

Report from South Africa

# The Hour Has Come

The following statement was issued in January 1963 by the National Executive Committee of the banned African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa. This text was published in "South Africa Freedom News" printed by ANC from its London office, 3 Collingham Gardens, London, SW 5.

1962 was a year in which we maintained our organization against the most brutal assaults by the enemy, and in which we had to reassess and examine our future strategy and tactics against an enemy whose sole objective was to destroy us organizationally and make the struggle of the people ineffective.

Whilst we did not move the masses in a spectacular action on a countrywide basis we have, nevertheless, learned a lot and we give the assurance that the wealth of new experience gained through painstaking experiments made during 1962 has added new wealth to our struggle and raised the potentiality of our organization to new heights.

The Nationalists began the year 1962 in a desperate attempt to cement and consolidate white domination and apartheid in the country. They announced their Bantustan scheme and self-rule for the Transkei in the hope of placating international criticism and of dividing the African struggle on an ethnic and tribal basis. They fortified themselves, paraded and strengthened military force to threaten their opponents so that they would have to walk through the valley of death to shake apartheid and achieve the aspirations of the people. This was a formal declaration that whilst in the past the Nationalists used violence, now vio-

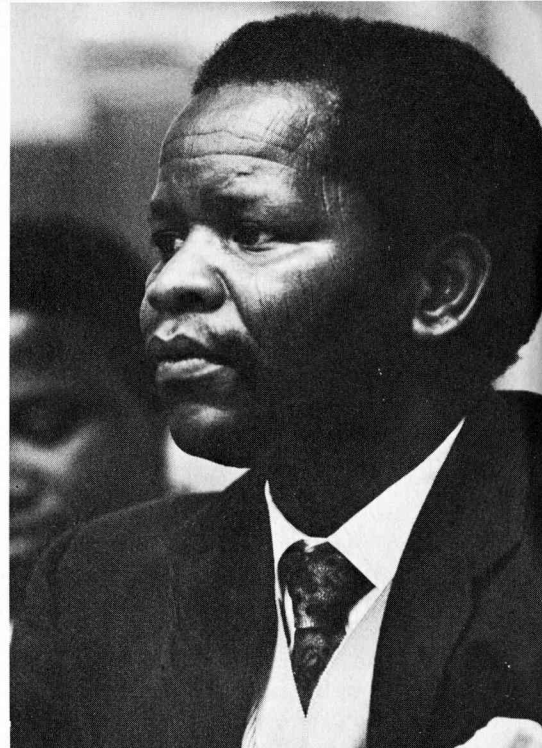
lence will be the order of the day. Finally they armed themselves with legal powers which virtually make any form of political struggle illegal and punishable through the most severe sentences including death.

From the point of view of supporters of white domination, they had done all that was necessary to guarantee themselves security, they had put the last nail on democratic rights in South Africa by suppressing organizations and newspapers, ruthlessly pursuing their plunder policies. At the same time they boasted of having a scheme to convince the world and the Africans that apartheid was not inconsistent with democracy. Finally, they had barricaded themselves securely within the white laager by arming the whites to the teeth individually and collectively and by increasing their military and police force.

But far from being secure and comfortable, even the government now realizes that it has only sown seeds of crisis.

At the United Nations Organization, the nations of the world pushed the Bantustan scheme aside contemptuously and decided at our request on economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa. They further decided to establish a United Nations Presence Committee in South West Africa to prepare for the rapid independence of the people.

In the Transkei the Bantustan scheme has been rejected by masses of the people. Far from pacifying the people, the Bantustan scheme involves the most ruthless intensification of all the objectionable as-



Above: Oliver Tambo, Deputy President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC).

Opposite page: An Africa Day Rally in Alexandria Township, Johannesburg, in 1959, organized by the ANC.

Below: Mrs. Winnie Mandela, in traditional Tembu dress, leads a group of supporters out of the court where her husband, Nelson Mandela, was on trial. The clenched fists are the latest ANC salute signifying "Amandla Mgawethu" (power to the people).



pects of apartheid.

Bantustan in fact has the seeds for intensified resistance not only in the areas regarded as Bantustan, but it can link both urban and rural people to attack apartheid and white domination from different angles and possibly using different methods.

The attempt by the government to protect white domination by means of military force has provoked in our people the decision to add to our methods of political struggle, assault and violence.

A new spirit and attitude among our people is already developing and it must be intensified. It is the spirit to be prepared to walk through the barrier of death to achieve our objective, POLITICAL POWER. It is the determination to meet the situation created by white domination on the basis of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. To meet violence with violence and to achieve political power through PEACEFUL or VIOLENT means. White domination with its military laager has compelled the people to seek and develop new methods of struggle.

RECKLESSNESS IN THE USE OF VIOLENCE CAN HAMPER THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE. ALL FORMS OF ACTION OF THE PEOPLE MUST REMAIN STRICTLY ON AN ORGANIZED BASIS AND HAVING DUE REGARD TO THE SUPERIOR FORCE OF THE ENEMY.

WE MUST ALWAYS ACT ON THE BASIS OF CONSERVING OUR OWN FORCES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHILST CAUSING AS MUCH SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE ENEMY AS POSSIBLE.

WHATEVER THEIR HOPES MIGHT HAVE BEEN IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE NATIONALISTS ARE RIDING A TIGER AND WE, THE PEOPLE, ARE THAT TIGER; HOW LONG THEY KEEP RIDING IT DEPENDS ON US.

DESPITE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FORMS OF STRUGGLE, OUR MAIN METHOD OF STRUGGLE STILL REMAINS THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE IN ORDER TO LEAD THEM INTO MASS ACTION.

In 1961 we gave the Verwoerd Government an ultimatum that unless it summoned a National Convention or Constituent Assembly by not later than the 29th May, we would embark upon countrywide demonstration and the African people would be organized to refuse to cooperate with a government whose rule was based on force.

OUR NATIONAL STRIKE AND DEMANDS WERE RUTHLESSLY SUPPRESSED. THE SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL ACTION COUNCIL THEN DECLARED THAT NEW FORMS OF STRUGGLE HAD BECOME IMPERATIVE. SOME OF THOSE NEW FORMS OF STRUGGLE HAVE DEVELOPED IN THE PAST YEAR. THEY MUST,

HOWEVER, GO HAND IN HAND WITH MASS ACTION.

The Government cannot rule without the cooperation of masses of the people. By leading the people in suitable acts of non-cooperation we can effectively paralyze certain schemes—sports, culture, education, social welfare are all possible targets.

OUR TASKS - 1963 is not only a year of crisis because the African nations have decided that colonialism and white domination must come to an end but also because our own people in South Africa have reached a stage whereby they can no longer tolerate oppression. THE DECISION TO TAKE THE DESTINY OF OUR PEOPLE INTO OUR OWN HANDS IMPLIES THAT AS FROM NOW ON EVERY MEMBER OF THE A.N.C. MUST BE READY TO SACRIFICE EVEN LIFE. THE TIME FOR MERE TALK HAS COME TO AN END.

The Bantustan scheme in country and town must be the first line of attack. The removal of the Africans from the Western Cape must receive the support of all our branches throughout the country — it may well serve as a springboard.

Our people must re-group for a mass attack on the pass system. Political and organizational tasks must be regarded as twins, i.e., they must go hand in hand and be tackled efficiently. The hour for us to strike has come.





they were intrinsically inferior to whites and work so hard to be acceptable that they will integrate with any white no matter how second class he be. They may drink tea at the White House, or they may acquire white-inspired titles like Ambassador or Dr., but they are not leaders of the people; they are separate individuals who perpetuate the great lie of inferiority that makes them accept injustice as inferiors.

As Mrs. Bulger said, "The horror of society is that it has dared to make the white man feel superior. It's a lie." It's difficult for a working person to combat a social lie, and he can only try with solidarity and numbers. The Community League is an organization of fifty men and women, all Negro, although it is in the integrated, professed liberal area of Washington Heights, and part of its focus is the liberal integrated George Washington High School to which colleges like Harvard, Yale, and Vassar come year after year for some top Negro student as a token contribution to the lie of integration. Nevertheless, the Community League has built itself into a position of influence after ten years of intransigent struggle.

"But," continued Mrs. Bulger, "the consistent and persistent drive has been solely by Negro leadership. We welcome others but they won't come in. A white citizen hearing 159th Street thinks of a Negro community and he won't join."

The organization is chartered "to help young people and to try to see the community as a better place." This is hard because taxpayer services like the Department of Sanitation, the police, the narcotics squad, the housing and welfare authorities do not maintain civic standards in Negro communities. "There seems to be a traditional opinion," Mrs. Bulger said, "that Negroes are satisfied with less." For instance, there are three buildings on 159th Street which violate housing requirements. The tenants complained and were ignored and came to Mrs. Bulger and



Mrs. Lucille Bulger, the intransigent and dynamic leader of the Community League of West 159th Street.

Mrs. Pairlie MacWilliams, an officer of the Committee. First, the League lectured the tenants on their responsibility to a law which excludes them anyhow. Then the League wrote three letters. Mrs. Bulger continued, "The first landlord replied in a month and agreed to put a lock on the door, but he warned us he had a right by law not to repair it more than once. There were many complaints, but still relative success. In the second case, the landlord said he had spent money on a new boiler which we had mentioned in our letter and he refused to do anything. In the third case, we heard nothing. We are trying to determine our next step.

"It's very difficult. Our society has done an effective job in trying to convince Negroes that they are inferior, and they have told Negro superintendents not to take complaints seriously when they are made by Negroes. We found supers who were convinced by their bosses that Negroes don't matter, that they don't pay their rent, their children are destructive, they don't cooperate. But we'll go on. We'll take the housing situation to its nth

degree, God give us energy."

The Community League has energy. In February a thousand people attended its annual dance for the Tomorrow's Adult Presentation at the Audubon Ballroom. "We feel," said Mrs. Bulger, "the adult community must assume a positive role on a lay level toward education and it must find constructive ways to encourage people to get a good education when it's still at hand. But the George Washington High School is an integrated school, and so even though there were white students qualified to win the award as Tomorrow's Adults, the contestants had always been Negro until this year." The white students had always dropped out, Mrs. Bulger explained. "They started with us but then their parents said they had to study for Regents, or they had to work after school. They always had some specific excuse.

"This year we asked the principal to make a personal appeal to the Parents Association, not encouraging them but informing them of the value of the program. We also had an active student liaison committee and help from a sensitive faculty advisor. The awards went to Miss Toni Schneider, president of the sophomore class, star in the school festival, officer of a foreign student commission, potential immigration psychologist; and Mr. Jerobin Gilbert, Jr., president of the senior class, captain of the basketball team, 93.6 average, president of the National Council of Christians and Jews, associated with the Bowery Savings Bank, aspirant theoretical physicist.

By means of integration the Community League, led by the intransigent Mrs. Bulger, has reached a new position of power in its area with or without its white neighbors. If the power of the people can be used for political and economic freedom, and not for capitulation, there is hope for liberation movements everywhere. "The horror of this society," repeated Mrs. Bulger, "is that they dare to try to convince the Negro that he is inferior, and that the white man is superior. We have always known better."

