

2 March 1993

IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR THE SACP

Foreword

Die Burger, according to a report in the Cape Times on 26 February 1993, stated that the Party intended to remain under the wing of the ANC in the coming election and and abstain from contesting seats on its own. The article continued to accuse^d the Party of riding on the backs of the ANC ever since the unbanning^{it} ~~by~~ by President de Klerk on 2 February 1990; and asserted that the Party had planted a large number of its members in the ^{ANC} National Executive Committee of the ANC. This attack on the ANC is bound to be repeated often in coming months and calls for close ~~scrutiny~~ scrutiny of the historical relations between the two organisations.

The Suppression of Communism Act, 1950

The ANC strongly opposed the Act and had no difficulty in absorbing in absorbing African party members in its ranks and working with white, Coloured and Indian party members who formed the Congress Alliance in 1953 together with the Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)

The Freedom Charter

Conceived by professor Z.K. Matthews, and ratified by the ANC in 1956, the Charter, formulated at Kliptown, Johannesburg on 26 June 1955, was a manifesto acceptable to all sections of the anti-apartheid movement. It was the centrepiece in the indictment by the prosecution against the entire leadership of the Congress movement In the treason trial which lasted from December 1956 to 1961 when the accused were acquitted and discharged. Justice Rumpff agreed with the defence that the Charter was not a communist doctrine and that the accused had not conspired to overthrow the state by illegal and violent means.

Sharpeville, 1966

The Sharpeville massacre, triggered by Robert Sobukwe's PAC, in which 67 Africans were killed and 187 wounded. The PAC had parted company with the ANC because of the Freedom Charter which declared that South Africa belonged to all, Black and White, who lived in it. The massacre

was condemned throughout the world, Pretoria declared a state of emergency, detained some 20 000 people and seized the opportunity to ban both the ANC and the PAC under a new law, the Unlawful Organisations Act. They were unable to function legally inside South Africa until 2 February 1990 , when the Party was also unbanned. The consequences of the ban on the ANC had been predicted in Chief Luthuli's letter of 1958 to the prime minister 'Baasskap'Strydom. He died in 1958 and was succeeded by Hendrik Verwoerd, born in Holland, educated in Zimbabwe and Stellenbosch University, the high priest of totalitarian apartheid .

Lobatsi, 1962

To meet the urgent need of consultation and planning, ANC and CP leaders met in Lobatsi, in the then British protectorate of Bechuanaland. The external representatives included Oliver Tambo, Moses Mabhida, Tennison Makiwane, Mzwai Piliso. Govan Mbeki presided, the steering committee consisted of Moses Kotane, Dan Tloome, Mark Shope and M.B. Yengwa. The conference demanded the unbanning of ANC and other outlawed organisations, release of political prisoners and freedom fighters.

The Call to Arms

The emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe was marked by sabotage acts on 16 December 1961 and the distribution of a leaflet declaring that 'The time comes in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa'. Those who formed MK were members of the ANC and SACP. They formed an inter-racial organisation under the ANC's political guidance, and with a National High Command based on a farm at Rivonia near Johannesburg.

The Road to Freedom

In 1962 the Party adopted a new programme, 'The Road to South Africa'. It set out the theory of colonialism of a special type, , pledged support for the Freedom Charter and claimed it would lay the theoretical basis

for an advance to a communist , socialist future. The manifesto was to remain the Party's guide for the next 27 years. But the next phase of its political life was plunged into a crisis by the arrest of members of the High Command at Rivonia.

The Rivonia Trial

Police raided a farm at Rivonia near Johannesburg , seized masses of ~~the~~ documents and arrested eight leaders of the liberation movement, and tried the^m in Pretoria Supreme Court on 9 October 1963. They were charged with 193 acts of sabotage committed between 27 June 1962 and the Rivonia raid^d . On Friday 12 June 1964, eleven months after the arrests, , Judge Quartus de Wet sentenced all the accused to life imprisonment except Rusty Bernstein, who was acquitted. Denis Goldberg, the only white defendant found guilty was imprisoned in Pretoria and released in 1985 in return for renouncing violence. Govan Mbeki w s released in 1987, Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990 and the other Rivonia trialists in October 1989. In September, 1964 Abram Fischer was arrested and charged with membership ^{of} the Communist Party. He went underground to carry on political work, ^{was} recaptured ten months later and imprisoned for life.

The Morogoro Conference.

The ANC had a conference on 25 April 1969 at Morogoro in Tanzania. Its main purpose was to chart the way to victory. For this far reaching changes in military and political structures were necessary. The enemy had responded to disclosures at the Rivonia trial and the boldness of the Wankie operations in 1967 with preparations for what came close to a civil war against the liberation movement. The outcome of the conference was the adoption of a declaration of intent entitled the Strategy and Tactics of the ANC and the formation of a Revolutionary Council which included representatives of the banned Congress of Democrats - Indians, Coloured, Communists and SACTU- in the ANC's external mission. One of the conference resolutions affirmed 'the necessity of the NEC to

The Moscow Conference

The militant upsurge in the Vaal Triangle during September 1984 revealed the widespread hatred ~~in~~ⁱⁿ black communities of apartheid, resentment against specific grievances, and the rejection of P W Botha's tri-cameral parliament which excluded Africans. The ANC's slogan: 'make South Africa ungovernable' became a reality and reinforced the determination of Umkhonto to recruit and operate within the country. In December 1984 the Party held its Sixth Congress in Moscow to take stock of developments ~~and~~, plan the next stage of the struggle and revise the composition of the Polit ~~byuro~~^{byuro}. Conference dropped Francis Mele and Andrew Masondo and elected Joe Slovo, Chris Hani, Mac Maharaj Thabo Mbeki, Azis Pahad, the general secretary Moses Mabhida and his fellow Zulu, Josiah Jele.

The Kabwe Conference

The ANC's consultative conference, the first since 1969, took place at Kabwe, Zambia, in June 1985. A major item on the agenda was a motion, sponsored by the President-General, O.R. Tambo, to open the door to all members irrespective of colour, race, sex or creed. He circulated a list of some 40 names, ~~his~~ his preferred candidates. All the 30 elected members of the NEC were on the list. It included the names of the previous NEC members and a number of newcomers, among them Joe Slovo, the only white person elected, two Coloured, James Stuart and Reg September and two Indians, Mac Maharaj and Aziz Pahad.. The entire politburo of the Party, except ~~Josiah Jele~~ Josiah Jele, were elected to the NEC. On the death of Moses Mabhida in 1986 Slovo took his place as general secretary and Jele was co-opted by ANC's national executive.

After 1990 many covert Party members in the ANC's national executive committee dropped out of the Party's ranks. Die Burger's allegation, with which I began this account, is certainly wrong. There ~~are~~^{are} no secret

Party members in the ANC's national executive committee.

Immediate Prospects

Rather than impose my own guesswork, I shall summarise the speculations of Dries van Heerden, writing in INSIG, the prestigious Afrikaans monthly, in the issue of March 1983. p.22)

He points out that 74 year old Nelson Mandela is in poor health; the vice-president, Walter Sisulu, is 81 and hardly a likely successor. The strongest figure in the inner circle is Cyril Ramaphosa who at the age of 41 is exceptionally young by ANC standards of seniority. If he were to become president his present deputy, Jacob Zuma, most senior Zulu speaker in the higher ranks would probably be promoted. Other possible candidates are Chris Hani and Thabo Mbeki, both 50 years within 10 days of each other at homes within walking distances in the Transkei. Chris nailed his colours to the mast when he became the Party's general secretary, but he is probably the most popular among the younger section of ANC activists and draws large crowds whenever he speaks in public.

The younger ANC members became active in the sixties and seventies when the banned ANC took up residence in Lusaka, Tanzania and Angola. Those who stayed at home fought the enemy in the mass democratic movement belonged to the UDF, were jailed, tortured and often sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. They will not forget or forgive. They demand and are entitled to homes, jobs, schools and opportunities to make a good life for themselves and the community. If the Party cannot assist, they will look elsewhere to the ANC or its rivals.

Without a share of political power, the Party will shrink and become an extra-parliamentary moral and ideological influence. Our immediate prospects depend largely on the degree to which democratic forces put an end to the corruption and treachery that pervades all sectors of the white establishment: the government, administration, banks, business and the edifice of white supremacy.