
SOUTH AFRICA: WHY SOWETO

APPEAL OF OSPAAAL FOR THE DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Events continue to be adverse for Vorster. After his unfortunate Angolan adventure, precisely at the moment he was preparing to reinitiate the diplomatic offensive recently undertaken to make South Africa attractive to the capitalist countries considered as friends, allies or recuperable, and when according to well-informed sources, he thought he had finally found the magic formula in his conversations with the ubiquitous North American Kissinger, for solving the thorny problem of Rhodesia—which in strategic terms is called hiding behind a smokescreen—it turns out that he lands in Europe not with his agenda full of good promises but with his hands dripping with the blood of more than a thousand dead Africans, victims of pitiless police repression. The South African Prime Minister could not have chosen a worse moment for his conversations with the head of the West German government and with the US diplomacy-maker: after the announcement of the sale of two nuclear centers by France at the end of May, the involvement of the western powers with the most abject den of racism became more evident than ever. That miniature fascist seeks the shadow of his natural protectors with increasing desperation.

The manifestation of monstrous violence that exploded on June 16 in the black ghetto of Soweto—where the work force charged with making the white factories of the white city of Johannesburg function in behalf of the white minority live crowded under inhuman conditions—and extended like a brushfire to different regions of South Africa, are eloquent proof of the level of exasperation on the part of the black masses. Hence—and the racist government was not wrong in this—the attempt to impose on the black schools of Soweto the teaching of certain materials in the Afrikaans language was merely the spark, not the underlying reason for the disturbances. The underlying reason has to be sought in the system of apartheid, in which blacks have fewer rights than animals.

The defeat in Angola of South African troops heretofore considered invincible awakened the South African black masses, and no tank, no police dog, no machinegun belonging to Mr. Vorster will be able to lull them to sleep. He can kill them, it is true—unrestrainedly, as was proven recently—but he cannot prevent them from rebelling, from organizing and from wiping out once and for all that socio-economic and political system condemned by history.

In order to put this possibility off as long as possible, the South African racist regime creates an internal and external strategy. Internally, outside of some small patches on

apartheid which only deceive the naïve, there is notable fortification of the repressive arsenal. On May 7, the government presented Parliament with a draft law for promoting state security, which can be extended to Namibia, expressly projecting the permanent detention without trial of all those suspected of disturbing public order or of acting against state security, in other words, the police will be able to arrest anyone, without a precise reason, and keep that person incommunicado for as long as they see fit.

Externally, there is an intensification in Vorster's great efforts to commit the western powers still further with his project of "continental gendarme." And Vorster does not hide this. On June 9 he said during an interview:

I think they (the United States and its allies) must be particularly aware of what is happening in the Indian Ocean where communist bases and the communist military potential are increasing alarmingly. I consider an allied naval presence that will balance that reinforcement to be a vital necessity... All we ask is that the United States and other countries that appreciate liberty become aware of the strategic position of South Africa and not place it in danger when it adopts a firm position against communism on the African continent.

It is thus to defend "that precious liberty" that the major supplier of arms to South Africa just signed a 5-billion-franc contract on May 28 to turn over two nuclear centers which, in spite of the good faith denials by the parties involved, will permit the racist regime to produce 500 kilograms of plutonium a year in a short time, enough to manufacture 100 atom bombs of the Hiroshima type. Of course it is known that, thanks to the efforts of West Germany, which two years ago became its chief trading partner, South Africa is capable of manufacturing those atomic bombs, as South African strategists have bragged on various occasions.

The Angolan adventure and the terrible repression of the Soweto demonstrations (June 22, more than 1000 African dead) are evidence of the savagery that racist South Africans are capable of when they are cornered, when it is a question of defending their interests and those of the "free world" with which they identify. The enormous increase in the military budget in recent years is a threat to the exploited South African masses and the entire African continent.

The Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL energetically condemns the bloody massacre organized by the South African government against the masses who rightfully demand an end to apartheid as well as a majority government.

The Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL calls on all its member organizations, all governments and all revolutionary and progressive people to intensify their solidarity with the South African people brutally repressed by the racist regime; to intensify campaigns to energetically condemn the involvement of western capitalist powers with the apartheid regime which has been denounced by all humanity, to openly reject military and nuclear collaboration with South Africa; and also to do everything possible to provide material and moral aid to the South African population struggling to create a society free of racism and oppression in their homeland.

OSPAAAL Executive Secretariat

Havana, June 25, 1976.

"THIS GREAT HUMANITY HAS SAID ENOUGH! AND HAS BEGUN TO MOVE"