

1. Introduction.

1.1. The latest manouvres in the "grand political design" of the Botha/Malan regime in the form of the "new constitutional proposals" are clearly a response to the united, diverse and escalating struggle of the oppressed people. They are also, in keeping with the age old policy of divide and rule, an attempt to co-opt the Indian and Coloured people into the ranks of the oppressor and divide each community amongst themselves. In pleading for support for these recommendations, Botha said "this is the only way to withstand the forces of revolution and communism".

1.2. There can be little doubt that the overwhelming majority of Black South Africans reject these proposals in all forms. This has been reflected in wide condemnation of the proposals across the political spectrum in all communities and even involving sections of the White community, albeit for different reasons.

1.3. Accordingly the central thrust of our analysis should not be whether or not the people object to these proposals but how they should campaign. Thus the aim of the ANC should be to guide and to lead the people in ensuring that the proposals are rendered totally unworkable and at the same time advance the cause of the struggle, in particular extend the United Democratic Front of opposition to the regime.

2. An outline of the proposals.

2.1. The first two reports of the Presidents Council were published in May and thereafter on the 30 July when Botha unveiled his overall plan for the so-called new constitution to the Federal Congress of the Nationalist Party. These plans totally exclude the African majority from the political structures envisaged and seals their relegation to the Bantustans plus a hint of an apparently undefined role in local affairs. The proposals can be summarised as follows:

2.2. The Executive President.

The Executive President would be elected by parliament and thereafter indirectly by an Electoral College of Whites, Coloureds and Indians in a ratio of 50:25:13. The President will appoint his own Prime Minister and Executive Council which would form a parliamentary executive or cabinet. The President and his Executive (no colour ratio) will act independently of Parliament but will however have the power to dissolve parliament and be the sole arbiter of legislation to be introduced.

2.3. The newly proposed Presidents Council

The President Council will consist of 20 Whites, 10 Coloureds and 5 Indians to be elected by their respective Chambers of Parliament. In addition 25 other members will be appointed by the President. The new Presidents Council is expected to 'play a decisive role in resolving conflict in the three chamber parliaments, when matters of national interest need to be settled'. A further proposal is that of joint standing committee which will function to avoid conflict and to promote consensus between the three chambers.

2.4. The proposed Central Legislature.

The Central Legislature will consist of three chambers, one each for White, Indians and Coloureds. Matters found by the President to be of national or common interest, will be discussed by all three chambers. Matters found by the President to be of "community interest" will be discussed by the relevant chamber of the community.

2.5. Provincial and Local Government.

Although at this level the proposals have not as yet been finalised, they can be summarised as follows:

a. Regional or Metropolitan Authority.

Here they apparently have in mind a sort of combination of the presently existing provincial council system and major city councils representing the major population concentrations. This authority will draw its representation from local wards/councils and could therefore be racially mixed. It will control what are termed 'hard services' such as electricity, water, public transport, planning, streets, sewerage, computer services.

b. Local councils made up of a number of wards.

Wards would be established on the basis of the total taxable value of property in the area. For example, an area in a poorer Coloured quarter, having a population of many thousands could be classified as a constituency. Whereas a small White area in Cape Town with a population of say one thousand could also be a constituency and therefore have 'equal' strength or voting power. The Group Areas Act will remain a corner-stone of the regimes legislation and the basic colour pattern of residential separation will therefore not be disturbed. Each resident will have one vote, owners of property will have two votes and business concerns will have three votes. The local councils will have the responsibility for what are termed 'soft services', (in effect sensitive services), eg; local parks, pavements, recreation facilities, libraries, swimming baths, beaches etc,. It will also bear the responsibility of collecting taxes.

3.1. What do the proposals mean?

Prof. Willem Kleynhans, head of the Department of Political Science at the University of South Africa, speaks of the 'mind boggling complexity' and further states 'most South African voters will not understand them'. In fact this seems to be the intention!

3.2. The twenty million African population is excluded except for only a hint of participation through Community Councils at a local level. This additional exclusion must therefore be seen as a key element in the grand design of the Bantustanisation of our country.

The drastic new pass laws contained in the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill' needs study, and be seen very much as part of effecting **this** overall scheme of separating the African more completely and effecting **maximum** control.

3.3. This must be seen as an attempt to co-opt the Black minority communities in the design of the ruling clique to hold on to power at the cheapest possible price. Although there is widespread opposition there is no doubt that there are elements within the Coloured and Indian communities which will be tempted to work the scheme. There is no doubt that Botha will proceed with whatever limited participation he can muster. In exchange for co-operation the regime expects to conscript the Indian and Coloured youth into the army.

THIS MUST BE SEEN TO BE ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES WHICH WE HAVE FACED SO FAR IN OUR NEED TO WIN THESE MINORITIES TO OUR SIDE.

3.4. At a parliamentary level the new style government will place virtually unchallengeable power in the hands of the President and the Nationalist Party. The concern being shown by the Progressive Federal Part is therefore readily understandable, and their very survival demands that they think seriously about an alliance with organised Black opinion in order to defeat these schemes.

3.5. At the local level the White minority, in co-operation with big business entrenches itself and the ward/council (which can be Indian or Coloured) will be expected to do the dirty work for the White master controlling the Metropolitan council. In other words our people will be participating in their own oppression eg; collecting their own increased rents or evicting their own people from 'unauthorised areas' etc. A sort of "self service" were the words of some astute commentator.

4. Reactions to the proposals.

Within the Nationalist Party Botha is getting the necessary support, however splits within the White electorate are now an increasing threat to Afrikaner unity, (See Paper Splits in the NP 28.09.82). Some differences are even beginning to become evident in the church. As a liberation movement

it is essential for us to take careful note of any evidence of dissension within the ranks of the ruling autocracy.

In organised circles particularly among the Indian and Coloured people there has been widespread protest. The RDM of June 22nd states that;

"Meetings show that there is a high degree of political consciousness among the people and a considerable potential for political mobilisation, Initial attempts by a 'committee of 15' to mobilise support for the Presidents Council initiative have been crushed by these organisations and representatives of the civic bodies have taken over advertised 'Committee of 15' meetings with unanimous public support".

The Methodist Church and the SACC have also protested as have a number of other organisations. However the 'negotiations' behind closed doors are being continued and the pressures for co-operation are still being applied. When Oscar Dlomo says that;

"Some Indian and Coloured people have two political life insurance policies, one with Blacks and the other with Whites," he could be having in mind the ambivalence being displayed by the leadership of the Labour Party.

In the case of the African people one suspects that many may understandably regard this as 'White politics' and therefore conclude that the proposals are not likely to make any significant change in the position of the African majority. However it is essential that organised African opinion plays a leading role in the campaign together with the Coloured, Indian and White communities.

We need to take special note of the danger signals in the statement of Dr Motlana when he says;

'it is of no consequence to us what the President's Council recommends'. A negative boycott, which is an easy trap into which to fall, must be avoided at all costs.

5. General strategic considerations.

Our first task as a national liberation movement is to give full support to the efforts of mass movements in their energetic exposures and denunciation of the schemes of the regime. In doing so note must be taken of a section of the Presidents Council report which reads;

"The best example of successful co-operation between the White local authorities and Coloured Management Committee's are with few exceptions mostly to be found in the 'platteland areas'".

In the process of campaigning for rejection we must build our public organisations, ie civic, residents, youth, women, etc AND THE ANC UNDERGROUND.

Taking the exceptional danger of these proposals into account the campaign needs to build such power and be so clearly understood, so deeply rooted as to enable us to present a massive militant front against its imposition. The possibility of mounting a campaign, even more broadly based and militant than

the Anti-Republic Campaign is within reach. The mood of challenge is widespread but we need to ensure that it takes on positive forms, all of which will have to be analysed.

In dealing with the problem, in working out our strategy, we need to understand the vulnerability of the regime right now. Already Afrikaner unity has been seriously damaged. The attack from Botha's right, the dire need for Coloured's and Indians to be conscripted into the army and the fact that Botha is caught between these two streams indicates the seriousness of his struggle for survival. He has to contain the right wing of his party and at the same time win over significant sections of the Brown minorities and win the battle for their conscription.

Our demand must be for all people irrespective of colour to be represented in a democratically elected people's government; for the right of all people to live where they choose and a complete rejection of the dismemberment of our country. Mandela and all political prisoners to be freed and so participate in the struggle to save our country from complete ruin. We must stop the spending of millions of rands in so-called defence. Our people must raise the demand to live in peace and harmony with the countries that border South Africa. In this way the mass of the people will be given the opportunity to render direct solidarity to MPLA, FRELIMO and in fact to all border states. THE MOOD IS RIPE!

For RC HQ.
Lusaka.
25.09.82.