

POLITICAL REPORT TO THE PNYC MEETING

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Our country, South Africa, was conquered by force. Today, the peace and negotiation processes notwithstanding, it is still ruled by force. Whether in reserve or in actual employment, force is ever-present. This apartheid government nor its colonial predecessor have known no other way of governing but by force. Nor can colonialism and apartheid survive for a single minute without force and violence.

1.2 The strategic objective of the liberation movement led by the ANC remains the transfer of political power from the white minority to the democratic majority. This is the only guarantee to ensure the attainment of a peaceful, prosperous non-racial non-sexist and democratic South Africa. The task however, is to determine and find the shortest possible way to this goal.

1.3 The only correct approach to win this goal is through struggle. Thus the task of a revolutionary organisation which the ANC is and must remain is not simply to draw up plans for the refashioning of a post apartheid society, not simply to point out the mistakes of the present regime, not simply to protest in the strongest possible terms nor simply to heap insults on the regime, not to hatch conspiracies and cobble high flown solutions above the heads of the people but to organise and prosecute the national democratic struggle of the oppressed in a stubborn, relentless and consistent manner and to lead this struggle to its ultimate aim: the conquest of political power by the people by all means at their disposal and the organisation of a new democratic South Africa.

2. THE PRESENT CONJUNCTURE

2.1. Victories:

The beginning of the 1990's have seen the South African regime forced into a process of change that may lead to the end of apartheid through negotiations. The year 1990 in particular was a watershed and a victorious nodal point reached by the ANC - led liberation forces in the history of our people's freedom struggle. Important and major among these victories are:

* We have forced the apartheid regime to concede that apartheid colonialism has failed and that it must go.

* We have forced the regime to concede that its centuries and

decades of the monologue of colonial and apartheid violence as a way of domination and rule cannot win against a people determined to be free.

* We have forced the apartheid regime to accept the reality of an existence in this country of the genuine representatives, leaders and organisations of the people outside the apartheid structures.

We have achieved all these and other important victories through intensified and pointed struggle that combined mass united action, the escalating armed struggle and the relative but yet wanting strength of the underground and relatively successful international solidarity campaigns to isolate apartheid South Africa.

2.2 The Changing Balance of Forces:

It was the mass political and armed struggles of the years before that have won us these victories. In particular, it was the semi-insurrectionary period of the '80's, our declared Decade of Liberation, which left no doubts in the minds of those confronting us that we were sensing victory and freedom and that absolutely nothing was going to stop us from attaining it.

In their millions our people rose and in unison acted to take into their hands the task of liberating themselves. The rapid growth in organisation and the equally rapid movement in the realignment of forces ideologically and otherwise served notice of the impending unprecedented confrontation, and the peoples' unwillingness to no longer be ruled in the old way.

It was these developments that secured for the ANC political hegemony among our masses and its growth in stature internationally and thus casting it in no uncertain terms as the main contender for power in this country. When consolidation and national co-ordination of the students, civics, youths, workers, women etc was achieved and unity of our people in action achieved then the stage was set for the beginning of an end of apartheid.

For the first time in many years the question of state power concentrated the minds nerves and energies of the masses of our people at the scale it did. Serving notice of their unwillingness to be governed not even in the new way by apartheid our people launched a stubborn programme of building alternative organs of people's state and power. Admitting failure to govern in the old way the regime introduced new rule of reform and repression in the form of the tri-cameral system and the implementation of the most violent the national security management system. This too was to fail under a hail of mass and armed attacks.

The apartheid state slipped into a deep structural and self perpetuating crisis. Its economy took a nose-dive into stagflation. This was as a result of a variety of factors which are all related to apartheid and the struggle against it. Economic and political strikes by workers, consumer boycotts, investment and disinvestment, war of colonial occupation in Namibia and wars of aggression against the frontline states, all these knocked a hole in the economy. Additional to this was the

excessive state expenditure of apartheid regime: a parasitic excrescence par excellence. The collapse of the rand and the decline of gold on the world market led to further economic misery and political trouble for the regime. Indeed the effect of the latter event was the hardest hitting on the gold based mono cultured and bi structural apartheid economy. Unemployment and the depreciation of the people across the colour - bar deepened leaving the populace particularly the oppressed seething with anger.

All this augured well for the advance of the liberation movement. The tinkering by the regime of its constitutional basis pointed to the fact that this was indeed a regime that was on the way out. With this and the development of a semi -insurrectionary situation in a deepening revolutionary in relation to the South African question was no longer whether power should be transferred but how and to what extent that must happen.

2.3 These victories were, however, not without some failures and mistakes either by commission or omission on the part of the liberation movement. Some disadvantages were as a result of the situation we could not help. We have correctly determined that the success of our revolution lay in a combination of our four pillars that we have in our means of struggle. Accordingly we have set our eyes on the development of a people's war in the final onslaught against apartheid. As a result of the unequal and inadequate development in implementation of these strategies we could not bring about a situation of people's war. Lack of or inadequate proper synchronisation of mass political struggles and the armed component contributed to this failure.

We had also failed to pay adequate attention to the development of the underground, to reach a situation inside the country where we had political and military command structures in localities throughout the country in place. Our guerilla attacks whilst effective never really passed into a stage necessary for people's war: for an example our guerilla attacks were still persecuted by underground units instead of and/or without the presents of guerilla units infiltrated as such to mount qualitatively different attacks. Linked to this was inadequate development of the other components of MK namely the revolutionary armed masses and the units behind enemy line. Consequently the question of the coming of the masses was not systematically undertaken - a situation whose worst fruits we are today reaping in the present ware of violence against us.

The major re-adjustments that we had to incurred as a result of the changes in our sub region particularly in Mozambique as in Angola and the collapse of the socialist community of states could not have come at a worse time for us. Since much of the support for noble causes came from this quarters the liberation movements, the world working class movements and the liberation movements, the world working class movement and the movement for peace and social progress suffered are of their major international setback in history. This, however, did not mean victory for capitalism. Yet the moral and political boost this situation gave to the forces of US led imperialism cannot be ignored with the UNO today having been completely taken over by

US militarism. We, of course also note and welcome the new political climate created by these events which saw the end of cold war and consequently the removal of the South African question from the East-West conflict. It is this new political climate that also saw the emergence of negotiations and peaceful methods as the major weapons for resolving regional conflicts. International censure and opprobrium also lessened under the impact of De Klerk manoeuvres at home and the neo-colonial ever-ready -to praise- old friends- tendency in the international community now of late led by reactionary trends.

3.0 THE NATURE OF THE NEGOTIATING TERRAIN

Yet these weaknesses and deficiencies were contra balanced by the strength of mass united action that plotted a history of defiance campaigns, development of mass democratic movement, consumer boycotts, political and economic strikes etc. by our people. This helped retain the strategic initiative in the hands of the people and the ANC. A combination of all the above elements produced a delicate balance of forces that saw the apartheid regime failing to rule in both the old and the new way and the liberation movement also not strong enough to seize political power.

It was in order to retain this strategic initiative and press home the attack under different circumstances and conditions that the ANC adopted the tactic of negotiations and defined and imposed the present phase and terrain of struggle. This we did in the OAU (Harare) and UN General Assembly Declarations.

Yet it is important to understand that in entering into this phase and method of struggle neither the apartheid regime nor the ANC see themselves as defeated on the important question of political power. None is therefore entering this process to negotiate terms of surrender. That the regime has been forced to institute certain changes in our society is a movement away from apartheid after failing to reform it and that it is also negotiating with us is a recognition of our strength and legitimacy to be is a definite important victory for the liberation movement. But it is not a victory that in itself guarantees transfer of power to the democratic majority. That is still a site of fierce struggle.

In addition it should be borne in mind too that no single situation of crisis no matter how deep does not offer a way out for the ruling class or bloc. That we have forced the enemy to negotiate with us does not in itself guarantee what we will win at the negotiation table. It has taken a particular and definite tilt in the balance of forces to bring the enemy to the negotiating table. But it is one thing to come to the negotiating table and another to negotiate the real issues. Clearly therefore, it will need another tilt in the balance of forces against the enemy to get them to negotiate the real issues. This current phase of our struggle is pregnant with many possibilities but also fraught with dangers and traps that demand maximum discipline and vigilance.

It must be noted that whilst it is true that we have forced the

enemy to enter the present phase of the struggle as defined and introduced by us the enemy did not come in without doing a thorough study and reconnaissance of this terrain. They too, like us, have entered the process because they see possibilities of victory.

3.1 The ANC's approach to negotiations.

The ANC's approach to the process of negotiation is contained in both the Harare and the UN General Assembly declarations. These, however, set only the broad parameters but do not determine details of the process. Additional to these documents that set out the approach of the ANC are the NEC's October 1987 statement, which determines the attitude of the ANC towards negotiations as a terrain of struggle. The objective of this statement and the processes it lays out around this issue was in the main to counter the state manoeuvres so that the issue of negotiations

- * does not create confusion or divisions in our ranks.
- * does not result in the demobilisation of the masses.
- * does not result in the lessening of pressure from the international arena and that it
- * results in us maintaining the initiative against the regime.

The second document is the NEC statement of the 16 Feb 1990 which includes new elements of procedure into the whole process as defined in the Harare declaration. One such point of procedure was the question of expediting the process by meeting with the regime in "talks about talks". This was the stage suggested in the documents of Comrade Deputy President Nelson Mandela drawn whilst in prison in Victor Verster and sent to the ANC. The third document is another NEC statement of March 1990 that deals with the positions of MK and the other strategies in accommodation with the process of peace and negotiations. It is this document that enunciated the position that the people's army MK should adopt a defensive posture rather than an offensive one. This and the August 4 1990 NEC statement are the forerunners of the Pretoria Minute. The latest document introducing a detail of procedure not contained in the Harare Declaration is the 1991 January 8 statement that introduces the concept of an all-party congress as a nodal point in the negotiations process.

3.2 The Weaknesses of the Liberation Movement

We must however admit that we have not succeeded in avoiding the dangers in 3.1. Among the causes that led to this situation are:

- Lack of clear organisation and co-ordination among various organs of the movements
- Lack of adequate consultations
- Lack of mass participation and the relegation of the process to committees and experts
- Lack of cadreship

It is therefore my humble submission that in all fairness and for all intents and purposes the negotiating strategy of the ANC is still disorganised and unclear. With this, the all-party congress and the Interim government as examples the ANC has at best been only able to put up this position as its strategic approach without clarifying itself thoroughly on how to realise

them in such a way that we win. As members and a component of the ANC this Extended PNYC has got a duty and a task to help the movement out of this unfortunate situation.

4.0 STATE STRATEGY

The government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to ensure that it does not lose power with the demise of and movement away from apartheid. Still relying heavily on the rationale of the "total onslaught - total strategy" approach the has worked out and implemented the following strategies:

- a) It is using the present wave of violence against the ANC and the people to weaken the ANC
- b) It is now opening its ranks through the Nationalist Party to membership by other races
- c) It is also pursuing active alliance politics to both counter the broad alliance of anti-apartheid extra-parliamentary groups.

* The reported invitation of parliamentary leaders by Mr De Klerk to Tuinhuys "immediately after the Easter recession April 8 to discuss the establishment of a parliamentary forum" Sunday Times March 31 1991 p.1.

* Viljoen's statement to the homeland chiefs made on the 22nd March 1991 opening of the Gazankulu's legislative assembly in which he announce the governments promise to reserve for all the homeland chief ministers seats at the negotiations table.

Although this particular move is undertaken in terms of the stated agreement between the ANC and the racist government to enter into widespread consultations on a bilateral basis before the convening of a multi-party conference, the government is using this to pursue its broad strategy as stated in (a) above. Part of the government strategy in this regard is to subsume the homelands into so-called sub economic regions "transferring over political boundaries". This is also organised in such a way that homeland leaders sympathetic to the ANC such as Cde E Maburu are marginalised.

4.1 Violence

It is in this regard that we must view the present wave of violence. Whilst the causes of this violence are many and varied its general strategic orientations forms a definite part of the state strategy in the present phase of the struggle. The strategy that should in the normal order of things have been implemented by us, that of hitting and talking is successfully being implemented by the enemy whilst we bicker and vacillated about its correctness. Whilst we have entered this process in a most disorganised way i.e without defining with clear precision the points of entry of each one of our components and how they must co-operate, the enemy nevertheless with some difficulties managed to enter it in a better shape organisationally. Nothing in terms of organisation and personnel was discarded without plan on their part. All what has happened is a process of adaptation of old structures to new conditions. So that while we talk and act peace with all our hearts the enemy is preparing for war and for a decisive moment. Already we are engaged in a war of attrition.

Through this violence the government aims to weaken the ANC and prepare it for a resounding defeat on all terrains of struggle. Thus the violence seeks to achieve the following in terms of state strategy:

- * Then isolation of the ANC from the rest of the anti-apartheid forces.
- * The separation of the ANC from the people through the instilling of fear and distortion of ANC positions by enemy infiltrations and mass propaganda.
- * Put a ceiling to the membership drive of the ANC through intimidation of potential new members.
- * The end of ANC mass campaigns by making it a point that everyone of these tactics is attended by vigilante and police reactionary violence.
- * The exposure of ANC's total strength from both the underground and the above-board so as to enable the government to deal with it effectively. This is reconnaissance by fire.
- * Discredit our leadership and our movement as blunderous parvenus and cowards who can never defend anyone including our members.
- * Endorsement of the regime's position that only they can manage the process of peaceful transition
- * Putting the ANC at the same level as any other organisation and thereby denying us our liberation content and appeal.

De Klerk has not abandoned P.W. Botha's "Total Strategy" approach. All that has changed are tactics. For him the abandoning of apartheid is not equal to transferring power and redistributing accumulated white wealth which was acquired through conquest, force and a violent system of racial privileges. The assault has therefore been all-round and has been joined by big business in a big way.

4.2 Our response to Violence

As for us all what we have done was to talk about "self defence units" and enter into unworkable "peace" treaties. However commendable these steps are our inability to empower our people is disarming. Self defence units have become a well trodden slogan with minimal and ineffective impact in the absence of practice.

We have simply stated the fact that we have not suspended the right of our people to self-defence without seeing to it that right is indeed exercised. The cumulative result is mass demoralisation, in particular among the youth.

5.0 UNITED FRONT

The time is upon us to reconsider and act in order to recover. Up to so far negotiations have not been the property of our people. The main task remains one of getting the whole movement and the whole society involved in the process of change and of removing apartheid and building democracy. The illegitimacy, illegality, inchoate independence and sovereignty of the present government are not in doubt and must guide all our approaches. It is clear that we cannot carry out this task of dislodging the enemy alone. The unity in action of our people remains the main launching pad. There is a dire and urgent need for the

establishment of a structured united front of all the democratic forces and forces for change. It is in this political front and on the basis of it that our salvation shall come. Without this working coherent political front there is no hope for mass action which is necessary for the success of the process of peace and negotiations. This front is necessary for the success of the process of peace and negotiations. It is within such a political front that concentric fronts such as the civic, youths, students workers, religious etc. conform and be co-ordinated in a generalised anti-apartheid struggle. Whether it emerges before after the formation of a patriotic front is a matter of tactic. But such a front is a priority and whenever it is established it can and must become the engine of any organisation of National Unity including the Patriotic Front.

At stake is our freedom and democracy. At stake is the question of political power. At stake is the empowerment of our people. Since no role was ever carved for us as youths and the masses in this negotiations process our task today in this meeting is to carve out a role for ourselves. Up until now the performance of the ANC Youth League has been disappointingly lacklustre. We have failed to become the leadership organisation of all South African youths as we should be. We have had no profile of our own. While talking autonomy we have practised tailism in all but few instances. We have easily succumbed to internal difficulties without organisation and our approach of the last months have been characterised in the main by sluggishness, lack of collectivism, imaginativeness, ingenuity, initiative and creativity. Whilst we are not wholly responsible for being in this situation we are wholly responsible for taking ourselves out of it and take our rightful position by accomplishing with vigour our set task.

6.0 THE ALL-PARTY CONGRESS

Among our immediate and most urgent demands is the need to clarify our call and demand for an All-Party Congress. As we do this we must still bear in mind that in the view of the ANC this is one of the most important and decisive of the negotiations process. Our concern has always been that both the process and the result of negotiations must be democratic.

The main question that is today facing us in relation to this particular call is who must sit in the APC. Indeed, who decides who attends the APC? So far we have only laid down the criterion that participants will be the political parties with a proven membership and history. The question that this begs is to whom should such credentials be presented.

Already the NP has suggested that major political parties, which according to them are the NP, ANC, PAC, INKATHA and CP, must convene and decide the crucial question of whom to invite to the APC. This is because no elections are envisaged for the contribution of this important body. In the light of this we might well want to ask ourselves whether to go to the APC is strategically correct.

7.0 THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

It is the ANC's position that the Interim Government and an elected Constituent Assembly are the necessary most democratic way to a peaceful negotiation and democratic result. Accordingly, our view of the APC is that it must decide on these important questions.

So far the position of the NP is that both the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly are unacceptable since according to them, South Africa is not a colony but a sovereign and independent state, regarded as such by the international community.

Our position is that it is precisely that sovereignty, legality, independence and legitimacy of the present South African state that we challenge and are at issue. Our demand for a Constituent Assembly and an Interim Government is directed both against this and towards achieving a climate conducive to negotiations and a democratic result.

Our task here today is to also clear ourselves on these important developments of our time.

I hope in the honest and frank discussions that we are about to enter into, the Youth League will ensure that the youth's concerns are addressed and taken note of by these developments.

8.0 TASKS OF THE ANC YOUTH LEAGUE

Unlike its predecessors and some of its contemporaries the Youth League has grasped the fact that it is operating on a much higher plane. In very difficult circumstances. Yet unlike the youth formations before us we have thus far failed to make a palpable and visible political impact on the present situation.

The main task and challenge that is facing us as the ANC Youth League is not only to correctly lead our members and boast big numbers, but to lead all the youth by our work and their consent and not by imposition and decree and become the centre of the all round development of young men and women from all walks of life. This we can only achieve if we assume our rightful place in both the ANC and broader society. We have to make a contribution to the solutions of problems facing our movement today. It is the reality of our situation that despite its follies movement forward to democracy and peace in South Africa is not possible without the ANC. If the ANC cannot ensure the transference of power to the democratic majority in this country no-one else can. There can be no doubt that the urgent question facing South Africa today in relation to negotiations is who is who is to decide the constitutional framework for a post-apartheid South Africa.

The options and answers are few.

Related to this is the question as to who should oversee the process. To this latter question arises the question as to how and who must decide which mechanism is acceptable. In as far as

this two questions are concerned the ANC have opted for a Constituent Assembly and an interim Government. From the January statement we also propose that the interim government will be constituted by an All-party Congress which will also take decisions on the Constitutional framework of a future South Africa. But with lack of clarity as to how the All Party Congress will be constituted is it correct for us to decide to give it this vital tasks? What is the opinion of the Youth League on this questions. These are vital question and the future they are talking about is us.

We must however be careful to treat these issues as table matters only. It is only in mass political struggle that we will win this positions. It is therefore proper and imperative for this PNYC to look into the role of the mass of youths in pressing their demand in this processes. A campaign that addresses the concerns of the youths around this issues and which will capture the imagination of the majority of youth is necessary. Obviously the youths yearn and pine for participation and influence and not just to be a pressure group away and outside the highway of developments. A campaign that will ensure the largest participation of youth in the process is therefore necessary. Members of the youth league and those outside the youth league between the ages of 16 and 18 at least would also want to be heard. How does the youth league ensure that. Are all our members able to read and write? Are they skilled and employable? Are they properly housed? Are they secure in their families and communities? These and many other concerns of the youths must guide us as we draw our programme of action towards congress and prepare for the period beyond congress.

As of now this extended PNYC is seating the racist government has not yet met the preconditions for negotiations as agree.

* Although the regime has released Cde Deputy President of the ANC Nelson Mandela, it has not yet released all political prisoners only 350 of the estimated 3000 political prisoners and detainees have been freed.

* Although the State of Emergency has been lifted, the Public Safety Amendment Act still in existence ensures that a virtual state of emergency still exists.

* Although political organisations have been unbanned numerous statutes such as the Internal Security Act, the Intimidation Act Gathering and Demonstration Act, Riotous Assemblies Act and Disclosure of foreign Funding Act still impedes free political activity.

* Political trials still continue.

* Troops are still not out of the townships bur are finding new ways of infiltrating and staying in the townships as forces of harassment and intimidation.