

# STUDENTS FIGHT APARTHEID

## From a Radio Freedom Interview with Comrade Dilinga

Question: The correctness of our position that the racist Pretoria regime is in crisis, is once again vindicated by the current wave of class boycotts by students all over the country. The general demands of the students are: better education, more teachers and generally, an improvement in educational facilities. Do you have a comment on the current situation as manifested through student class boycotts?

Cde Dilinga: The African National Congress has always indicated that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people. We have also repeatedly said that our country will never be prosperous or free until our people live in brotherhood enjoying equal rights and opportunities.

### FASCIST REGIME

Basically, the Pretoria regime being a fascist regime cannot accept these basic truths and therefore has to base its authority on force and repression. In the manner of examining the problems of the people, they must of necessity be sectarian in approach and therefore will never come with solutions.

What then constitutes the crisis?

Firstly, the party that is leading our oppression is not agreed on the best way of oppressing us although they agree on us being oppressed.

Secondly, the white community is beginning to ask itself whether the Nationalist Party is leading them to destruction or not?

Thirdly, the instruments of repression and oppression - the army and police - are beginning to have problems of personnel because some of the individuals begin to ask themselves whether it is in their interests to defend apartheid and oppression.

The problem of education is not only a problem of black education. The white children by being separated from their black counter-parts are deprived of education by association



and interaction. They are denied the experience of being taught by black teachers. They are not being prepared to live together with their black countrymen. The approach to education by the South African regime deprives the white parents the right to choose who will teach their children, where and how. South African universities have all been reduced to tribal institutions. A university in the true sense has diversity of peoples and disciplines as its cornerstone. Those who teach are determined by ability and not colour or creed.

The history of South Africa is full of student protest and unrest because of their disagreement with the form and content of education. In these struggles all the sections of our students have taken part. We know of white students who have been baton charged in the 60s. Even during the 1976 Soweto uprising those white students who understand that their interests lie with other students joined them.

The present students boycott of schools which started with Coloured children should not be looked at by other students as a matter between Coloured students and the government or that it is a question of secondary or primary schools. The demands are true for all students, parents and teachers.

### BETTER EDUCATION

All South African students need better education. If other students have inferior educational facilities, students of other groups cannot sit and watch.

Question: The student boycott on the other hand, has served as a launching pad for teachers to push forward their demands to the regime, namely an increase in wages, better living conditions for teachers and so forth. How do you view the position of African teachers, vis-a-vis apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa?

Cde Dilinga: Teachers should not stand by and watch their pupils who are fighting for better education. It is high time that teachers as transmitters of our social values and builders of a future society should stand firm to defend their work. We as teachers let us join the children to demand our own rights. Let all our people irrespective of colour or race join the children who have called for unity of action amongst students in demanding that:

- (a) The doors of learning and culture be opened to all.
- (b) The government discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement

of our cultural life.

- (c) All cultural treasures of mankind be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands, the aim of education be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace.
- (d) Education be free, universal and equal for all children, adult illiteracy be ended by mass state education plan, teachers have all the rights of other citizens.



## COLOUR BAR

Let us demand that colour bar in cultural life, in sport and education be abolished now.

Let the campaign for better education grow. Let everyone examine the above demands and compare these with the fact that that the people who have the least means of living are the ones the wonderful budget for the year allocates only R224-millions, while for the whites it is R404-millions. Whilst the government spends R405 on a white child they spend R56 for a black child. It is obvious these children do not get equal education.

The black teacher is a pathetic person under apartheid and discrimination. He is supposed to develop human dignity in his wards but he is humiliated at every turn by the state that employs him. He is expected to be an example of cleanliness but his salary and the hiking cost of living make it dif-



difficult for him to cope. He is required to produce students who will compare with the best in the world but his classes are crowded and without proper equipment and aids.

Educational crisis in the country is then part of the general crisis of apartheid and fascism in our country. The question of education in any country is one of the pillars of progress. Education produces the most important element, in the development of any country - manpower. The values of any society are inculcated through the educational system. The fact that all governments in South Africa have always looked at the education of the people in terms of colour and apartheid, ideological interests have made it impossible for a correct approach towards education.

The question of equal education for all is not a case of the same syllabi. It entails the proper material conditions in the home, correct food, the ability of the parents to provide the school needs of the children; a home without the constant raids by police.

## TEACHER

In the school itself, it entails a teacher who is properly trained to teach, one who enjoys a peace of mind in his home situation and is satisfied about the working conditions. In terms of teaching material and aids, and the number of children per class. If the teacher's salary is not competitive with other professions the tendency will be to gravitate to better prospects.

In the ultimate we shall find that those who are left in our schools are people who feel they cannot make it anywhere else.

Question: Finally, do you have a word or two, to our struggling youth, workers and peasants throughout the country?

Cde Dilinga: The authorities keep on telling us that they are going to introduce changes but what we see is removals, mass arrests for passes, unemployment and the hiking of the cost of living or rather for us blacks the cost of survival.

The attainment of independence by people bordering our land is something that must worry the rulers of our land because they know that we are asking ourselves how long and of what are we made that we should be the only ones on this globe who are destined to remain under the yoke of oppression indefinitely?

The most frustrating phenomena for the Pretoria regime is that in spite of their show of power by bombing neighbouring states, by killing defenceless children in 1976, by banning



organisations that espouse the will of the people. Instead the spirit of resistance continues.

Repeatedly the racist rulers have tried to convince us that they have destroyed our organisation, the ANC and our army Umkhonto we Sizwe. Instead during the funeral of our leader, Lilian Ngoyi, we demonstrated our support for our organisation by hoisting the people's flag - Black for us the black people of this country, Green for the agricultural wealth and Gold for the mineral wealth. We have seen the courage and determination of our heroes in the persons of Solomon Mahlangu, the Silverton group and the Maritzburg Twelve which included James Mange. The superiority of our army in tactics has been demonstrated in the attack of the symbols of oppression and repression - the police stations. We have in mind Moroka, Orlando, Soekmekaar and Booysens police stations. It is better that the racist regime take heed of what their then Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, said when he stated that: "It is not possible to destroy the ANC but to contain it". Although even to contain it will become more difficult because the people will see to it that our instrument of change and freedom should never be contained. Our organisation, the African National Congress, is the main generator of the crisis of the Pretoria regime.

We are clear that the solutions to the problems of our country will be solved by the ANC led by our authentic leaders like Tambo, Mandela, Sisulu and Mbeki. That is why we are demanding and will continue to demand the release of our leaders from Robben Island. That is why we are prepared to support the Free Mandela Campaign and call on more of our people to express themselves. In this way we are clearly demonstrating who are our true leaders and which is our organisation.

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## **Document / CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE, 1955.**

### **CALL TO THE CONGRESS**

Leaflet issued by the National Action Council of the Congress of the People. The idea for the Congress of the people had been proposed by the venerable ANC leader Prof. Z.K. Matthews and sponsored by the ANC, SAIC, COD and Coloured People's Organisation. The National Action Council was composed of eight members from each organisation and was responsible for producing and distributing this call in several languages.

**WE CALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA BLACK AND WHITE. LET US SPEAK TOGETHER OF FREEDOM!**