

Can South Africa achieve unity to build a nation?

by Linda de Hoyos

On July 2, a multi-party negotiating forum in Johannesburg, South Africa announced, after hours of debate, that national elections for a 400-member constituent assembly will be held on April 27, 1994, the first elections in which black citizens will have full voting rights, after 350 years of white-minority rule.

The following day, Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress, and South African President Frederik W. de Klerk, were in Washington, D.C., meeting (separately) with U.S. President William Clinton. President De Klerk told U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that the requirements set by the international community for the lifting of sanctions against South Africa would soon be met, and that South Africa would soon join the global community of nations. De Klerk also happily noted that the lifting of sanctions would give the green light to the International Monetary Fund to extend loans to South Africa.

On July 4, Mandela, De Klerk, and Clinton traveled to Philadelphia, where the two South African leaders were given the Freedom Award by the American President.

But the celebrations for new-found democracy in South Africa were belied by the events on the ground. After the announcement of the April 27 date for national elections, the black townships outside Johannesburg and in Natal province burst into the worst violence of the year. Over 100 people were killed in the space of six days, although according to Reuters, "residents speak of hundreds" dead in Katlehong township. In the townships, mobs were reportedly seeking to murder anyone who could speak Zulu, as they were presumed to be supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which rejected the April 27 election date.

The killing spree, which ANC leaders admitted had been sparked by their supporters, also ended hopes that the nine-hour meeting between IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the ANC's Nelson Mandela on June 25 would lead to unity of these two major representatives of South Africa's black citizenry.

To resolve the crisis in South Africa today and to avert full-scale civil war



African National Congress President Nelson Mandela (above); South African President F.W. de Klerk (below). Right, a demonstration in Washington, D.C. in 1986. Sanctions are about to be lifted, but averting civil war in South Africa will require attention to several points which many in the anti-apartheid movement have never considered.

requires attention to several points of conflict:

1) To what extent has the violence been sparked by a “third force”? On June 21, hours before the announcement of the Buthelezi-Mandela meeting was made, unidentified masked gunmen broke in to houses in Natal, killing 13 people, most of them members of the ANC. The killings were “clearly designed to destabilize the peace process,” commented BBC. And in the townships, during the slaughters, the police abandon the townships during the night, making no attempt to maintain law and order.

Even more to the point, a Briton who was formerly with the British SAS is one of the five most wanted suspects sought in connection with the June 18 storming of the multi-party negotiations by the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) in Johannesburg. According to the British *Daily Telegraph*, Keith Conroy, a former SAS member, had trained the AWB’s Ystergarde, the group’s “iron guard.” Conroy is believed to have been the leader of the AWB attack on the World Trade Center in Johannesburg, where the talks were held.

2) Both the IFP and the Conservative Party, representing many Afrikaners, are concerned that the current road to “democracy” is based on a secret deal between De Klerk’s National Party, and the ANC, which is dominated by the South African Communist Party and is also the beneficiary of funds and support from such British corporations as Tiny Rowland’s Lonrho. Such a deal would lead to the effective disenfranchisement of the Zulu-based IFP and the Afrikaners. Both these groups rejected the April 27 date, stating that

constitutional issues, including the relationship between states and the central government, must be resolved before any elections are held.

3) There will be no peace in South Africa without a reversal of the country’s current economic depression. Official unemployment in South Africa is 40%. Placing the economy under the domination of the IMF is a sure prescription for economic disintegration and the perpetuation of the slave-labor system known as apartheid. And how can there be regional or state autonomy and sovereignty in a country which is held hostage to the IMF?

Can unity be achieved in South Africa, a unity forged on a common vision for building the South African nation? *EIR* here presents four different views of the South African crisis—interviews and papers from murdered ANC leader Chris Hani; former head of military intelligence of the South African Defense Forces, Maj. Gen. Tienie Groenewald; IFP leader Mwezi Twala; and American civil rights leader Rev. James Bevel. The totality of these views proves that the crisis confronting South Africa is far more complicated and difficult than a simplistic drive toward “democracy” portrayed in the western liberal press. What emerges in views expressed below are very clear differences in viewpoint, but also the possibility of unity, as each leader voices his concern that South Africa achieve economic progress. This must be the starting point for negotiations seeking true unity for the South African nation, and unleashing that nation’s great potential for all of Africa.