

South Africa: more violence in store as Botha fails to deal with issues

by Douglas DeGroot

In his major policy speech to the Natal Provincial Congress of the National Party on Aug. 15, South African President Pieter W. Botha failed to seize the opportunity to make the bold policy shifts in his country's rigid racial separation laws required to stop the violence and unrest that have resulted in over 600 people dead, mostly blacks, since last September. Although Botha opened the door a crack by indicating not all the "apartheid" laws were sacrosanct, and pledged to negotiate with black leaders, he made no concrete proposals for implementation that could lead to ending the present impasse in South Africa since he declared a state of emergency in July 21 in parts of the country.

While calling his statement a "Manifesto for the future," Botha punted on the basic policy issues, and instead delivered a defiant and defensive political campaign speech designed to rally the white South African base of his National Party around him, instead of trying to lead his political base out of the policy cul-de-sac it is now caught in. "I am not prepared to lead white South Africans and other minorities on a road to abdication and suicide," Botha stated, ruling out a unitary South African government in which all its citizens had a vote.

As a result of Botha taking the option that was safest for him in terms of white South African internal politics, compromise, for the moment, will not be possible, and the South African government will now be condemned to play out the destructive role that the Western financial oligarchies who are the power behind the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the Soviets, want it to play. A protracted and totally manipulated Northern Ireland-style conflict is now on the agenda. If the scenario is allowed to play itself out, South Africa will ultimately be destroyed as an industrializing nation, as part of the broader scenario of the pro-IMF financial circles, to destroy the nations of the entire continent of Africa.

Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, an advocate of a moderate solution to the present impasse, predicted that as a result of Botha's speech, moderates like himself will doubtless be rejected by blacks: "It's going to be very difficult to know who will avert the catastrophe that I believe we are on the

brink of. . . Obviously, those who advocate peaceful change will have their credibility very drastically eroded because they have nothing to show for all their advocacy." Referring to Botha's speech, Tutu said: "Here was an opportunity to show statesmanship and instead we saw a man addressing the party faithful, trying to win a few more votes. Another prime opportunity has been passed up."

Reagan administration had urged change

According to leaked reports of a secret meeting in Vienna, Austria, on Aug. 8, U.S. National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane gave a blunt warning to South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha, in case the new reforms to be announced by President Botha on Aug. 15 looked like nothing more than cosmetic changes. Not only would President Reagan be unable to prevent Congress from overriding his possible veto of economic sanctions against South Africa, but also Reagan might not veto sanctions at all, if the policy speech of P. W. Botha did not contain any measures that could be genuinely perceived by South African blacks as reforms that would lead to a change in the situation in South Africa.

In response, according to reports, Roelof Botha told McFarlane that P.W. Botha's speech would open the way toward common citizenship in South Africa, and would end enforced living in black "homelands" or bantustans.

The South Africa survival faction

There are circles in the South African State Security Council and law enforcement apparatus who, for practical reasons, are more and more impatient with the slow pace of reform within the country. They fear that if substantial change is not made, the country will be destroyed in the subsequent holocaust of racial conflict.

Reflecting this factional position, just ten days before President Botha made his speech, a European source had expected him to announce a plan to form within a few years a single parliament in the country, with the number of representatives in it determined by the size of each group in the population—in effect a black government. But the violent unrest in the 10 days leading up to the speech, primarily

around Durban, stirred up fears of a right-wing backlash among whites. On Aug. 14, Andries Treurnicht, leader of the ultra-right Conservative Party, warned Botha that a move toward breaking down apartheid would "awaken the tiger in the whites" and threatened that Botha underestimated the extent of white backlash that would occur if he moved away from traditional apartheid policies.

Days earlier, on Aug. 12, Dr. Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Cooperation, Development and Education, the ministry in charge of relations with the black community, told a National Party meeting that "The days of white domination are coming to an end," and told whites that they would face a radically different future with the black population. Viljoen, rumored by some to be next in line to succeed P. W. Botha as President, said that the apartheid laws used to keep racial separation would eventually be repealed, and that reservation of jobs for whites would eventually be replaced by competition. It is precisely these restrictive laws which stand in the way of developing a large and rapidly expanding skilled industrial workforce in South Africa, a workforce with skills beyond those required for mining, now the predominant economic activity in South Africa.

In another example of the factional policy fight, after four years, a white think-tank in South Africa, the Human Sciences Research Council, has produced a report saying that apartheid should be junked because it doesn't work. The Council is paid for by the government, has its staff made up almost entirely of Afrikaners, the base of the National Party, and is close to many of the government's strategic thinkers. The report advocates ending racial segregation in schools and residential areas, and proposes that the classification of people by race should be abolished. It reportedly also implies that the present three-chamber parliament—one per race except for blacks—must be abandoned so that people of all races could be represented in one assembly. An opinion poll in the report brings home the reality of why change should be made: 63% of blacks think violence is needed if they are ever going to win any political rights.

The unrest since September 1984 has been in response to implementation of P. W. Botha's "reforms" at that time which excluded blacks, and set up separate parliaments for Indian and colored or mixed-blood minorities in South Africa. President Botha moved only a tiny step toward the viewpoint of his factional opposition in his National Party when he pledged in his speech to negotiate with black leaders, and ruled out the formation of a sham separate black parliament. He came the closest to dismantling any of the apartheid machinery when he said that the "influx control" laws which limit the movements of blacks were "outdated and too costly," and said for the first time that the government-designated tribal homelands or bantustans that rejected the phony independence offered by the government "are South African citizens and will be accommodated within political institutions." These

latter two points—influx control and blacks forcibly belonging to homelands and therefore not considered citizens of South Africa—are part of the foundation of apartheid.

The next round of violence

As a result of the failure of P. W. Botha's speech, further waves of communal violence can be expected in South Africa, and could also spread to the United States. Denunciation of Botha's speech by Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill and others in the U.S. Congress will lead to a call for economic sanctions against South Africa. There have also been calls for violence in the United States, if the Reagan administration doesn't take stronger action to end apartheid. This "Farrakhan" race-war scenario was laid out most bluntly by Philadelphia's Rev. Leon Sullivan, who told a crowd chanting "Jail Reagan" that the violence in South Africa will escalate, and stated outright that there will be race riots in American cities "that make the 1960s look tame," if the administration fails to act. Plans are already afoot for mass campus rallies against apartheid next October.

Robert McNamara, remembered as the architect of the "body count" policy in the Vietnam War, has just made a trip to South Africa and is gleefully predicting that "a violent explosion is inevitable."

Fanatics of both the black and white varieties are necessary for this gameplan, and the killer squads that have been killing moderate blacks as well as organic leaders who are opposed to apartheid, have been preparing the way for fulfillment of this nightmare.

The Western Malthusian oligarchy, strongly represented in South Africa by the British and European continental banking establishment, is intent on giving South Africa the same genocidal treatment that it is dishing out to the rest of Africa. Thus anyone who talks of the apartheid problem without dealing with the economic reality of what is being done to the entire continent of Africa is nothing more than a controlled agent in this scenario to destroy all of Africa.

The gap created by the reduction in activity in South Africa by American banks and businesses has been rapidly filled by British interests. After Chase Manhattan put extensive limits on its activity there recently, the slack was picked up by Barclay's Bank of the United Kingdom, one of the preeminent British colonial banks. With British and mining interests predominant in South Africa, it will be a fairly simple matter to run a long-term Northern Ireland-style scenario. Ironically, P. W. Botha in his speech took a few minutes to bluster against British colonialism, and said South Africa would not tolerate solutions imposed from outside. He did not have the courage to follow through on this idea, however, and declare that he was going to throw out apartheid, which was also imposed on South Africa from the outside by precisely the same forces that are now seeking to wipe out South Africa along with the rest of Africa.