern Africa, we have historically experienced differing forms of colonial domination, which though having a multiplicity of forms, shared one central characteristic - the denial of the African people of their rights of national self-determination. The guises under which the colonial regimes implemented this policy are almost as numerous as there are countries in the Southern African region.

With respect to Mozambique and Angola, for example, the Portuguese colonialists claimed that theirs was not a colonial empire but rather one national state comprising a European as well as overseas provinces, located in Africa and Asia. No one, except the most abject apologists for Portuguese colonialism, was taken in by this legal sophistry. Africa and the world correctly insisted that the essence of colonial oppression should not be covered over with elaborate juridical alibis.

In the case of Namibia we have yet another variation on the same theme. Racist South Africa transformed that country from a trust territory of the international community into its own colony. The colonial power was, in this case, acting not only against the express demands of the colonised people, but also in open defiance of world opinion as repre-

sented by the United Nations.

The other instance was that of the former British colony of Rhodesia. Here the racist white minority illegally seized power from the

colonial state through UDI, creating the legal fiction of an independent Rhodesia. This unilateral action did not in any way change the essential truth that Rhodesia was a colony whose people were being deprived of their legitimate rights of self-determination through this illegal strategem.

In many respects the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 could be characterised as UDI, with the consent of the colonial power. But the fact of this connivance did not in any way alter the central question, which is the denial of self-determination to the black majority.

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The South African Struggle is an, Anti-Colonialist National Liberation Struggle  
Flowing from this analysis of the South African racist state as essentially colonial, the South African struggle is an anti-colonialist national liberation struggle. It may differ in form from the struggles waged in other African countries, but in its content it has the same objectives and is motivated by the same aspirations. The differing form of the South African anti-colonial struggle is derivative of the shared territory occupied by the Colonised and the colonizer alike. Consequently, the institutional mechanisms whereby the black majority is colonially oppressed, are also internal to the South African body politic, and not located beyond its borders. This explains why we centre a large part of our political programme on the acquisition of political rights by the black majority.

Careful analysis of the struggle of other colonial peoples would, however, shed light on the essential, rather than the co-incidental, features of the South African case.

The anti-colonial liberation struggles centres on the demand for national self-determination or national sovereignty, which are embodied in institutions of popular sovereignty. In most colonial liberation struggles, the means through which this objective has been achieved is the abolition of the colonial state and the transfer of power to a national government elected by popular suffrage. The institutionalised modalities by which national sovereignty is secured are however not the essence of the struggle. They are incidental creations which in many cases have been changed, adapted and even abolished without in any way jeopardising the central achievement, namely national sovereignty.

Similarly, in the case of South Africa, the

focus shall be on the central issue and not on the incidental. Because the undemocratic colonial, white minority state occupies the same territory as the people it dominates, there can be no question of a hand over of power from

an externally based colonial state and its agents, to an internally located national government. The struggle of the South African people has therefore centred on the abolition of the colonial white state and the creation in its stead of a democratic state based on the principle of majority rule.

Because of the special circumstances in South Africa, the constitutional modalities through which this can be accomplished " necessarily entail the acquisition of political rights by the Black majority, that is, the abolition of the monopoly of political power by the whites. That money is effectively maintained with both the Bantustan system and the tri-

racial parliamentary system». What needs to be stressed here is that national self-determination as in all other national liberation struggles, is the decisive one. This is to be secured through the introduction of a framework of full adult suffrage, full civil liberties within a non-racial state. Black majority rule is this merely the term, through which the oppressed, colonised peoples of South Africa will achieve the content of their struggle for national self-determination.

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The historical experience of the South African liberation struggle has, at the same time, shown that the institutions of national oppression and colonial domination are linked to, and derivative of, the particular economic arrangements that obtain in our country.

It is a historical fact that the African people were dispossessed of their land with swords and fire in 200 years of wars of conquest. That on the ashes of the African societies destroyed in the process, was built a thriving capitalism, based on mining, commercial farming and secondary industry, dominated and controlled by the property owning class drawn from the white minority.

The institutions, laws and practices of apartheid are basically extra-economic devices elaborated to secure the processes of capital accumulation through the maintenance of the black majority as an easily exploitable source of cheap labour power. Because of the total penetration of racial oppression and capitalist exploitation, the South African struggle also necessarily has a class dimension. The national question in South Africa has been characterised as a land question. This formulation illustrates and underlines the historic injustice of dispossession of the people of their land. Conquest is the foundation upon which colonial domination was built. To redress this historic injustice requires that, as part of its immediate programme, the national liberation movement seize the land from its

present owners and restore it to dispossessed and exploited black tillers.

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This is why the ANC has always considered the two economic Clauses of the Freedom Charter "The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth" and "The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It" to be the very core of its revolutionary programme. These clauses envisage the seizure of economic assets, presently owned and controlled either by individual capitalists or capitalist companies drawn exclusively from the white minority or trans-national corporations.

Liberation struggle

The experience at the South African national therefore demonstrates that it is impossible to separate these inter-penetrating aspects of national liberation struggle.

Because of the foregoing and in spite of the specific features that set the South African struggle apart from the others in essence, the struggle of the South African people is inextricably bound up with and an integral part of the struggle to liberate the African continent from imperialism and racism.

From its very inception the ANC, its leaders and its rank-and-file have conceived of the liberation movement as having continental dimensions. Even before the creation of the O'AU, the liberation movements of our continent, and the independent states that emerged from our common struggle, have accepted as a collective moral obligation the duty to support and assist, in whatever way possible, the struggle to liberate the continent from the last vestiges of colonialism particularly entrenched in Southern Africa. It is a universally recognised truth that the Front Line States and Lesotho have borne the brunt of Africa's commitment to liberation in the region. It was in order to enhance this solidarity that the concept of the Front Line States came into being. For the past twenty years, all of us in Southern Africa have patiently and stubbornly endured the common sacrifices the cause of African liberation demanded of us. It was an option we chose jointly, in the full knowledge that it would entail grave and even mortal dangers. We would, however, make bold to say that despite the high price we have all been called upon to pay, this was not a mistake, and it is a decision that does honour to Africa and its peoples, especially those of Southern Africa.

Since 1912, we of the ANC have considered ourselves and the fraternal peoples of Africa, as partners in a single, glorious enterprise the liberation of our continent from colonial domination and servitude.

As partners and equals, bound by our commitment to the same objectives,

our unity in the face of our common enemy is essential!

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partheid South Africa:  
COLONIALISM OF A SPECIAL TYPE

The South African National Liberation Movement, the ANC and its allies, characterise the South African social formation as a system of internal colonialism or Colonialism of a special type. What is special or different about the colonial system as it obtains in South Africa is that there is no spatial separation between the colonising power (the white minority state) and the colonised black people. But in every respect, the features of Classic colonialism are the hallmark of the relations that obtain between the black majority and the white minority. The special features of South African internal colonialism are also compounded by the fact that the white South African state, parliament and government are juridically independent of any metropolitan Country and have a sovereignty legally vested in them by various Acts of the British govern-

ment and state

These juridical formalities should not be allowed to cloud the colonial content of the white supremacist state. The correctness of this position is clearly borne out by the historic evolution of the white South African state.

The Union of South Africa, which came into being on 31st May, 1910 by an Act of the British parliament, laid the basis of the South African state as we know it. In the run-up to the creation of the Union, the political representatives of the African, Coloured and Indian people, organised into four African provincial Congresses plus the Native Electors Association, the African People's Organisation and the Natal Indian Congress, exerted every legal and constitutional means to ensure that the constitution of the projected Union would be non-racial and enshrine democracy.

In 1909 Dr Walter Benson Rubusana, later a co-founder of the ANC, led a deputation of African and Coloured political leaders to London, to have expunged from the proposed constitution the colour bar clauses whose intent was to exclude the black South Africans from the body politic. In an interview with the British press, WP Schreiner, the only white parliamentarian who associated himself with our cause, described the proposed union as an act of separation between the minority and the majority of the people of South Africa. What was the essence of this act of separation? The South Africa Act, passed by the British parliament in the teeth of eloquent and determined opposition by every quarter

of black opinion in South Africa, was a political sleight of hand. Its terms vested national sovereignty in a racially exclusive South African state, independent of the British colonial office; with its own officials responsible to their own parliament.



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This was, however, merely a surface ap-

pearance. Beneath and behind this ap-  
' appearance of decolonisation, a much more),

significant process was occurring. Because  
the South Africa Act also abolished the franchise  
rights which had until then been en-  
joyed by the black electors of the Cape Province,  
Vince, and relegated them to the position of  
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mere voters without the right to sit in parliament.  
It entrenched the racially exclusive  
constitutions of the other three Colonies  
Orange Free State, Transvaal and Natal  
\_which had never accorded blacks any  
political rights.

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The South Africa Act thus institutionalised  
and statutorily defined black South Africans  
as a subordinate category of persons within  
their own country; it was a continuation and  
entrenchment of our status as a colonised  
people. It is this essential fact that Africa in  
particular must never allow to be hidden? \_  
behind the apparent juridical independence  
of South Africa.

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The subsequent evolution of the Union of  
South Africa, up to and including its transfor-  
mation into the Republic, conforms to and  
confirms precisely this pattern. Coupled with  
and parallel to every phase in the acquisition  
of greater local autonomy on the part of the  
South African state, the colonial status of the  
Black South Africans has been entrenched.  
The decisive statutes and measures com-  
prising this process are interlinked and in-  
terlocking franchise and land apportionment  
laws. Thus the 1910 Act of Union, establishing  
the principle of racism as fundamental to  
white South African law, was coupled with the  
Native Land Act of 1913 which forms the basis  
of the blatantly inequitable division of the  
territory of our country, placing the stamp of law  
on the military conquest and dispossession  
of our people.

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The South African white supremacist state

acquired greater independence from Britain  
in terms of the statutes of Westminster of 1931.  
Five years after this follows the second ma{

major step confirming our colonial status, the  
Hertzog and the Native Land Trustâ\200\230Bills of  
1936. In terms of these laws, Africans were  
completely disenfranchised and even the