

Statement of the African National Congress .j
on the current situation in South Africa

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

Once again, on June 16th, in the Johannesburg African township of Soweto, the militant opposition of the people to centuries of oppression, broke out into the open to the resonant battle cry: "Amandla ngawethu - Power to the people!!"

The world has since watched with horror as that noble effort was mercilessly drowned in blood by the oppressor gendarmes of the fascist regime of white minority rule.

After all, the chief of the gendarmerie himself, B.J. Vorster, had ordered that his security forces should "use all means at their disposal" and "act without regard to persons".

The African National Congress of South Africa dips its revolutionary banner in respectful memory of the brave youth and other patriots of the heroic uprising in Soweto and elsewhere in our country.

The militant battle-cry of those whose mighty heartbeats have been silenced by the guns of the fascist brutes still resound throughout the length and breadth of South Africa. That battle-cry is a rallying call to the millions of the black oppressed to join the ranks of the invincible revolution.

Indeed, the next of kin of those who fell and went to sleep but forever should, together with all the oppressed people, draw comfort and inspiration in the fact that the price they have paid is an immortal contribution to our noble cause for freedom and human dignity.

Their names have entered into the register of revolutionary martyrs who have, in the course of our protracted and bitter struggle, laid down their lives rather than submit to slavery and tyranny.

The June uprising in our country posed once more, in action, the central question of our struggle, the question of the transference of political power from the fascist and racist minority to the democratic and anti-racist majority.

Even as the students took to the streets to demonstrate against the imposition of Afrikaans as a language of instruction in African schools, Vorster knew that the question of power had once again been brought out into the fore.

To challenge the imposition of Afrikaans was to challenge also the imposition on the black majority against its express will, of the Bantustans, slave wages, the pass laws, landlessness, votelessness etc., by the white minority.

The students were defending and advancing the positions of the liberation movement of our country, for a democratic, progressive and humane educational system in a democratic, progressive and humane South Africa.

That is why the blood-thirsty Vorster regime had to confront unarmed children with the most deadly weapons that French, Belgian, British, U.S., Israeli and South African industry could produce.

Vorster's infamous and criminal call for "the maintenance of law and order at all costs", on which the police generals of the racist regime base their moral authority for the cold-blooded murder of our children, was but a natural reaction as far as the fascist white minority regime is concerned.

For, indeed, it has set itself the task to maintain for ever the racist laws, to defend unbendingly the fascist order.

The cost is writ large in the unknown hundreds who have been killed and the thousands who have been wounded in Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa, Mabopane and elsewhere.

It is writ large also in the hundreds of others who have died at the hands of successive apartheid regimes, Joseph Mdluli in Durban in March, the 12 martyrs of Carletonville in 1973, the 69 assassinated at Sharpeville in 1960, the 18 patriots shot down in Alexandra Township in 1950 - the list is long and gruesome.

It encompasses all the millions who have perished at the point of a gun or under the whip of a white farmer; those who have been recklessly sacrificed in the search for gold in the bowels of the earth; those who have been starved to death while they were still infants or diseased prematurely into their graves.

The history of the colonisation of our people is a history written in the blood of these black millions. The colonial system of apartheid was born dripping with the blood of our people. Its perpetuation demands that it must suck even more of the blood of our people.

Even now it should be expected that the Vorster regime will intensify the repression and persecution of the patriots of our country. Already hundreds of people have been jailed. Once again the numbers of those rotting in Vorster's jails will swell dramatically.

The June uprising itself was preceded by a sharp wave of repression directed against the African National Congress and other democratic forces. Other stalwarts of our movement have fallen victim to the current wave of arrests. Others like Joseph Mdluli have been murdered. The racist Minister of Justice has admitted that more than 90 detainees died in 1975 alone.

So long as the regime of white minority domination exists so long will there be massacres of the oppressed and struggling people. For, the regime draws its authority to rule our country solely from the guns it has accumulated.

When the peaceful demonstration of the children was put down by force of arms, the mass of our people joined together in a veritable uprising. With stones and simple weapons they tried to defend themselves from and destroy the fascist monster that had murdered the youth of our country.

For the Bantustan leaders to have called on the people to "remain calm" was an act of treachery. They once again exposed themselves as the representatives of the oppressor regime among the ranks of the oppressed people.

The discussions that have taken place between the Vorster regime and representatives of the so-called Urban Bantu Councils will solve nothing.

The African National Congress equally rejects the decision of the white "parliament" to set up a "commission of enquiry" into the June uprising.

This is only a play through which the racist regime hopes to buy time for itself. In the end, the outcome will be that that commission will condemn the people for having struggled at all. By its praise, it will give further encouragement to the brutal security forces to commit yet more outrages in future.

On this score we can have no illusions. No commissions of enquiry, no meetings between Vorster and "Bantu representatives" or the U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger will solve the fundamental issue facing all the people of our country - the transfer of political power from the minority to the majority. Rather the opposite is intended.

Yet, the June uprising showed practically that the people as a whole, both black and white, reject the white minority regime.

The will of the people has been expressed in no uncertain terms in the streets of Soweto and elsewhere. It is the task of the African National Congress to ensure that that will triumph, that the June uprising is continued to its successful conclusion.

As we have said before, we have only one task at hand. That task is the seizure of power together with and in the name of the oppressed and democratic majority.

Our experience has clearly demonstrated that the counter-revolutionary violence of the racist regime will never deter the people from following the path of revolutionary struggle. Such is the position even today.

Our victory is therefore more imminent today than it has ever been in the past. Many years of unceasing work inside the country by the African National Congress and other democratic forces have made this possible.

The independence of Mozambique and Angola, under Frelimo and the MPLA respectively and other changes in Africa and the world have also contributed decisively to this process.

In this situation, the African National Congress has therefore decided further to redouble its efforts to overthrow the hated apartheid regime.

We are entering a very difficult period in our history. Many more of our people will be called upon to make the supreme sacrifice. The enemy himself will throw in everything he has in order to ensure our destruction. Victory however is certain.

There is only one solution of the South African problem available to us and the rest of humanity. That is the seizure of power by the oppressed and democratic majority through armed revolutionary struggle.

We call on the peoples of the world to redouble their support for our movement and our cause. We address this call to all those friends of our revolution in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the socialist countries and the democratic forces in the imperialist world who have stood with us even when our task seemed hopeless to some. We address it also to all those who were misled by Vorster's propaganda into believing that any other solution was possible.

The need is ever more pressing that the Vorster regime be completely isolated internationally. The Security Council has just reaffirmed that apartheid constitutes a crime against humanity.

It is the urgent task of democratic humanity to bring to book the international collaborators of the criminal Vorster regime. All effort must go towards forcing the governments and the multi-national corporations of Western Europe, North America and Japan to break their ties with racist South Africa.

The international campaign for the unconditional release of the political prisoners must be infused with new vigour and a sense of urgency.

All steps should be taken to defeat the lying propaganda of the Vorster regime. Together with this, we must thwart the efforts of this regime to gain international acceptance for the perfidious Bantustan programme and its puppet spokesmen.

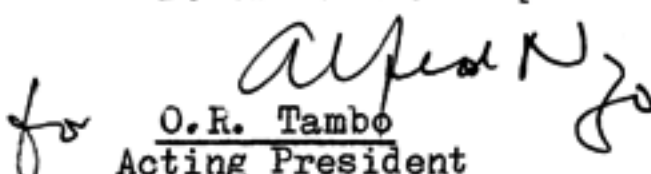
But, above all, selfless and generous assistance must go to the African National Congress of South Africa, the primary and decisive vehicle of democratic change in South Africa.

For our part, we pledge in the name of our heroic people, in front of all freedom-loving humanity to continue the struggle until final victory is won and the perpetrators of the criminal system of apartheid justly punished.

Victory is certain!

Amandla Ngawethu - Maatla ke a rona!

Power to the People!

for 
O.R. Tambo
Acting President

African National Congress (SA),
LUSAKA.

June 23, 1976.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
(SOUTH AFRICA)