

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO 8TH G.C.S.

The theme for this year's conference is appropriate for the following reasons:

- (a) the map of Africa has changed so much since last we were here and quite fast at that.
- (b) because white racism and oppression and the end of exploitation of man by man be he black or white, is no longer a myth or Utopia but is more of a reality now to all who strive for peace and justice in Azania.

Change (and therefore liberation) as a product of an effort by progressive forces against the resistance of the oppressor, is quite heavily dependent on the contribution of all our people: the youth and students have a special role to play. This is true, not for this country alone but has been seen to be the case in all the struggles of the world. It is however, also true that students can be the oppressors of the people if not armed with a clear analysis and strategies and an accurate perception of who the enemy is and in what different forms he is capable of presenting himself. It is my belief that we are not committed to the struggle because we would have liked to have been at Wits or UCT for our university careers but could not and therefore begrudged the system. If it is so we have missed the point.

Nor do I hope that we associate with the movement because it precludes White membership or maybe it is fashionable to be in Saso. Black Consciousness as a philosophy we adhere to, is still being misrepresented by those who refuse to understand it and more important it needs to be better understood by those who are like all of us here who, identify themselves with the movement.

The White South African Government is today carving and promoting an aspiring middle class amongst Blacks that is going to do their dirty jobs for them in maintaining the status quo. The call today from liberal and "verligte" quarters to the Nationalist Government is that Blacks should be given more opportunity to participate in the so-called "free-enterprise" system so that they should identify with it and be able to defend it against "advan-

cing communist aggression that is now at the door-step of South Africa". This aspiring Black middle class is at the top of the Bantustan programmes with its appendages, the Black Bank, B.I.C., X.D.C. Nafcoc, and others. These are trying to compete with capitalistic concerns like the O.K. Bazaars on the basis that Black markets should be left to the Blacks entrepreneurs. All they are saying is that Black should be exploited by Blacks and this sounds better to the Black community. We are therefore faced with a monster that has a big White trunk and with black appendages. Furthermore, this black middle class aligns itself with imperialism, the highest form of capitalism for they have to make trips to Europe and America to seek foreign investment. This black middle class is the victim of a strategy to render them comfortable so that they may worry about communal commitments. The need is therefore to look at our struggle not only in terms of colour interests but also in terms of class interest, skin colour infact has become a class criterion in South Africa. Just as the Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique was pro-imperialist and counter-revolutionary, there are a lot of institutions and practices even amongst ourselves that are part of the general strategy of oppression.

In order to proceed in our struggle for change and true humanity, we ought to know the position of our enemy inside and outside the country. Apartheid as an exploitative system is part of the bigger whole, capitalism: Foreign investment (imperialism) has committed overseas economics in South Africa's domestic politics against social change in the same way that Western powers that were backing the FNLA, UNITA axis against the progressive MPLA in Angola we should learn the lesson that forces of reaction were put against the progressive forces (both were black) and hence try and look around in South Africa even amongst ourselves whether we are progressive or reactionary. In most independent African countries today colonialism was replaced by neo-colonialism which means that the countries today concerned are politically independent but still economically servile. If Black Consciousness must survive as a viable philosophy and continue to articulate the aspirations of the masses of the people, it must start interpreting our situation from

an economic class point of view. The Matanzima's and the Mangope's should be seen in the light of bourgeois counter-revolutionaries along side the Maponyas. When we talk of the "system" we should understand not only the upholders of racial-discrimination and apartheid but also the exploitative machinery of capitalism that in this country is run along the basis of a man's colour where black is the passport to naked economic exploitation and political deprivation. This will lead us to the point where we ask ourselves the question whether our struggle is an isolated struggle or part of a bigger struggle of the Third World that wants to shake the yoke of imperialism and replace it with socialistic governments in which the power is wielded not by a few wealthy families but by the people.

The systems we have talked about above is kept going by a numerical weak group of persons but who are materially strong. This means that amongst Blacks in this country, Vorster's strategy is to corrupt each and every Black student by exposing them to the luxuries and comforts of a "free-life" by making education a means towards a better living. This is the strategy of Vorster. This means that the student group is fertile ground for the temptation to forget about the next man and to prepare his future for himself. This is why Blacks in this country can never boast even about the few professional people that they have because they are not theirs, they live for themselves. All tragedy is based on the individualistic nature of the education meted to us. It needs a conscientized mind not to be receptive to this corruption.

It is against this background that in a capitalistic set-up like it is in South Africa we have to align ourselves with the majority of working people and be with them. Personal desires can only make us drift further and further away from the people. You cannot lead people when you are staying in a R110,000 house, because you will not want to change the system because of your own class interests which shall always clash with those of the people. When houses are being burnt, like it was happening in Soweto, the people will be saying "we have nothing to lose" and you will be saying "this is madness, what? my beautiful house!" Class interest will always affect the political outlook of people as you have seen. This is why we have people who say that they want to study first and then think of doing something about the political situation later. They are having in mind the social status and economic advantage, which are the criteria of middle class interests.

Having taken into account the socio-economic factors affecting any person involved in a struggle for change, then it is logical to expect that group action is more effective than individual action. Group action means organisation of the people having common values and aspirations. We are aware that times have changed, therefore having a greater need to be more organised than before. Saso as a meeting point can never die before the ultimate liberation of the Black people. We affirm our belief in the saying that "BLACK MAN YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN" and further we maintain that Black is an attitude of the mind and not the colour of the skin. We will not be fooled by little concessions like the appointment of Black Rectors in the tribal colleges because this does not alter their separatist or their tribal nature. Generally, Black Consciousness as a way of life amongst blacks in South Africa has been entrenched in the community. The eras of "Yes, sir," are over. In churches, black priests are waging an internal battle and are demanding more control and representation in the decision making.

In the continent of Africa, today, radical changes, have occurred and are still taking place. When Frelimo took over Mozambique, we evidenced the setting up of a

Government of the people for the people's interests in the true sense of the word "democracy". Not a mis-constructed democracy, and this being so near South Africa.

The Angolan issue reinforced the reactionary fears even more to the Vorster regime; hence we witnessed the invasion of Angola by the South African troops which were terribly humiliated. Angola is now a stable state under the people's leadership of MPLA.

In Zimbabwe, the bourgeoisie nationalist leaders have been barred from visiting the bases because they are "land-owners". The leadership is now in the hands of the guerrillas. This demonstrates that at crucial stages of struggle people who have middle class aspirations have no future in the solving of issues affecting the people. These are the realities of our times. Moreover this is the background against which:

- (i) South Africa's dead detente exercise was to create economic dependency of Black Africa on South Africa,
- (ii) the African tour by Kissinger and his subsequent meeting with Vorster in West Germany has taken place,

America, the big brother of capitalism, can no longer ignore the threat of a takeover of the "last bastion of the so-called free enterprise system.

In effect South Africa is becoming more obviously a partner of the West because the struggle in Africa is no longer a matter of national independence only, but also of progressive forces against imperialism and neo-colonialism. Now, the imperialist forces are threatened because they have economic interests in South Africa. It is expected that we will see a greater co-operation between South Africa and the West. Israel, also a fascist country that has an identical ideology with apartheid in Zionism, in cahoots with South Africa. We are still aware of the West Germany scandal coming out of the co-operation of the West Germany government with South Africa towards the setting up of a nuclear power station in South Africa.

From this analysis, it is becoming more clear that our oppressors in Pretoria, Bonn, Tel Aviv, London, New York, etc. This is the picture as I see it.

Therefore, it stands out clearly from the above analysis that we as students can never effectively contribute positively to this changing South African scene if we pursue middle class interests. Neither can we hope to effectively solve problems affecting us as students in different campuses in particular or national in general.

The rationale of this year's conference is to come and assess the role we have played in our society and the role we can still play towards change.

Power and Solidarity.

Diliza Mji.