

MbM/012/082/12

POLITICAL STATEMENT

The mass offensive for the victory of the national democratic revolution in South Africa has reached new heights. Despite the use by the enemy of methods of extreme repression to defeat the national democratic movement, this movement continues to draw into struggle ever-increasing numbers of people, both black and white, as well as the masses in the countryside. The level of consciousness among the ~~pep~~ people and the willingness to sacrifice for the transfer of power into their hands signify that the revolutionary upsurge will not abate, whatever the enemy does.

The revolutionary movement, as represented by the SACP and the ANC and SACTU continues to gain in popularity and in its organisational strength. The demands advanced by this movement find a ready response among the people. Its programmes, strategy and tactics and its leadership are accepted by the masses of the people as their own.

The strategically important campaign to make South Africa ungovernable and apartheid unworkable, resulting in the destruction of the organs of government of the apartheid regime, has become a focal point of struggle. It has gripped the minds of the people as a continuation of the rejection of the apartheid constitution and as an essential part of the struggle for a united democratic and non-racial South Africa.

An integral part of this mass revolutionary offensive, the black working class is increasingly assuming its position as leading social force of the national democratic alliance. Apart from the regional stays-at-home in November, 1984 and March, 1985 in the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape respectively, the black workers have successfully used the strike weapon in many towns and cities in furtherance of the demands of the democratic movement. They have also contributed decisively to the success of the consumer boycott that gripped many parts of our country.

As a result of the growing class consciousness among these workers, who are becoming increasingly aware of the unique interest of their class, the ideas of socialism are spreading among the workers and enjoy rising popularity.

The stark and dismal failure of the capitalist system to meet the most basic needs of the working people, points exactly to the needs to replace this socio-economic formation with another non-exploitative one.

This fact, as well as the increasing access to socialist ideas, is also resulting in greater numbers of the youth being won over to the socialist perspective. This is of great importance given the reality that the youth form a sizeable proportion of the working class and the population in general as well as the outstanding role they are playing in the revolutionary struggle, in all its formations.

The potential of the workers to discharge their political responsibilities is emphasised by the decisive advance that the working class movement has made with the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). This should enable the workers to act nationally, as united force, dealing not only with economic questions but also acting to advance the democratic struggle.

The formation of COSATU has also come at the right time. As the economic crisis worsens, the capitalist class will increasingly resort to locking out striking workers, taking advantage of the vast pool of the unemployed and utilising the repressive and punitive possibilities offered by the migrant labour system. The united ^{strength} ~~stand~~ of the workers, organised in COSATU, will have to be brought to bear to defeat the counter-offensive of the employers which has already started.

The special place that the ANC occupies in our country as the head of the liberation front continues to be reinforced by the open adherence of millions of our people to this vanguard movement. This development has forced many elements that are otherwise hostile to the national democratic revolution, including sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie inside and outside our country, to seek contact with the ANC and to promote the idea of a negotiated settlement of the South African problem. It is however clear that these forces are seeking a resolution of the struggle in South Africa in favour of the bourgeoisie. They would like to see a bourgeois democratic transformation which

would leave/.....

would leave the capitalist system intact and create the possibility for the rapid emergence of a small and medium capitalist class which would ally itself with the local monopoly bourgeois and international capital against the masses of the working people of our country.

Accordingly, the representatives of this tendency in South African politics are working for a situation whereby this creeping bourgeois democratic transformation would be prescribed over by an alliance of the big and petty bourgeoisie and their political representatives. Naturally, they are hostile to the idea of the leading role of the working class in the national democratic revolution and do everything in their power to ensure that the trade unions concentrate exclusively on economic questions.

At the same time, this counter-revolutionary tendency seeks to destroy the positions of the ANC as the head of the national democratic revolution and equate it with other groups on an equal footing. This is accompanied by persistent efforts to break the alliance between the ANC and the SACP and between the ANC, the Soviet Union and the world progressive movements as well as determined attempts to rid the ANC of the anti-imperialist content. All this is brought about by the realisation among the forces of reaction that the ANC leads a powerful movement which pursues consistent revolutionary objectives which correspond to the deepest aspirations of the masses of our people.

Inspired by the positions of this movement and by the certainty that victory is within our grasp the masses of our people have engaged in struggles which have resulted in the emergence in some areas of our country in what has been described as an insurrectionary situation. These areas have many features of a mass revolutionary base, with the people highly conscious and active, well-developed mass legal and semi-legal organisations and an acceptance by the broad masses of the ANC-led liberation front in the democratic revolution.

In this situation, the idea of a people's war has taken root and expresses itself in countless actions of revolutionary violence that has taken place and continues to occur in many parts of the country, including the countryside. Reflecting a popular response to the reactionary violence of the enemy, these armed actions are carried out by combat groups with rudimentary weapons in the majority of cases. Nevertheless revolutionaries who have conducted these actions have themselves attained a high level of political awareness and consciously act as the combat forces of the revolution, subjecting themselves to the programme of the revolutionary movement and its leadership. They represent the further expansion of the people's army, Umkhonto We Sizwe, whose units have also continued to make notable impact to escalate the popular offensive against the apartheid regime. Even the enemy has been forced to admit that in the past year MK has carried out more actions than on any previous year.

The strength and heroism of the struggle inside the country has inspired millions of people throughout the world to join the active ranks of the anti-apartheid movement and further to step up the campaign for the isolation of the Pretoria regime. Internationally the strategic importance of this regime is weaker today than it was a year ago. Sections among its own allies have lost confidence in its ability to defeat the revolution while the masses of the working people and other social forces are taking independent action, themselves to impose sanctions and extend support to the national liberation movement.

Taken together, these developments at home and abroad have driven the apartheid system deeper and deeper into a general crisis. At the same time the enemy's response to this crisis has only served further to worsen it rather than to alleviate its impact.

The economy faces one of the worst crisis in history. The regime was forced to intervene and close the stock and foreign exchange markets to save the capitalist system from collapse.

The rate of chronic unemployment has reached disaster levels while retrenchment of workers continues with no end in sight. Despite the persistent reactionary talk about "monetarist policies", the rate of inflation continues to grow resulting in the further depression of the living standards of the people. The value of the Rand, having reached its lowest levels in the recent past, is set to decline further. At the same time, the price of gold has steadied at low levels with no prospect of any appreciable increase. Business confidence has also reached "an all time low". The country has an enormous international debt which it cannot pay.

The depth of the economic crisis is evident from the way it is affecting the white population as well. The "poor white" problem is beginning to emerge once again, with growing numbers of whites jobless, homeless and with nothing to eat. The small and middle bourgeoisie and sections of the middle strata have also been hard by this economic crisis. It reflects itself in an unprecedented increase in corporate and personal bankruptcies.

The combination of these inter-related political and economic developments has thrown the apartheid regime into confusion. It can no longer claim to have a policy and certainly lacks both the ideas and the means to extricate the apartheid system from its crisis.

The divisions within the white power bloc have continued to increase contradictions between the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, and the Botha regime. Worried by the revolutionary threat to the capitalist system, the bourgeoisie is beginning to indicate a readiness to act on its own and in its interest without waiting for its political representatives to move at a pace which the bourgeoisie considers as unacceptably slow. Sections of this bourgeoisie feel that they cannot be held to ransom by some outdated ideas about "the historical destiny of the Afrikaner volk". The decades-old alliance between big capital and the petty bourgeois Afrikaner nationalism is beginning to break up.

Simultaneously, the petty bourgeoisie is also losing confidence in the ability of the Botha regime to protect its material interests and to guarantee its security and its political future. This is leading to an increase in the rate of white emigration (which is slowed down by the low value of the Rand), some defections from the Nasionale Partei to alternative right-wing parties and groups and increased confusion and indecision among large sections of this petty bourgeoisie. In the meantime, the bulk of the white workers continue to hang on the rails of the bourgeois parties of the right, having surrendered the political independence to these parties, decades ago.

Yet others, especially the white youth, are trying to find a way towards the democratic movement moved in good measure by an increasing unwillingness to serve in the racist armed forces and to die in defence of a system that they can see does not guarantee them any future and is in any case breaking up.

All these are contradictions and divisions which the revolutionary movement, including the SACP must exploit and work to widen in the interest of our struggle.

The efforts of the Botha regime to manage this crisis have concentrated on a continuing campaign of extreme repression aimed against the democratic movement. Thus we have seen the mass murder of the people, the proclamation of the state of emergency, the deployment of the racist army and its formal use as a police force as well as other measures such as mass arrest, ~~further~~ further restrictions of the press, use of secret murder squads and so on.

Yet this attempt to defend the apartheid system has worsened rather than improved the generally adverse position of the apartheid system. The period that we have just gone through has therefore seen the balance of strength shift continuously in favour of our revolutionary movement, both at home and abroad.

Many features of a revolutionary situation have emerged and are maturing. The general crisis of the apartheid system has thus continued to deepen. This situation imposes many urgent tasks on the ANC and the broad democratic movement in general and the SACP in particular.

As part of that broad movement, the Communist Party has to play its role in further deepening the crisis of the apartheid system and helping to shift the balance of forces in favour of the victory of a genuinely democratic, people's revolution.

In this regard, the party has an historic role to play to assist in the organisation of the workers, further to spread socialist consciousness within the ranks of the working class and to mobilise and activate workers into the struggle for freedom and socialism. The rural workers and the working masses require our special attention. They constitute the vital mass reserve of the revolutionary proletariat. Of them it can truly be said that they have nothing to lose but their chains. The importance of this political and organisational work is further emphasised by the fact that these working people are at the mercy of backward, counter-revolutionary elements such as are exemplified by Gatscha Buthelezi. The struggle demands that these rural masses should be won over to the side of the revolution and that they should turn against all those who represent their continued oppression and exploitation, be they black or white. The demand - land to the tillers - must become a rallying call mobilising the landless masses to seize what is theirs.

The deepening economic and political crisis in our country has also made this both possible and necessary that the Communist Party must step up its work among the white workers, to bring them close to the democratic and non-racial trade union movement. The current situation, which makes communist ideology very attractive to a very large numbers of our people also requires that the Party should engage actively in the ideological and political struggle to win over as many people as possible, especially the workers, to the ideals of scientific socialism. Inevitably, during the course of this

work we shall have to combat both right and left tendencies which, among other things, pose the democratic in opposition to the socialist revolution, seek to deny the colonial nature of the oppression of especially the African people, work to deny the independent and leading role of the working class and seek to deny the existence of our party or in other ways try to liquidate it or dissolve it into the general movement for national liberation.

It is also our vital task continuously to work to strengthen alliance of revolutionary forces, giving no possibility to the enemy to break the alliance between the ANC and the SACP in particular and the alliance between the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and the world anti-imperialist movement on the one hand and our revolutionary movement, on the other.

At the centre of our efforts lies the task of further strengthening our party inside the country, extending its links with the workers and the broad masses and drawing into its ranks the best revolutionary representatives of our people. It must be that communists earn the respect among the people by the example they set in struggle be it a trade union front, in mass community struggles, in military combat or elsewhere. Such a party, many of whose members have already played the role in the manner we describe, will make an even bigger contribution in the coming battles which should result in further maturation of the revolutionary situation and the emergence of the circumstances in which it will be possible to launch a determined general uprising to overthrow the apartheid regime, transfer power to the people and open the road to the victory of the socialist revolution.

To reach that goal, the immediate task that the Communist Party faces during this decisive year, 1986, is to join in the general offensive to build up and activate the mass political and military forces of the revolution, ensuring at every stage that the masses are conscious of the fact that genuine liberation will come when they seize power, relying on their own strength, and refusing to succumb to illusions spread by the enemies of our revolution that the Botha regime will, in the near future, be willing to surrender power to the democratic majority.