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EDITORIAL

This issue of *Phambili* comes out at a time when the alignment of political forces is in favour of the movement seeking to transform our country into one, united democratic South Africa. The issues covered in this edition point to the seriousness with which we have to approach and tackle the current situation.

One of the main tasks of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) is to broaden and deepen its influence over as many forces as possible. The need to rally together in action all forces and groups ranged against the apartheid state is more urgent now.

In keeping with the aim of building a broad unity of anti- apartheid forces, we must look at how to isolate and to weaken the white colonial bloc. We also look at ways to dislodge forces from it and win them over to democratic cause. For this reason, we present an article on the "anti-apartheid coalition".

We also publish an article that deals with the current process of united action against the Labour Relations Amendment Act (LRAA). A careful analysis of the history of problems confronting the labour movement and of obstacles to unity is made. The perspective of the MDM on unity is explained.

The talk about negotiations has generated much interest and debate within the *Mass Democratic Movement*. The article on negotiations provides insight into the issues pertinent to the struggle regarding this terrain.

Lastly, we examine on the changing balance of forces in the southern African region which, together with other factors, set in train the process towards the independence of Namibia. We make a careful analysis of the forces which combined to bring the Pretoria regime to the negotiating table.

Building the Anti-Apartheid Coalition

1. Introduction

The question of building a coalition of forces against apartheid is placed high on the agenda of the National Democratic Struggle (NDS) by the political conditions that prevail in South Africa today.

These conditions are:

a) **The emergence, the growth and development of a powerful Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), which is based on and unites community organisations, political organisations and trade unions, and puts forward the vision of a future South Africa based on the Freedom Charter. The MDM displays growing unity in both ideology and political programmes, as trade unions (COSATU), political formations (UDF) and health workers (SAHWCO) adopt the Freedom Charter and define their political aims in terms of it.**

b) **The apartheid regime has increasingly turned itself into an enemy of all the people and has opened itself up to a growing mass challenge through its racist oppressive policies and practices. For example, attempts to make the bantustan scheme work, through forced removals and incorporation in areas like Braklaagte, Peelson and Moutse, have generated mass militant opposition where the people are calling for an end to forced incorporation, forced removals and the bantustan system itself. The Labour Relations Amendment Act (LRAA), which is aimed at maintaining the cheap-labour system and suppressing democratic trade union rights, has met with determined opposition from the organised workers. Many sportspeople who were traditional government supporters can no longer live with being rejected by other countries and excluded from international sports events because of apartheid.**

They now demand that the system must be ended. Businesspeople are disillusioned with the regime because of its failure to create political stability, its growing isolation, and the shrinking economy. In turn the white social base of the regime, especially the white workers, are turned away by the falling standard of living from the NP government, and they do not trust that it can insure their privileges of protected jobs and higher wages. And, the over-extended rule of the security establishment - the army and police chiefs who have taken over the role of parliament - has turned many liberals and other whites who believe in 'civilian' parliamentary rule against the NP government. The government's continued and unsupported talk of reform has been shown to be transparent - the NP has failed to convince the majority of people that it can bring about change, peace and stability.

c) **Growing and wide-ranging opposition to the government.** Sportspeople, religious groupings, sections of business, liberal whites, political organisations and unions have increasingly expressed varying degrees of opposition to the government and the apartheid system. The opposition is sometimes offered jointly where there is limited cooperation between the MDM and other groupings outside it, at other times by small pockets of these groups apart from one another. But most important is the fact that the mass bases of diverse political groupings have come together in action on the ground against the common enemy, the apartheid regime, its bantustans and other puppets. For example, in Bophuthatswana this diverse grouping has included trade union members and other sections of the communities threatened with incorporation into Bophuthatswana, including (sections of) the support base of the official opposition to the Mangope regime.

The task of the MDM and the democratic movement as a whole is to deepen the isolation of the regime, maximise unity against it and weaken its ability to resist the struggle for a democratic, and non-racial South Africa. This means that we must find common ground for joint action with forces which are broadly anti-apartheid or potentially anti-apartheid. A key organisational task of the democratic movement in the current phase of the

National Democratic Struggle (NDS) is the creation of a coalition of forces that can bring down the apartheid regime. The main content of the NDS is the liberation of the oppressed majority, particularly the Africans, and the transforming of South Africa into a non-racial, united democracy; this can happen by placing political and economic power in the hands of the broad working masses.

This cannot be achieved all at once nor can it be achieved by the working people acting in isolation from actual and potential allies, from other democratic sections of the oppressed and white communities. The unity in action of all these forces behind a democratic programme is a necessary condition for both the isolation and final destruction of apartheid.

There is therefore a need for a platform on which this vast array of forces may unite and strive towards common aims. This platform must be built with a full grasp of the specific conditions, the grievances and aspirations of all involved. It must be understood what they are prepared to struggle for and how they are prepared to do it. It must also be made sure that those that are politically lacking in some way may be reinforced: their political understanding and commitment can be enhanced, so as to weld them into an unyielding fighting force against apartheid.

1.1 What is the Anti-Apartheid Coalition (AAC)?

It is the united front of the broad National Liberation Movement, which is made up of those forces who share the long-term programme of the NDS as set out in the Freedom Charter, who are therefore in a long-term programmatic alliance, and those with whom short-term alliances are possible. It must be capable of bringing down the apartheid regime.

1.2 What is the basis of the AAC?

A. Concretely the AAC must be based on forces for change - all the oppositional forces that are organised at the following levels:

a. The broad national liberation movement based on and spearheaded by the revolutionary alliance and which embraces the mass democratic organisations, particularly the UDF, COSATU, COSAW, SAHWCO, SAYCO, NADEL, and Women's Organisations (FEDTRAW, UWCO, NOW, etc).

b. Organizations of the people outside the broad National Liberation Movement (NLM), including those that enjoy relatively limited but important support of the broad mass of the oppressed, like NACTU, AZAPO and various mass groupings in the bantustans who have opposed apartheid in various ways and who agree about the need to overthrow the apartheid regime and build a democratic government in its place.

c. Those forces who are breaking or have broken away from the apartheid regime and with whom it is necessary to forge an alliance, for example, Five Freedoms Forum (FFF), Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) and sections of the parliamentary opposition organised in the Democratic Party (DP).

d. The black working class must be the leading mass force because it is the largest, the best organised, the most politically conscious force and the most committed to fundamental social transformation beyond the destruction of apartheid.

B. The coalition must be rooted in and reflect the experiences and struggles of the broad masses. Its perspective must be one that reflects their demands and unifies diverse forces against apartheid.

Each force has its own view of the political and economic situation. This view is shaped by its conditions of life, and also by its grievances and

aspirations. More importantly, there are those grievances and aspirations which are common to most. These are often minimum common-points which make it possible to have cooperation between diverse groupings. The perspective that is used to unite these forces must fully recognise and understand the specific grievances and immediate interests. In understanding these, we must correctly gauge the potential they create for united action for a common goal. The following popular demands are the components of such a unifying perspective:

1. One person-one vote in a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa.
2. The lifting of the State of Emergency.
3. A living wage for all.
4. Freedom of association and expression.
5. Press freedom.
6. The unconditional release of all political prisoners and return of exiles.
7. The scrapping of repressive laws.
8. The ending of political trials and hangings.
9. The withdrawal of troops from the townships.
10. The unbanning of the ANC and other banned organisations.

C. The specific agenda of the MDM must be:

- a) The broadening and consolidation of the MDM: drawing more forces into our ranks and influencing and leading those outside the MDM.
 - b) Uniting all the forces for change led by the MDM in campaigns around specific issues.
 - c) Keeping the strategic initiative firmly in the hands of the MDM and taking advantage of the regime's political and economic crisis.
 - d) Dividing the ruling bloc by fragmenting the National Party's social base, drawing forces away from its organs and influence, thus weakening and isolating the most dangerous and reactionary core.
 - e) Isolating the regime from international support and mounting international pressure on it.
 - f) Ultimately outlining and shaping a political path that ensures maximum unity on the side of the democratic movement so that the democratic movement can determine both the terrain and terms of struggle.
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g) Ensuring that UDF and COSATU lead the mass contingent of the coalition.

4. Conclusion

The anti-apartheid coalition is a platform for maximum unity against apartheid and an important step towards the realisation of the goals of the transfer of power to the people of South Africa. It is not a substitute for the fighting alliance of UDF and COSATU, nor can it take the place of the working class, its political organs and the strategic goal of socialism. But it is connected to all these, in that the democratic movement as whole led by the working class must take with it all social forces that are not antagonistic to it into the new South Africa. This calls for a process that involves finding minimum conditions for joint action against a common enemy. The task of building the AAC demands patience, perseverance, creativity, firm principles and flexibility of tactics.

QUESTIONS

a. What conditions have made it possible to form an anti-apartheid coalition now?

b. What groupings/organisations comprise such a coalition?

c. How does the agenda of the MDM differ from the agendas of other organisations in the coalition? And how does the MDM's agenda connect with or link up with the agendas of other organisations/groupings?

d. Why is the anti-apartheid coalition "an important step towards the goal of transfer of power to the people"?

BUILDING UNITY IN ACTION - THE WORKERS' SUMMIT

South African labour history is a history of a divided labour movement. This division is not peculiar to South Africa. It is a global position since the outbreak of the First World War.

From that time the working class was divided into two basic camps: namely revolutionary trade unionism, a view that recognised that trade unionism must extend its outlook beyond the factory floor; and reformist trade unionism a view that believed that unionism should confine its activities to the factory floor and not have any contact with political issues outside the factory.

These trends have taken different forms depending on the conditions in individual countries. For instance, in South Africa the problem was compounded by colonialism and racism. This resulted in the South African working class being divided on the basis of colour, with white workers elevated to a labour aristocracy status and as such perceiving their interests as common with those of capital.

This article will therefore conveniently ignore developments in the white working class, but focus only on the black working class. Because of its position in the South African economy and society, it has the will and potential to make a decisive and significant contribution to the liberation struggle. However this potential is weakened by the multiplicity of labour groupings based on disagreement on the following principles:

1. How to organise black workers.
2. Alliance of the working class with other classes.
3. Non-racialism in trade unionism.

RESURGENCE OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISM

The emergence of Black Consciousness and the intensification of struggle in both Mozambique and Angola impacted positively on the South African people.

In 1973 workers went on strike, mainly in Natal, demanding higher wages. These strikes laid the foundation for the second wave of trade unionism, the first wave having been from the 1920's until the early 60's.

From these strikes, progressive intellectuals and white students - from NUSAS in particular - helped establish unions for African with no formal political relationship with apartheid.

The liberation of Angola and Mozambique brought with it rising militancy in the country. This militancy culminated in the 1976 student uprising, with the government brutally suppressing the unrest, a reaction that cost the regime further international isolation.

In its effort to improve its image and to gain acceptability internationally the government appointed two commissions, the Wiehahn and Riekert commissions. The former was to investigate labour laws and the latter influx control laws.

The Wiehahn commission recommended that Africans be allowed to form registered unions, on condition that they would be subject to government control. This condition was initially rejected by all labour groupings: Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), Confederation of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), etc. Later FOSATU and CUSA accepted these conditions but the Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU), SAAWU and Motor and Components Workers Union of South Africa (MACWUSA) held onto their initial position.

THE CONGRESS TRADITION

The fifties were a period of rising militancy amongst democrats and the oppressed majority. The defiance campaign and the formation of the Congress of Democrats (COD) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) culminated in the drawing up and adoption of the Freedom Charter by the ANC, Indian Congress, Coloured People's Congress, SACTU and the COD who formed the Congress Alliance, SACTU and ANC being the key components of the alliance.

The events leading towards the drawing up of the charter had laid the basis for non-racial participation in the struggle. Our people from all racial groups united in struggle against apartheid. Their unity in struggle was confirmed by the declaration in the preamble of the Charter: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

The Congress Alliance took forward the tradition of non-racialism based on the Freedom Charter against all odds. At times even against extreme provocation from both the government and the detractors. This tradition was upheld until it was suppressed by the regime in the early 60's.

This period was followed by a political lull and the consequent development of Black Consciousness, a school of political thought that became central to political resistance until mid-1979.

RESURGENCE OF THE CONGRESS TRADITION

The formation of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) in 1979 saw, for the first time since the sixties, an organisation coming out openly in support of both the Freedom Charter and the principle of non-racialism. In the same year SAAWU broke away from BAWU and followed on the tradition of SACTU - that of actively encouraging participation in the political struggle by its members.

In addition, a growing number of organisations that were coming out in support of the Charter and non-racialism were a clear indication of the re-emergence of the congress tradition. The Freedom Charter became widely read and very popular.

UNITY TALKS

From the days of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in the 1920's through SACTU's days to date, the creation of a single federation in South Africa has always been a priority amongst progressive unionists. This challenge presented itself anew in the post '79 period when trade unionism was legalised for Africans.

In this period there existed basically three trends in the trade union movement who had no formal relationship with apartheid, namely:

1. FOSATU: who represented working class exclusivism and non-racialism.
2. CUSA: who espoused black exclusivism in trade union leadership.
3. SAAWU: who represented the Congress tradition, that is they encouraged participation in political struggles and adopted the Freedom Charter.

Therefore, attempts at unity and our understanding thereof should be informed by the following perspective:

- Unity is a product of struggle
- It is only in the trenches of struggle that the need for unity is realised.
 - That we have to rally around us the broadest section of our people on the basis of common short-term goals.

To us unity with other forces is a short-term objective but within that short-term objective are contained our long-term goal: that of winning all the forces into our camp. It is a challenge to democrats, to broaden our scope of struggle and to extend our correct influence to other forces. And most importantly, we can only achieve this in the practical field of struggle.

It was therefore at the height of activity in 1981 that unity talks were initiated. During the resistance by the people of Ciskei to so-called independence, SAAWU played a key role in this campaign. The consumer boycott of Wilson Rowntree products and the Anti -South African Indian Council (SAIC) campaign made it possible for unions to unite in action.

All these campaigns called on democrats to try and marshal the forces towards one direction. Already in the terrain of struggle the masses had united in action. For instance in 1982 the workers irrespective of affiliation embarked on a 30 minute national strike protesting against the death of Dr Neil Aggett. Also in November 1984 a three day political strike was embarked on in the Transvaal. In this particular strike FOSATU played a key role.

Talks went on for four years of painstaking and, at times, stormy sessions. But ultimately a breakthrough was made and the basis for unity was set. By the time the leadership agreed on unity, the masses on the ground had already established their unity through action.

FORMATION OF COSATU AND AFTER

A new era in the labour history began in December 1985 when the majority of organised labour formed COSATU. Once COSATU was formed, it did not mean 'all systems go' with the federation. There were tensions in bringing together unions with different political traditions. But these tensions could be contained because the various unions had a unifying perspective, namely non-racialism, a single federation and 'One Industry One Union'.

And through unity in action the unifying perspective was consolidated by the adoption of the Freedom Charter by COSATU as a minimum demand of the working class.

With COSATU representing the majority and not all organised labour, the task of rallying the broadest section of our people remained. And as such we were still expected to live up to the challenge.

CUSA and the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU) and other independent unions had remained outside COSATU, for various reasons, but mainly ideological. CUSA and AZACTU later merged to form the National Confederation of Trade Unions (NACTU).

THE PROCESS LEADING TO THE WORKERS' SUMMIT

The regime was faced with a revolutionary situation and at the behest of the "bosses" proposed a bill, the LRAA (Labour Relations Amendment Act).

In proposing this bill the government was aiming at erecting all possible obstacles to working class unity and to unity between the workers and the entire formations of the MDM.

More specifically the government wanted to reinforce the ideological and institutional framework for submissive reformist trade unionism, thereby *sidelining the working class from the mainstream of the struggle against apartheid*.

Informed by the perspective that we have to rally the broadest section of our people around common short-term goals, COSATU identified the LRAA as one such short-term goal. It therefore organised together with UDF a three day stay-away in June 1988 protesting against the LRAA and the State of Emergency.

In this venture the MDM rallied around itself the participation of NACTU and independent unions on the unifying perspective of rejecting the LRAA.

From lessons learnt from the three-day protest, a basis was set for a workers' summit that assembled 700 delegates from different out looks around a single and unifying problem - blocking the LRAA from becoming law.

Despite protests and presentations to the regime, the government proceeded and made it law. This necessitated a second summit that took place in August 1989: to look at ways and means of making the act unworkable and thereby causing it to be ultimately repealed. At the summit several resolutions were adopted. We summarised these:

1. To mount a campaign of peaceful protest against the LRAA;
2. A programme of sustained peaceful action against the LRAA until demands are met.

Participation in such a venture should be seen as part of the MDM's tactical approach to win all forces to our side. The campaign against the LRAA should not be seen as separate from the entire mass struggle for democracy and the creation of a broad coalition against apartheid.

WHAT IS OUR TASK?

Our task as the MDM is to strive towards maximum unity within the working class and unity between the workers and the entire mass democratic movement. We should:

- always strive to identify unifying perspectives for the broadest section of the oppressed majority;
- unite with other forces without submerging our ideology. We should instead strive to lead the coalition towards achieving our interests.

To achieve this we have to be strong - organisationally, politically, and ideologically. The organisations to which we belong have to work closely to ensure that the coalition achieves its purpose. At all times and in all platforms of united action we should strive for a single federation.

QUESTIONS

a. "Unity is a product of struggle."

What does this mean?

Explain how the following events proved the truth of the above statement:

- the unity talks
- the formation of COSATU
- the Workers' Summit

b. "Our task as the MDM is to strive towards maximum unity within the working class"

What does this mean?

Why is this an important task of the MDM?

NAMIBIA SHALL BE FREE

INTRODUCTION

The struggle for a democratic republic in Namibia has reached unprecedented heights. The full implementation of resolution 435 will surely lead to the attainment of national self-determination and sovereignty for the Namibian people. A number of factors came into play to change the alignment of political forces in favour of democracy and national liberation. This resulted in the Pretoria government being suddenly prepared to negotiate a process that will lead to free and fair democratic elections.

The aim of this article is to uncover and explain the processes and factors that had a bearing on Pretoria's sudden change. In doing this, an examination of the following points will be made:-

- 1. Namibia as mandated territory.**
- 2. The role of the masses in the struggle as led by SWAPO.**
- 3. Regional balance of forces.**
- 4. The deepening crisis inside South Africa.**
- 5. Will Namibia's independence mark the end of Colonialism in Africa?**
- 6. Solidarity with SWAPO.**

In conclusion, the article shows that it is the defeat of the SADF at Cuito Cuanavale which paved the way for the independence process in Namibia. The combined effect of the forces ranged against apartheid colonialism weakened the enemy forces. It is not "reasonable" diplomacy on the part of Pretoria and her imperialist allies which suddenly changed hearts in favour of independence in Namibia.

1. NAMIBIA AS A MANDATED TERRITORY

It is only in recent times that the principle of self-determination of peoples has been recognised as applicable to people other than the states of Europe and a very small group of Asian, South American and African states (e.g., Ethiopia and Liberia). The principle found partial, but inconsistent, expression, even in Europe, because international affairs until after the First World War were governed by the rule that "might was right". It is on the basis of this principle that Africa was carved up at the Congress of Berlin in 1885 and various areas allocated to various imperialist powers.

The territory that we now know as Namibia was first colonised by the Germans in 1883. They occupied the territory in the face of powerful tribal resistance. German firepower, based on a relatively advanced economic system, was too great to withstand. The Germans perpetrated massacres almost unprecedented in the already bloody history of colonialism.

During the First World War, Namibia was captured by the Union Defence Force, acting on behalf of Britain. At that time the principle of self-determination was being raised in a powerful form in the international arena. The 1917 October revolution in Russia made this principle one of the cornerstones of its policy. In terms of that principle, the state of Finland was allowed to secede from Russia (it was not yet the USSR) and various unequal treaties with Asian states, entered into by the Tsar, were annulled.

The Bolsheviks called for the principle of self-determination to be universally applicable and for a total ban on the use of force in international relations. Annexation of territory, they argued, was illegal. Partly to blunt the impact of these views, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States also advanced a plea for self-determination. It was clear, however, that while Britain and other imperialist countries were content with the rhetoric, they were not prepared to see their empires dissolved.

It is out of this situation that the mandate system, applied to Namibia (then known as South West Africa), was introduced. One of the principles of self-determination that was accepted, however reluctantly, at the Versailles peace talks was that the territories belonging to the defeated powers would not, as happened previously, simply be annexed by the victors. But the powers were not at that stage prepared to entertain the idea of independence for these territories.

The mandate system, applied to a variety of territories in Asia and Africa, was described as a "sacred trust of civilization" in the text of the treaty. Lenin, however depicted it as "legalised robbery". The territory was handed over to South Africa to administer, on behalf of Britain. The territory was not the property of either Britain or South Africa, but one enjoying a special international status, with the administering powers supposedly responsible to the international community.

In subsequent years the South African state tried at various moments to annex the territory, but that was always refused by the League of Nations and the United Nations. When the National Party came to power, after the formation of the UN, they launched a more aggressive effort aimed at annexation. This failed and led to a series of requests for advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice. These opinions held that South Africa had no right to annex the territory.

In the meanwhile, SA introduced its apartheid laws fully into the territory, in the face of a great deal of international criticism. This led to a case initiated by Liberia and Ethiopia, against the South African government, declaring its mode of applying the mandate illegal. In the course of very long proceedings, the case became very formalistic and the composition of the court changed, due to deaths of judges and other factors. In the end, they rendered a decision that amounted to saying that they had no jurisdiction, partly contradicting an earlier decision of the court. This led SWAPO to take up arms in 1966.

The African, Asian (who now were numerous) and Socialist states were outraged by the decision and the General Assembly decided to revoke the Mandate, i.e., take it away from South Africa, and declared SA's continued

occupation to be illegal. This view was confirmed by a 1970 Advisory opinion of the International court (reconstituted with a broader representation), which held that SA's continued occupation was illegal and that the international community had a duty to bring this illegal situation to an end.

2. NAMIBIA WILL BE FREE, BECAUSE OF THE HEROIC STRUGGLES OF THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE LED BY SWAPO

What the commercial press and the bourgeoisie's analysts have sought to do, in analysing the forces that came into play to make independence possible, is to exclude the contribution of the Namibian people. This view undermines the history of heroic struggle waged by Namibians under the leadership of SWAPO.

Ever since, the Germans colonised Namibia in 1883, Namibians have never submitted to the enemy. The struggle for national liberation did not cease when the South African racists took over Namibia. Namibia's history is the history of resistance to colonialism and exploitation. The product of these struggles was the formation of SWAPO in 1960.

The combination of mass mobilisation and armed struggle weakened the SADF and SA's capacity to continue with the war. Over the last ten years, labour, student and church organisations increased the mobilisation and organisation of the people for democratic transformation. PLAN's military battle continued to deliver powerful blows to the racist army. SWAPO's international campaign to isolate SA was part of the overall offensive to destroy apartheid colonialism and replace it with a non-racial, unitary and democratic Namibia.

The Namibian people should therefore see the coming independence as their victory. It is the fruits of selfless sacrifices made by oppressed Namibians, who wanted freedom in their life time.

We salute these finest sons and daughters of Namibia who sacrificed their lives at great cost for the liberation of Namibia.

This analysis does not exclude other factors which combined to force the South African regime to negotiations. Here a note should be made of the changing regional balance of forces and the contribution of the Angolan people, the Cuban international forces, the OAU and the Socialist system. Were it not for the selfless support of these forces, independence would still remain a distant possibility.

3a. REGIONAL BALANCE OF FORCES

The late 70's and 80's have been years of increasing isolation for the apartheid state. From 1974, the countries of Southern Africa got their independence. In quick succession, Mozambique, Angola and later Zimbabwe attained their independence. Over the years, SA has sought to limit the impact of its encirclement.

It has used various methods aimed at robbing these states of the fruits of independence and intimidating them to stop supporting Namibia and SA's struggles. As a result, none of the neighbouring frontline states have known peace nor had the chance to act free of South African aggression.

This continued extension of apartheid domination over the region has meant that the peoples of the frontline states have a common interest with our people and the people of Namibia in eliminating apartheid colonialism.

For 14 years, the Angolan people in particular have shed much blood. The independence of Namibia will free them from war. It is the Angolan people who shouldered the responsibility of fighting the SADF and UNITA.

The Angolan armed forces were the first in Africa to engage the SADF in conventional warfare. The region united in battle against the common enemy demonstrates internationalism of the highest order.

3b. FROM CUITO CUANAVALA TO WINDHOEK !

From the middle of 1987, the regional balance of forces began to swing in favour of the forces of democracy and progress. SA's imperialist ambitions were being blown to pieces by the relentless efforts of FAPLA - CUBAN forces. SA sent 3 000 troops into southern Angola to save Savimbi from a humiliating defeat.

In the face of invading South African forces, Dos Santos called on the Cuban crack units for help. 10 000 members of these units were sent by Comrade Fidel Castro. In a matter of days, the nose of the SADF was bloodied. The defeat of the SADF at Cuito Cuanavale had both international and national effect. The Cuban - FAPLA forces translated the American slogan, of making the world a safe place for democracy, from a hypocritical imperialist phrase into a reality.

SA's humiliating defeat at Cuito Cuanavale must be seen against the backdrop of its years of aggression towards independent states. For years SA's military machine seemed invincible. South Africa had always practised its "tried and tested quick-strike approach". This always resulted in limited loss of its own troops and maximum destruction of the people in the region. South Africa dominated the air space.

This placed SA's racist forces at an advantage. The development of sophisticated war machinery in Angola changed the equation in favour of FAPLA and PLAN forces. Angola had just developed young pilots recently trained in the Soviet Union. Thus the strategic initiative was no longer determined by South Africa's military strength.

4. PRETORIA IS IN DEEP CRISIS !

South Africa is deeply engulfed by a crisis which is the worst of its kind in South Africa's history. It cannot extricate itself from this crisis without talking to the ANC.

The result of such negotiations should be the democratic transformation of the political and economic structures of our country. This crisis is political, economic and ideological. It is political, in that it cannot mobilise consent for its racist colonialist policies.

Its political structures have collapsed in disarray. The tri-cameral parliament and black local authorities have been rendered unworkable. The elections of October 1988 dealt a final blow to the constitutional schemes of the racist regime.

Presently, there is a widening gap between the Nats and their collaborators. The bantustans are riddled with corruption and scandals. The Nats cannot mobilise the "Volk" as one collective entity. There is dissension within the ranks of the Nats. This fluid situation has opened up possibilities for the further isolation of the Nats. They have no political will and vision. They have come to a deadend !

5. IS NAMIBIA AFRICA'S LAST COLONY?

The commercial press and imperialist forces have said that Namibia will be Africa's last colony. The oppressed and exploited people of SA do not agree with this view. Our perspective is informed by understanding that the oppressed and exploited masses of our country, together with colonised Namibians, have for some time been ruled by the same colonial power. It is the same apartheid colonialism that has denied black people in SA and Namibia full rights. It has denied both communities national self-determination. The same regime has insisted on fragmenting the oppressed of these two countries into tribal entities.

Whilst Namibia is a colony of South Africa, in a classic sense, black SA is a colony of a special type for white SA. The South African masses together with the Namibian people are facing a common enemy. The struggle for national self-determination in SA is integrally connected with the

independence struggle of Namibia. The winning of national independence by the people of Namibia represents a qualitative change in our struggle. It widens the horizons of freedom and brings the possibilities of democratic transformation in SA closer.

PRETORIA GET OUT OF WALVIS BAY !!

Namibia is one country and Walvis Bay is part of Namibia. It is Namibia's only deep-sea fishing port. The South African government and the multinational companies exploit the national resources of Namibia. The Namibians are not benefiting from the wealth created by Walvis Bay. SA's insistence on having Walvis Bay under its control is part of its imperialist ambitions. In case SA's puppet groups fail to win in the democratic elections, it wants to use Walvis Bay for counter-revolutionary purposes. Elements of Koevoet will remain long after the elections. We, the people of SA, should demand that SA should completely move out of Namibia.

A SWAPO VICTORY IS OUR VICTORY !

5. SOLIDARITY WITH SWAPO !

The common experience of living under the same colonial power places a responsibility on the people of SA to demonstrate internationalism by working towards a SWAPO victory in the coming elections. The MDM (i.e., COSATU and UDF affiliates) and the ANC have called for solidarity with the people of Namibia. We must look at different ways of giving assistance. A SWAPO victory will open vistas for our own liberation.

COSATU's affiliates have taken the lead in setting up solidarity committees. The Wits region of COSATU has set up a committee to look at ways of helping the Namibian people. This work of solidarity should move into other

sectors of the MDM. It should be a collective responsibility of the MDM to organise our people. We should integrate this work into our political campaigns.

The work of solidarity may involve, among other things:-

- 1. Popularisation of the cause of Namibia.**
- 2. Drawing the links between the two struggles.**
- 3. Organising material support for SWAPO, e.g., making T-shirts and giving material assistance.**

SA and big business are pumping millions of rands into puppet and reactionary political parties for election campaigning. The onus is on us to undermine these efforts.

Conclusion:

From the above, it becomes clear that the cumulative effects of the forces fighting apartheid colonialism and aggression contributed heavily towards setting in process independence in Namibia and peace in Angola. This process has positive effects on the oppressed masses of South Africa. Our task is to deepen the crisis for this state. In engaging the enemy we must at the same time throw our support behind SWAPO in the coming elections.

**A SWAPO VICTORY IS
A BLOW AGAINST APARTHEID !!**

**A SWAPO VICTORY IS
A STEP TOWARDS PEACE IN THE REGION !!
FORWARD TO NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE !**

QUESTIONS

- a. Why did SWAPO resort to armed struggle in 1966?**
- b. What factors came together to create conditions favouring Namibian independence?**
- c. Why was the SADF defeat at Cuito Cuanavale a deciding factor in creating conditions favourable to Namibian independence?**
- d. "A SWAPO victory is our victory"**
Why is this slogan true?
In what way can we help SWAPO to win a victory?

ON NEGOTIATIONS

Our approach to the issue of negotiations is informed by the following: that the apartheid state, together with its imperialist backers see negotiations as a way of pre-empting the realisation of the basic objectives and demands of our people;

- that the new international relations, based on the inter-dependence of the world community and influenced by the "new thinking" in the Soviet Union aimed at the peaceful resolution of the international and regional conflict, has an impact on our region;
- that no political movement, including us, can reject negotiations on principle without the danger of being isolated from its base and of divisions within its ranks;
- that a fighting movement must maintain the strategic initiative firmly in its grip in all spheres of struggle, including the sphere of negotiations;
- that, therefore, we approach the issue of negotiations as a terrain of struggle; and
- finally, that the liberation movement is not engaged in the struggle to push the apartheid state to the negotiation table, but is committed to the elimination of apartheid and the transfer of power to the people of South Africa. The need for an all-round mass offensive against the obnoxious apartheid system has never been more urgent.

1. THE APARTHEID REGIME:

The apartheid state is not committed to genuine negotiations involving the elimination of apartheid and transfer of power to the people. It sees negotiations as a means of preserving white minority control and ownership - the preservation of apartheid. When it talks of negotiations - the "great Indaba" - its objectives can be summarised as:

- to confuse and demobilise the struggling masses;
 - to divide the forces fighting apartheid;
 - to relieve international pressure.
-

In its practices and declarations the apartheid regime does nothing to show that it is committed to entering into any serious dialogue with the true representative of the people. It is instead committed to dealing with its apartheid puppets and underlings - the discredited and hated bantustan leaders and bantu councillors. Its brutal repressive strategy unleashed against the democratic movement has among its purposes the creation of space for these puppets to emerge and to be projected as leaders of the people. Its vicious attacks and propaganda against the ANC are part of a process that is attempting to :

- cause a split in the liberation alliance by demanding that the ANC distance itself from the SACP;
- sow rumours about divisions within the ranks of the ANC and MK;
- destabilise the frontline states in order to undercut their capacity for supporting the liberation struggle in South Africa

The reality of the popularity and the mass following enjoyed by the ANC and the recognition of its centrality to the resolution of the conflict in the country has defeated these attempts. The failure of the repressive strategy to destroy the united, determined mass offensive has led to a deep all-round crisis and growing divisions within the white minority and a growing loss of confidence amongst whites in the viability of apartheid. Added to these problems is the intensification of economic sanctions and international isolation. Talk of negotiations by De Klerk is a ploy to gain international and local credibility and to stem the tide of growing economic sanctions, particularly the rescheduling of the foreign debt. In short, the government is attempting to gain space and time to overcome the crisis of political legitimacy facing the country and thereby regain the strategic initiative.

It is tactically imperative that we expose the real nature of the apartheid state, the National Party and its leader De Klerk's true intentions through activities like the defiance campaign and the campaign for the non-rescheduling of the debt repayment. More importantly, we must deny him the space to project himself as a peacemaker committed to setting the parameters of the negotiation process.

2. THE IMPERIALISTS

The imperialist-backers of the apartheid regime have come to accept that apartheid can no longer secure their interests. The longer it exists, the stronger the forces for change will become and thereby endanger their long-term interests.

Having failed to sideline the ANC in the resolution of the South African conflict, they are pushing for immediate negotiations as they believe the democratic forces are not strong enough to back their demands with sufficient power at the present time. Their attempts to create a "third force" have crumbled with the growing unpopularity of the discredited so-called "moderate leaders". Their efforts to project the ANC as communist-dominated and their demands that it sever links with the SACP lie in ruins in the face of the wide acceptance and popular following of the ANC and its alliance with the SACP. Their campaign to declare the ANC a "terrorist organisation" also failed miserably.

It is in this context that Thatcher (staunch supporter of apartheid and anti-sanctions) has been given the mission to co-ordinate this venture - to pre-empt revolutionary takeover by the people. Her task is to set negotiations parameters that guarantee the protection of imperialist interests. If our movement rejects such an unfavourable process, she would then project us as not committed to peace and a stumbling bloc to serious and genuine negotiations. In this way, the liberation movement would be sidelined, lose international support and divisions would bedevil our ranks.

Towards this goal the imperialists are putting the Frontline states under great pressure to deliver the ANC into a negotiation process unfavourable to the realisation of the basic objectives and demands of our people. The recent history of the Lancaster talks teaches us that the Frontline states, because of their underdevelopment and dependency resulting from colonialism and sustained destabilisation, are unable to resist indefinitely this pressure and blackmail. We can never be insensitive to the plight of these states without the danger of losing their support. Nor can we be blind to the prospect of being forced into negotiations on terms and at a time which may not be of

our own choosing. Otherwise we lose the support, facilities and accommodation these states extend to us. We must be prepared for all possibilities, even negotiations!

It is these realities that impose on us the responsibility to maintain the offensive on the issue of negotiations. We must:

- maintain the initiative of setting the parameters and conditions of the negotiation process;
- maintain unity and support of all people committed to the elimination of apartheid - the international community, the Frontline states, etc.

3. MAINTAIN THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

The democratic forces both in practice and policy statements have remained committed to the peaceful elimination of apartheid - if and when conditions exist for such a process. It is the white minority that remains committed to the crime of apartheid. A climate for a peaceful resolution of this conflict does not exist. Conditions for genuine negotiations can only emerge once the apartheid regime is ready and prepared to create a climate conducive to a genuine negotiated settlement. It must:

- release all political prisoners and detainees
- unban all political organisations
- lift the State of Emergency
- withdraw the "security and defence forces" from the townships
- stop all executions and hangings

As far as the democratic movement is concerned only a sovereign body elected by all South Africans on the basis of one-person, one-vote, can draw up a democratic constitution for a new South Africa. Negotiations can never be conducted above the heads of the people!

Guided by the above, our negotiation concept and process demands that a negotiated settlement is directed at the elimination of apartheid and the transfer of power to the people. Developing such a concept and setting out its parameters is also a process of engaging in a new terrain of struggle. However, our strategic line remains the escalation of an all-round offensive on all fronts through the combination of the four pillars of our struggle: mass political mobilisation, political underground, the armed struggle and international isolation.

4. NEGOTIATIONS: A NEW TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE

For us, there is one "acid test" for any activity we engage in, including negotiations, and that is whether it will advance our strategic objectives or not. The activities and objectives of the ruling class around the issue of negotiations are clear. They see negotiations as a terrain of struggle - to pre-empt the realisation of our basic demands and ideals. Having failed to destroy our mass offensive through a campaign of terror and violence, the apartheid regime seeks to fight us by other means. Vlok said talking to the ANC was "a way of fighting them with another instrument". This also serves to remind us that talk of negotiations has been brought about by our own struggle: it is an open admission that the state has failed to destroy our determined offensive.

For the democratic forces, therefore, engaging in the process of developing a negotiation concept is not seen as an alternative or contradictory to the armed struggle and the imperatives of the escalation of the struggle. It is complementary to this urgent task.

It is from this perspective that the national liberation movement has submitted its negotiation concept for adoption by the OAU. That concept has become the OAU declaration on negotiations. The OAU has committed itself to:

- canvass support internationally for the adoption of this declaration world-wide;
- intensify international pressure against the apartheid regime
- work actively for the escalation of the mass democratic offensive against the crime of apartheid.

5. CONCLUSION.

For the democratic forces therefore, taking the initiative on the issue of negotiations must not mean the demobilisation of the masses nor the obscuring of our primary goal, i.e., the eradication of apartheid, the transfer of power to the people of South Africa and the establishment of a state of people's power. The key task remains the escalation of the struggle on all fronts.

QUESTIONS

- a. What does the democratic movement see as genuine negotiations
- b. What aims must, and can, be achieved by the democratic movement through negotiations?
- c. What is meant by the *strategic initiative* ?
- d. How does the democratic movement *maintain* the strategic initiative?
- e. What does the regime aim to achieve through negotiations?
“Talking to the ANC is a way of fighting them with another instrument” - Adriaan Vlok.
What does Vlok mean when he says this?
- f. In what way does Vlok hope that he will be able to do this?
What do the regime and the imperialists aim to gain by “fighting the ANC” in this way?

NOTES:

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