

joint statement from the ANC, UDF, and COSATU

The text of the official report of a two day meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, on June 6 between the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) executive members of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the full Executive Committee of the African National Congress (ANC).

It is the official record of the consultations and was distributed on a confidential basis to those who attended; later it was printed in the Argus. It is intended to be a study document for the mass democratic movement (MDM).

The meeting dealt with the "key issues facing our struggle". The agenda covered the following issues :

1. Assessment .
2. Negotiations (for a political settlement)
3. Way Forward (campaigns).

1. ASSESSMENT:

A presentation from the Mass Democratic Movement (ANC, UDF, COSATU,etc.) covered the question of the crises facing the regime, its inability to find a direction to break out of the crises and the growing unity and confidence of the Mass Democratic Movement.

Several weaknesses of the Mass Democratic Movement were also raised, namely, our inability to effectively implement programmes of ac-

tion, ineffective communication with the grassroots, our dependence on foreign funds, our failure to make use of favourable conditions, and our inability to effectively counter enemy propaganda.

In summary of this point we concluded that our strategic perspective remains one of offensive against the regime, and that the "volcanic material" of an upsurge is building up.

We need to ensure, therefore that our programme of action is capable of firing up the imagination of the people and building up action to increasingly higher levels.

2. NEGOTIATIONS:

Our discussions on this issue produced the following general perspective.

In 1987, when the issue of negotiations was receiving much attention internationally, the ANC made its stand clear, ie, that it could not consider negotiations unless certain preconditions were fulfilled.

For example that all political prisoners should be released, the state of emergency should be lifted,etc. The apartheid government was not prepared to make any move and the whole issue of negotiations subsided.

Recently, however, as a result of the increasing pressures being placed on the regime from all quarters and as a result of initiatives being taken by im-

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perialist forces, the issue of negotiations has arisen again.

There are clear signs that this time the regime will make positive steps towards negotiations and towards meeting the preconditions set in 1987. As a result it is necessary for us to collectively review our position on negotiations.

Our perspective in doing so is to find the appropriate response that fends off this initiative in a manner that :

- does not create confusion or division in our ranks
- does not result in the demobilisation of the masses
- does not result in the lessening of pressure from the international area
- results in us maintaining the initiative against the regime.

It is necessary also to maintain the perspective of continuing on all fronts with mass action and resistance in general, as the discussion around negotiations is not seen as an alternative to struggle.

INFORMATION REGARDING NEGOTIATION INITIATIVES

2.1 THE BRITISH:

Britain has been preparing for P.W. Botha's departure. They have been cultivating links with blacks, white liberals, businessmen, etc. The Foreign Office also wants to establish links with the Mass Democratic Movement and the ANC, but Downing Street believes that a solution can be found without the ANC.

2.2 THE USA:

The Americans want to initiate a

process of "contact, dialogue and negotiations". They believe objectives for such a process of negotiation will develop in the course of meetings. They believe this is what happened in the negotiations over Angola and Namibia.

2.3 PIK BOTHA / THATCHER MEETING:

Pik Botha told Mrs. Thatcher that the reformers in the cabinet have the upper hand. F.W.de Klerk's Transvaal base is reduced and as a result he has to rely more heavily on the "reformers". The reformers want Thatcher to influence Africans to enter the process of elections, etc.

2.4 CONTACT GROUP IDEA:

Britain does not support far-reaching changes. It is considering initiating a new contact group. Such a contact group would have to consist of representatives of the big powers. When the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) was established the ANC, argued that the regime was not ready for negotiations. Nevertheless, despite pressure the EPG still came to South Africa. The question of what our response to this type of initiative could be needs to be considered again in the light of current conditions.

2.5 FW'S PLAN FOR A "REPRESENTATIVE FORUM":

FW is working on a proposal to have negotiations without the ANC. He is planning some kind of "representative forum" of all race groups which is likely to be set up quite soon. At the point of the establishment of this forum, it is anticipated that Thatcher will move to give South Africa access to the world. Her campaign against sanctions will

take on a new intensity. Presently there is already some kind of anti-sanctions campaign.

2.6 FRONTLINE STATES:

Zambia has a predisposition towards negotiations and has already stated its desire, should South Africa establish its bona fides, to invite South Africa to the Frontline States meeting.

Mozambique and South Africa already have much contact. Comrade Eduardo Dos Santos has said, in response to the view that we must be in a position of strength before we enter negotiations that, "we may not have the time to develop that position of strength."

There have been indications of large amounts of aid that could be given to the Frontline States to rebuild their economies should the South African issue be resolved. One factor preventing that at the moment is the constant destabilisation caused by South Africa. The pressure this places on the Frontline States to be sympathetic to any kind of political settlement is obvious. The role played by the Frontline States in ensuring that the Zimbabweans continued with the Lancaster House settlement needs to be remembered. Part of Thatcher's mission in Southern Africa recently was to win support from the Frontline states for her planned initiatives.

2.7 OTHER ALLIES:

At a recent meeting between the Chinese and our Comrades, the Chinese made a distinction between ending of apartheid and the ending of white rule. Their view was that we should be prepared to move slowly and accept modifications of the status quo as a starting point. There are in-

dications from the Soviet Union that they would be prepared to work for a peaceful settlement of the South African issue side-by-side with the West. The contact group being proposed by Thatcher could include some of our close friends.

2.8 LIKELY SCENARIO:

How do we respond or enter the process being planned ?

We have to dictate the terms of change. Nothing should start that we are opposed to.

Our struggle is to take control of the process and ensure that negotiations, should they come about, are genuine and serious.

For this reason it is important that :

- we should all have the same position both inside and outside South Africa
- we have a strategy to remain in control so that those who intervene have to deal with our position
- our position should become an All-Africa position. This is crucial to our ability to influence the rest of the world.

The Frontline States have a crucial role in this.

We have to present proposals on this issue before the rest of the world comes up with something. The world must deal with our proposals rather than us having to deal with another initiative. This would place us at an advantage and give us the ability to control and direct the process.

In arriving at an acceptable position we have to ensure that we do not give the false impression that the regime is

prepared to hold genuine negotiations. Also we have to ensure that we do not demobilise the masses and that there is widespread consultation with our people.

The state of emergency will be lifted after the September elections, comrade Mandela and high-profile political prisoners will be released (comrade Walter Sisulu is expected to be released very soon, well before the elections). Legislation will be passed to allow blacks in parliament and a black could even be brought into the cabinet.

There is a person already being mooted in their circles for this position. Together with this, an announcement will be made by F.W. inviting all South Africans to an open ended conference to negotiate a new dispensation for South Africa. At the Commonwealth summit in Malaysia in the second half of October, Thatcher expects to announce a process of political settlement and call for sanctions to stop. This would put pressure on the ANC to become involved in this process and stop the armed struggle.

2.9 OUR PERSPECTIVES:

Negotiations are again a matter for discussion because of the manoeuvres of imperialists which have some support among our long established friends. The imperialists want a modified capitalist society to replace the current apartheid regime. This is quite different to what we have been fighting for.

2.10 TOWARDS A PROPOSAL:

We need to formulate a concept which does not surrender our political strategy to take power and which does not reject any political settlement.

We need to ask whether the preconditions are a sufficient measure to deal with these initiatives.

From the assessment of the likely scenario, the strategy of imperialism is to pressurise the regime into meeting the preconditions. Therefore, it is felt that a detailed plan needs to be worked out at the head of which is a list of preconditions.

Some ideas for dealing with this situation are to propose holding negotiations for the establishment of a constituent assembly which would be empowered to draw up a constitution.

- Who would run the country while such an assembly met ?
- How would such an assembly be composed ?
- How do we negotiate over the establishment of this assembly?

These are some of the questions to be addressed.

There is another idea, going together with idea of the constituent assembly, that the parliament(s) should be suspended and an interim government established. This would need detailed elaboration and could be part of a negotiation proposal.

An issue to be looked at by the ANC would be the demand for the suspension of armed struggle and how to respond to the call for this in the context of a negotiated settlement.

Yet another issue is that of an "umpire". Do we need one for the purpose of a proposal?

There are no definite answers to all these issues yet they need to be discussed both inside and outside the country to reach a common approach.

The final question that arises is how urgent is this for our struggle? What seems clear is that there are a number of meetings taking place at high levels. We therefore need to act swiftly, taking everything that has been said above into account.

The OAU summit will meet from July 29 - 31 and is therefore crucial in formulating an All-African position on the issue of a possible negotiated settlement in South Africa.

If we are to pre-empt any other initiative we will need to win support for our position, by that date.

3. THE WAY FORWARD:

Discussions on the way forward produced the following conclusions:

3.1 BUILDING AND CONSOLIDATION :

We need to restructure the Mass Democratic Movement organisations.

We must build unity with the Mass Democratic Movement and broader forces.

Discussions on the Constitutional

guidelines must be deepened.

The issue of negotiations must be discussed.

The efforts to build a Peace Movement in Natal must continue and be intensified.

3.2 CAMPAIGNS :

A defiance campaign with a mass character needs to be waged to deepen our campaigns to be a challenge to the regime.

The educational and Labour Relations Act campaigns could be linked.

The possibility of widespread mass action and, in particular, a general strike (factory occupation) must be looked at.

Other campaigns that need to be focussed on include Housing, Namibia, and the September elections.

In conclusion, we need to aim for the Workers' Summit "of Action" in August, followed by our action of September versus the action of the enemy.