
South Africa

Botha announces steps to abolish apartheid

On Jan. 31, 1986, P. W. Botha, President of the Republic of South Africa, announced major steps by his government to abolish the apartheid system bequeathed to South Africa by British colonialism, including abolition of the hated pass laws. In a speech opening parliament in Capetown, President Botha declared that South Africa has "outgrown the outdated colonial system of paternalism as well as the outdated concept of apartheid."

Botha announced a series of constitutional reforms based on the concept of "an individual Republic of South Africa where all regions and communities within its boundaries form part of the South African State, with the right to participate in institutions to be negotiated collectively."

"The peoples of the Republic of South Africa form one nation," Botha stated in motivating the bold measures his government will now implement. "But our nation is a nation of minorities. Given the multicultural nature of South African society, this of necessity implies participation by all communities and the sharing of power between these communities but also the devolution of power as far as possible and the protection of minority rights, without one group dominating the other."

Among the measures President Botha outlined to implement the abolition of the apartheid system are the following:

- "Restoring South African citizenship to black persons who reside permanently in the Republic of South Africa, but who forfeited their citizenship as a result of the conditions of independence of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei.
- "The amendment of the immigration selection policy by repealing discriminatory preference provisions.
- "The drafting of legislation to remove existing influx control measures which apply to South African citizens in the Republic of South Africa. The present system is too costly and has become obsolete.
- "The government is in favor of measures which will facilitate urbanization.
- "Extension of the powers of the self-governing states.
- "The involvement of black communities in decision making.

- "Freehold property rights for members of black communities and
- "A uniform identity document for all population groups."

President Botha reaffirmed the "government's commitment to equal provision of education for all population groups." "One of the most important steps" in the implementation of this process, the South African President stated, "was the establishment of a single education department for general policy for all communities." President Botha also called for "the equitable allocation of resources to the various communities in this reform process."

Principles of constitutional reform

In the section of his speech devoted to "constitutional reforms," President Botha set forth the principles upon which his actions to abolish apartheid are based:

- "We accept one citizenship for all South Africans, implying equal treatment and opportunities.
- "We believe that human dignity, life, liberty, and property of all must be protected, regardless of color, race, creed or religion.
- "We believe in the sovereignty of the law as the basis for the protection of the fundamental rights of individuals as well as groups. We believe in the sanctity and indivisibility of law and the just application thereof.
- "We believe that a democratic system of government, which must accommodate all legitimate political aspirations of all South African communities, must be negotiated.
- "All South Africans must be placed in a position where they can participate in government through their elected representatives."

Concerning Southern Africa, he said: "We affirm our continued commitment to peaceful international coexistence through cooperation and negotiation. This applies to all nations, but particularly Southern Africa. In this regard, I wish to emphasize that there can be no peace and stability in our region as long as countries knowingly harbor terrorists who plan to execute acts of terror against a neighboring state."

On South West Africa, he said, "the Republic of South Africa remains prepared to implement resolution 435 provided agreement can be reached on Cuban withdrawal from Angola. Only then will the Republic of South Africa reduce its troops in terms of the agreed arrangements. In this area, lasting peace and freedom can only prevail if terrorism gives way to negotiation and constitutional development such as desired by the internal parties."

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., candidate for the Democratic Party presidential nomination in the United States, welcomed President Botha's measures as "actions which I heartily endorse. They are consistent with what I have been advocating for approximately ten years."