

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT INANDA?



The tragic events at the beginning of August were a sad moment in the history of the oppressed peoples. The government, the Rajbansis and the media, portrayed this as a conflict between Indians and Africans. The blame was laid at the feet of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and its affiliate, the Natal Indian Congress (NIC). But, the UDF and the NIC believe that it is the agents of apartheid themselves who are responsible for this conflict.

What really happened at Inanda?

Inanda is a vast squatter camp on the outskirts of Durban where Indians and Africans have lived together for years. It is a black spot which the government wants to incorporate into KwaZulu.

But, Buthelezi does not want it because he does not have the finances to improve the area. The government has been stalling because they would have to resettle the Indians who are demanding large amounts of compensation for their land.

Most of the Indians are landowners and tension has been developing between them and the African businessmen who are supporters of Inkatha. These businessmen held a meeting a few months prior to the August events, where they identified the Indian landowners as obstacles to incorporation into KwaZulu and demanded that action be taken by the Department of Community Development. They wanted the Indian landowners out because they could then get their land.

It is against this backdrop that the events in Inanda took place. On Monday 5 August, several combis of "strangers" entered Inanda and began attacking Indian shops. Many Indian families fled and took refuge at Greenbury Hall in the adjoining Indian township, Phoenix. By the end of that week, close to 1 000 families were left homeless.

Inanda Relief Committee.

In Phoenix, the Phoenix Child Welfare Society, the Phoenix Working Committee, the local civic association, together with affected residents, set up an Inanda Relief Committee.

It was assisted by the Muslim Youth Movement and the UDF-affiliated, Durban Housing Action Committee (Dhac). Through these organisations, UDF and NIC members were centrally involved.

The Inanda Relief Committee sent two memorandums to the authorities demanding proper housing and compensation for losses suffered by the people. They also called on the authorities to meet the short term needs of the people.

It was not long before the political opportunists arrived on the scene. Rajbansi and the government stepped in and blamed the NIC and UDF for the incident. When the looting was at its highest, the SABC interviewed an Indian resident who claimed on TV that "it's the UDF". Later, the NIC discovered that the man did not know what the UDF was and that he had been told to say so by the TV crewmen.

A member of the Phoenix Working Committee said; "it was not a situation of race rioting. Many of the looters were just hungry people because of the high

unemployment and poverty in the area. Nothing was ever mentioned by the press of how Indian families were protected by their African neighbours". Observers have questioned the role of the SADF and the SAP in the event in Inanda. Reports are that they were present in the township, but they did nothing to prevent the looting. It has also been said that they prevented fire engines from entering Inanda to douse the fires. Why is it that in other trouble spots in the country, the SADF and the SAP are the first on the scene?

Rajbansi flees.

But where were Rajbansi and the House Delegates? Contrary to press reports, members of the House of Delegates were nowhere to be seen. Rumours that they had been sleeping with the families were also totally untrue, informed sources told the Congress Resister.

Rajbansi and other members of the House of Delegates visited the Greenbury Hall for the first time on Friday 9 August, where they made an announcement that the families would get R22 million in compensation and that housing will be provided immediately.

When they reappeared on Sunday, they restated their promise about the R22 million but suddenly had problems carrying out their promise of housing.

Rajbansi had also promised to lead the Indians back into Inanda in convoy with the SADF to get back their possessions. However, when some residents returned to Inanda, there was no presence of Rajbansi or the army and clashes occurred.

Rajbansi had instead attended an Inkatha rally. When Rajbansi came back to Greenbury Hall, he was greeted by angry people and forced to flee.

None of Rajbansi's promises have materialised. Yet the UDF, NIC Diakonia and the Black Sash set up a crisis committee to collect information, monitor developments and collect relief. People from around the country have sent food, clothing and money to the Inanda families.

The role of Inkatha in the Inanda issue is not clear. However at the same time as Inanda was blowing up, Inkatha imps were patrolling the Durban townships of Umlazi, Lamontville and KwaMashu

seeking out UDF supporters. They were bent on destroying the schools boycott which was organised to protest against the murder of UDF leader, Victoria Mxenge.

5 000 people attended the memorial service at Umlazi. The mourners were attacked by a group of 300 Inkatha members who were wielding sticks and spears as they tried to disrupt the service. At least 15 people were killed in this battle. The Inkatha members were chanting anti-UDF slogans.

In looking back on the events of Inanda, it is clear that the government forces are determined to break the unity of the Indian and African people. A unity which has been built through many years of struggle and sacrifice under this government. There can be no doubt that Inanda whipped up feelings of mistrust. But, we in the TIC, the NIC, together with all freedom loving people are determined to continue to fight for the unity of all South Africans.

SUPPORT MINERS

Workers throughout the country are finding it more and more difficult to feed, clothe and house their families. The ranks of the unemployed are swelling, while the price of basic essentials increase. It is against the backdrop of inflation, recession and drops in living standards that the NUM strike must be understood.

When the strike was announced, it became clear that mineworkers would require support. Various trade union, community, political, youth, health and student organisations formed a Num Strike Support Committee. Amongst these organisations were the TIC and other UDF affiliates.

The TIC has done so with the understanding that the workers in South Africa are the most oppressed and exploited. Our destiny is linked with theirs. It is only their final liberation from Apartheid rule and economic exploitation that will liberate all South Africans.

The TIC calls on all the people to support the miners in what ever way possible.

PFP CANNOT BE TRUSTED

In 1983, when the government held a referendum to determine whether the white community would support the tricameral parliament, the Progressive Federal Party (PPP) urged whites to vote NO. Its leader Van Zyl Slabbert argued convincingly that the new constitution would increase conflict in our country. Unfortunately the vast majority of whites rejected Slabbert's argument and supported Botha's "new deal".

We had hoped that Slabbert and the PPP would then turn their backs on Botha's racist 3-chamber parliament and join the democratic movement in our struggle for democracy. Instead they opted to participate in the white parliament "to change the system from within". In so doing they did an about

turn - they decided to participate in the very parliament which they had rejected earlier on; a parliament which they said would increase conflict.

Last year in one of our greatest showings of unity, we boycotted the elections for the Indian and "Coloured" Houses of Parliament. The government's aim to co-opt the Indian and "Coloured", and particularly the middle-class sections of our communities failed dismally. The new constitution was therefore still-born - doomed to failure right from the beginning.

Faced with this rejection, the government tried a new trick. It decided to scrap the Political Interference Act, thereby opening the door for mixed political

parties. In so doing it hoped that the PPP with its more credible liberal image would begin to make inroads into the Indian and "Coloured" communities. Of course the PPP has now attempted to do precisely this - and has set aside R10 million rand to facilitate this.

At its recent congress held in Durban, the PPP decided to field candidates to contest elections for the Indian and "Coloured" houses of parliament - despite strong opposition from its youth and other prominent members - despite its total rejection by our people - despite the fact that this very parliament has contributed to setting our country on a road to disaster.

For us in the Transvaal Indian Congress and the

United Democratic Front this decision of the PPP is the last straw. It shows us that the PPP cannot be trusted. By going against the wishes of our people, they have declared war on us.

The PPP has also revealed its opportunism. By criticising the government on the one hand, while attempting to rescue the apartheid parliament on the other they are only trying to give apartheid a better face. This also confirms our view that the PPP is much closer to the Nationalist government than they would have us believe.

The TIC is committed to a South Africa as envisaged

in the Freedom Charter; a South Africa where all South Africans will participate in the decision-making process; a South Africa where all South Africans, Black and White have the vote in a single parliament. Only then will peace and prosperity come to our country.

In order to achieve our vision of a non-racial democratic South Africa, we remain committed to mobilising and organising our people in united mass action against Botha and his collaborators, whether they are the Rajbansis, Hendrickses or even Slabberts.