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CLEAR THE OBSTACLES AND CONFRONT THE ENEMY

NELSON MANDELA

In writing an essay of this nature one may be tempted to take us back to Van Riebeeck's days² and give a catalogue of all the injustices done to us with hardly anything to say on the burning questions that plague us today. We need to spell out the stumbling blocks on the way forward and offer suggestions for overcoming them. My main effort will lie in this direction.

The most urgent problem facing us is that of unity. To see the problem in perspective, we must first of all draw a clear line between the enemy and the oppressed people and at all times carefully compare the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. Failure to make this distinction has brought its own chain of problems and made some elements in the movement concentrate their fire on those who have always borne the brunt of the attacks from the enemy. Polemics are inevitable in a movement that is active. The more complicated the situation, the more bitter the controversies are likely to become. But there is a wide difference between constructive criticism that will pave the way to a consensus and mere invective that tends to harden the differences. The dividing line between the activities of plain government stooges and those elements in the liberation movement that delight in vilifying their fellow freedom fighters may be quite thin. In both cases the effect is to discredit the movement in the eyes of the people and to blur the demarcation lines between the enemy and us.

The immediate programme before us is to defeat the Nat regime and its apartheid policy.³ In this regard we can count on our side a wide range of forces who are hostile to all forms of colour discrimination, who would give us their moral support and who are ready to harass the enemy if only through taunts and jeers from a distance. Others are prepared to fight oppression to the bitter end, even though they differ with us on the means to be used in fighting against it. All these are valuable allies and even potential freedom fighters. We should reason with them constantly and patiently, and invite them to advance as far as they can go. This is an important aspect of our work. But the force that will shatter the enemy and on which we should concentrate all our resources is the political organisations we ourselves have built and which have led the people in the struggle for a free South Africa for more than 80 years. Our main task is to link up and to confront the enemy with a mighty force that enjoys the undivided loyalty of the oppressed people as a whole.

Unity is not easily achieved when dealing with several organisations, some of which have a large membership and have dominated the political scene throughout their history, while others are comparatively small and fear to be swallowed up by the big ones. In this connection, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) will play a key role, and

a firm declaration committing these two organisations to a joint programme will represent a major breakthrough that will cut down more than 50 per cent of our problems. Unity between the ANC and the PAC has been blocked by differences over the Freedom Charter,⁴ the role of communists and other national groups and allegations of extreme nationalism. It may well be that the Sino-Soviet dispute has crept in,⁵ making it even more difficult to bridge the gap. The relations between the ANC and the non-racial Liberal Party were warm on the national level and lukewarm in some provinces. Again the main bone of contention was the reluctance of the Liberal Party to work with communists. But even in areas where relations were not zealous, contact was always maintained and ideas regularly exchanged.

At the same time the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), a small but vocal organisation concentrated mainly in the Cape, makes venomous attacks on the Congress Alliance (that is, the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured People's Congress (CPC), the white Congress of Democrats (COD) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)) and labels all these as bourgeois nationalist reformist organisations that collaborate with the enemy. There is no other group that is as bitter in its condemnation of the Congress movement as the NEUM. Trotskyites are active in its ranks and the Congress movement seems to be discredited in their eyes by the mere fact that it admits communists as members. The NEUM has never been able to answer the widespread charge that there is no other organisation in the liberation movement in South Africa that has created so much disunity and confusion among the oppressed people as the NEUM. For this reason any suggested programme of unity which includes the NEUM immediately rouses strong opposition from all sides.

An examination of the policy documents of the NEUM, the utterances of its membership and the whole record of the organisation bear out this charge, and the general hostility towards them is understandable. Speaking for myself, my thoughts and actions are influenced by the knowledge that the ANC is in the forefront of the struggle, that its Freedom Charter is the most radical policy document ever adopted by a political organisation in South Africa, and that it is the organisation that will deliver the final blow against the enemy. But I also believe that a united liberation movement will ensure us speedy victory. In this connection there is no danger in making the unity programme broad enough to include anyone in the liberation movement. If any particular organisation does not want to join us we will fight without it. If it does join us it will be bound by the conditions laid down as a basis for unity.

With the exception of the white members of the COD and the SACP who are kept in Pretoria jail and women prisoners who are kept in the Barberton and Kroonstad prisons, all the organisations mentioned above are represented on Robben Island.⁶ In addition we have as our intimate comrades members of the South West Africa Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), iron men who remain undaunted and whose hostility towards and struggle against apartheid in this prison have never flagged. We have also recently been joined by a few members of the South African Students Organisation (SASO) and the Black People's Convention (BPC), all of whom are fine and dedicated people.

A new organisation that has recently joined the progressive forces is the Black Women's Federation, whose aim it is to rally African, Coloured and Indian women around the issue of human rights and equal opportunities. It is active in various parts of the country. It promises to become a powerful force capable of giving dynamic leadership to the women of South Africa.

Here in prison, policy differences do not prevent us from presenting a united front against the enemy. This experience can be generalised and applied to our political work outside jail. The two situations differ fundamentally in one respect: here we are primarily concerned with the general improvement of jail conditions and with resisting any particular measure we consider unjust. But the general fight against racial oppression immediately raises the important question of the kind of social order that will be introduced after victory. This is not an insurmountable obstacle. A careful study of the programmes of the various organisations discloses no basic differences, and in some cases there are even remarkable similarities, a fact which removes the only grounds on which our experiences in jail may be considered inapplicable to the situation in which the liberation movement wages battle. What people usually lose sight of is that the finer details of our future social order will not depend merely on abstract theorising but will be the product of empirical conditions at the moment of victory. Our preoccupation at the present moment should be the overthrow of the oppressor, and the issue of the precise social order is secondary as long as we agree that it should be stripped of racial discrimination. In addition we are already united by a common hatred of oppression and the desire to be free. There is general agreement that all effective means should be used in fighting the enemy. The ANC has raised the largest liberation army in the country, which has fought in Zimbabwe and is ready to strike at the first opportunity. The PAC also has its trained men and may be expected to take the field in due course. The Communist Party, which has worked closely with us throughout its history of 55 years and which demands full equality between black and white, was amongst the first organisations to take the decision to wage an armed struggle. It has given the ANC its full support all the way. In 1970 the NEUM sent in a few men from abroad to start training people inside the country. Legally the Liberal Party does not exist and prior to its dissolution it renounced violence, but it is common knowledge that an influential section of its membership, including its Vice-President, Randolph Vigne, operated through the African Resistance Movement (ARM).

Thus there is a large area of agreement on the main issues. The next step should be fairly easy. A united liberation movement that enjoys the solid support of the oppressed people as a whole, which does not have rivalries to divert its attention, and which can devote all its resources to the single objective of crushing the enemy will be a turning point in the history of our country. However, although there are no basic differences in the present programmes, we cannot ignore the impact of world events. In particular the future attitude of our people will be influenced by the fact that whilst the imperialists are on the side of the enemy, the socialist countries are among those who support our struggle. The fact that we now have two socialist countries on our borders will have repercussions on our policies.

The unity we are advocating is a unity of existing political organisations in the movement, of those who are already waging the armed struggle, those who are still preparing to do so and even those who have no such plans. It is the type of unity that is imposed from above by that minority of conscious freedom fighters who are aware of the dangers of disunity and of the value of concerted action.

Stable political unity involves not only the mere amalgamation or co-operation of the various population groups on matters of mutual concern. In the final analysis unity must be the expression of what is actually taking place amongst the oppressed people and will go hand in hand with the acceptance of the idea of a full equality amongst them and those progressive whites who fight on our side.

The readiness of the more affluent blacks to share economic and social benefits with the less privileged sections of the population, the large-scale emergence of mixed activities like joint labour and parents' organisations, co-operative societies, promotion of joint trade enterprises and professional associations and sports and recreation bodies, the introduction of the principle of equal pay for equal work and the increase in intermarriage between population groups will all indicate that the message of unity has penetrated deeply into the ranks of the people. These developments cannot be set fully in motion until white supremacy is removed with all the legal restrictions and deep-seated social prejudices that accompany it. Only then will there be unlimited scope for tremendous possibilities, when through daily contact the common people will overcome their isolation and prejudices, and when a new generation living in the same residential areas and attending the same schools, playing and singing together, will have arisen. But there are areas where such restrictions do not apply and where it is possible to initiate such trends immediately.

Paradoxically, the independence of the Bantustans is a by-product of our own activities.⁷ If we had not stubbornly resisted apartheid during the past 26 years, exposed its hardship and carried the fight against it, independence would have not come about. Apartheid was conceived as a means of preserving white supremacy forever. But when it became clear that we would resist it to the bitter end and that colonialism was in full retreat everywhere, the regime changed its tune and decided to grant self-government to the Bantustans with a view to ultimate independence. In this way the regime hoped to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, it would give them some constructive solution to offer to a critical world and, on the other, it would help deflect the demand for emancipation and preserve white rule outside the Bantustans.

This paradox throws some light on the position of these Bantustans *vis-à-vis* the white regime. With armed men of the national liberation movement poised across the borders, the Bantustans gain room to squeeze concessions from the Nat regime. This is an unavoidable spin-off but cannot be expected to last. Furthermore, the whole question of a cluster of independent Bantustans subserving the economy of white South Africa bristles with contradictions and points of friction.

The decision to resort to violence has brought its own problems. In a liberation movement that has for half a century used non-violent methods of struggle and included legal and illegal organisations working together, the decision to switch over to violence could not have been an easy one. Some may have opposed it on principle whilst others may have argued that the proposed switch-over was premature, and that it would merely afford the enemy an excuse to smash the movement. Nevertheless, the decision was taken and the new phase opened with a real bang. First there was the curtain-raiser on the Witwatersrand in October 1961, when power pylons were blown up and phone wires cut. This was followed by the sensational emergence of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK)⁸ on 16 December of the same year, when acts of sabotage took place in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Durban. In spite of what happened in October, the regime was caught unawares. For two years thereafter, white South Africa lived in fear. Apart from MK, the National Liberation Committee (NLC)⁹ was also active and attacked selected targets. At last, after many reverses, we had taken the initiative and struck hard blows. We were elated by our initial successes. Even those who had first doubted the wisdom of the new line were swept away by the tide of excitement that accompanied this brief spell of activity. Few of our men had received professional training in sabotage. On the whole they acquitted themselves well and deserved the praise that has been heaped upon them. However, we were not strong enough to maintain the offensive. Within 24 months the regime had cracked down on us, crippled our organisations and stamped out the acts of sabotage. This was the first serious setback we suffered. We were forced to abandon activities that enabled us to come to grips with the enemy and could have paralysed the economy of the country, and that would have enabled us to speak from strength. When the blasting of the Pass Office buildings had ceased¹⁰ and power pylons were no longer tumbling down and many of those who had made sabotage such a lethal weapon were jailed or driven out of the country, voices were again heard that we had acted prematurely and underestimated the strength of the enemy. Others even argued that we made a cardinal error by launching the acts of sabotage with inadequately trained men and by embarking on such acts without having trained our own armed units to defend our organisations when the enemy retaliated.

Acts of sabotage were snuffed out because, in our enthusiasm for violence as a weapon to strike at the enemy, we neglected the important work of strengthening the political organisations by recruiting new members, holding branch meetings, conducting political classes, and using legal platforms to reach the masses of the people. In almost all cases the members of the new sabotage organisations were recruited from the liberation movement, which, in the process, was drained of many of its most active and experienced functionaries. The net result was a weakened movement at a time when it should have been raised to its feet.

Having been forced to abandon sabotage, which was relatively easy to execute, we now concentrated on the more difficult preparations for the armed struggle. MK began sending out recruits for military training in 1962. Later other organisations followed suit. Both the ANC and the PAC have well-trained and disciplined detachments whose mere existence should be a

source of pride to us all and which remind us of olden times when we commanded our own armies and could defend our freedom. MK has made several efforts to open a route for our men to fight in South Africa. The PAC made a similar attempt. All were foiled by the enemy with the result that 14 years after the first MK recruits were sent out, the armed struggle is still to begin inside South Africa. Even the independence of Mozambique and Angola is no guarantee that our problems in this regard have been solved. Newly independent states have numerous problems to contend with and they may find it quite difficult to do what they wish. The initiative is still in enemy hands and the most pressing task, after the question of unity, is to wrest that initiative from the enemy. I have confidence that this historic moment will come and that the results will more than compensate for the agonising moments of suspense and tension the movement has experienced for more than a decade. For some years the movement has been operating from abroad, where our people are doing magnificent work. They have isolated and weakened the enemy considerably and continue to pile on the pressure, forcing the enemy to defend its policy to a world that is alive to the dangers of racism. But inside the country we are paralysed by the imprisonment of hundreds of active freedom fighters, by many fleeing the country and by restrictions of all kinds. The movement is well aware of this and during the past decade has sent trained men into the country to reorganise the movement. The casualties have been heavy and many were caught before they carried out their respective missions.

Time is of the essence and we cannot afford to hesitate. One of the most burning issues in the country today is the independence of the Transkei and other Bantustans, and the whole question of our tactics towards apartheid institutions. Separate development is just another name for apartheid and the use of the phrase to describe the same thing must be taken as an admission by the regime that apartheid as a political concept is discredited. The liberation movement totally rejects separate development and has boycotted the elections to the legislative assemblies in the affected areas.

It is not possible to examine the merits and demerits of the highly controversial question of the boycott as a political weapon here. Suffice it to say that the very first elections held in the Transkei in 1963 revealed serious weaknesses on our part. The question of whether or not the elections should be boycotted was treated by some as one of principle rather than of tactics, and the actual decision taken bore no relationship whatsoever to the question whether we were in a position to carry out that resolution. Of course, tactics must flow out of principle if opportunism is to be avoided. The test is always whether the pursuit of a particular line will enable us to reach our objectives sooner or whether it will retard the struggle. It would have been correct for us to take part in the elections if this would speed up the defeat of apartheid. As it is, the tactics we used showed we were out of touch with the actual situation. We made no proper assessment of the position and were unable to predict the reaction of the people, and not a single organisation was strong enough to launch the boycott campaign. Although the majority of those who voted in the 1963 Transkei elections emphatically rejected separate development, they chose to use the legislative assembly as a platform to fight apartheid. Two other elections have since been held in

the Transkei and there was a swing in favour of the Transkei National Independence Party (TNIP) and independence of the area. In other Bantustans the trend was similar.

Some may prefer not to say a word in regard to the mistakes we have made and the weaknesses shown in the course of our political work. The fact that apartheid institutions are in operation in certain areas is a reflection on us, and a measure of our own weaknesses. Of course, it is our duty to condemn and expose those who have gone over to the enemy and who believe that freedom can be attained by working within the framework of apartheid institutions. But merely to vent our frustration on all those who have gone into these institutions irrespective of their motives for doing so and the line they pursue inside these bodies is not only dogmatic and naive, but entails the danger of alienating potential allies. We should concentrate more on constructive self-criticism and on frankly and publicly acknowledging our own mistakes to our own people. Far from being a sign of weakness it is a measure of one's strength and confidence, which will pay dividends in the end.

The movement, however, faces an entirely new development: the independence of the Transkei, which will be followed by other Bantustans. The Transkei will have an independent legislature, judiciary and executive and may control its foreign relations. Such independence will be the product of separate development, a policy that we unequivocally reject. It will mean breaking up into small separate states a country we seek to free intact. The crucial question is whether we stick to our tactics and ask people to boycott independence or whether the moment has come for a review of the whole question. People in the affected areas will approach the question in a practical way. The heavy and visible yoke of white oppression will have gone. For the first time since conquest the people will run their own affairs. Now Africans will be able to be judges, magistrates, attorneys-general, inspectors of education, postmasters, army and police officers, and they will occupy other top positions in the civil service. Do we ask them to stick to the status quo ante – the maintenance of white supremacy in their areas – and refuse to accept these positions? If we were unable to carry the people on the boycott question before independence, can we hope to succeed after independence? Would it not be far better to consider independence as an accomplished fact and then call upon the people in these so-called free territories to help in the fight for a democratic South Africa? Would acceptance of independence as an accomplished fact limit our freedom of action when these territories apply for admission to the United Nations Organisation (UN) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)? It seems to me that to ask the people to reject independence would bring the movement into conflict with their wishes and considerably multiply our problems.

Some people have argued that the liberation movement is now preparing for armed struggle and that it is incorrect for us to waste valuable time examining tactics on the independence of the Bantustans and on the boycott of separate institutions. They regard all talk of independence as mere propaganda on the part of the regime and criticise those who consider such talk seriously. They refuse to examine the problems the movement has been grappling with for the past 14 years and will make no constructive suggestions as to how these should be solved. They

insist that the reason why the armed struggle has not commenced is because the movement is planning to attack from bases located outside the country instead of trying to do so from inside. They further argue that the boycott question was settled 14 years ago and that it is wrong to reopen it now.

In matters of this nature, rigidity is as dangerous as wishful thinking and opportunism. The mere decision to wage an armed struggle does not mean that armed operations have already begun and can be no excuse for abandoning the vital work of organising the masses of the people inside the country. An armed struggle is not a question of simply acquiring a gun and shooting. The people should be drawn in and for every man in the front line there should be 10 others to help in the fight. From the beginning, the aim should be to develop the armed struggle into a people's war. Victory is impossible if we fail in this. Concretely, we should explain our policy carefully and tell the country why we have turned to violence; that separate development is no answer to our problems; and that all peaceful methods have failed to rid the country of white supremacy. Far from being a diversion from the armed struggle, mass mobilisation is an essential part of preparing the country for the struggle ahead. Moreover, tactical decisions must be reviewed from time to time and adapted to the changing situation. When subsequent events show that a decision previously taken was wrong, we should have no hesitation whatsoever in reviewing it. The enemy may speed up the independence of the Bantustans to improve its own public image and that of the Bantustan leaders. On independence the people of these areas may regard the Nat regime as a benefactor and the so-called Bantustan leaders as the messiahs who have liberated them without bloodshed. The traitors of yesterday may become the honoured redeemers of today. Independence will give South Africa a ring of buffer zones on its borders, where Africans will be able to govern themselves. When the armed struggle begins, will these independent areas fall within the sphere of our operations? Can we really hope to get the support of the masses in these areas? Will we not be playing into the hands of the enemy who would be happy to see black men massacre one another? Can our operations against the enemy ever be effective if these enclaves are excluded?

De facto acknowledgement of these fragmentary mini-states would not in any way oblige us to support their admission to the UN, the OAU and other world bodies. In fact, it will be our duty to oppose such admission because their acceptance as members of the international community will represent the final triumph of separate development.

A related problem is the emergence of several political parties in the Bantustans and amongst the Coloureds. This immediately raises the question of the relationship of the liberation movement to these new parties. It is easy to dismiss all of them as a collection of traitors with whom we will settle accounts one day. To brand them as sell-outs helps to divert public attention from our own weaknesses and mistakes. By all means, let us attack those who choose to work with the enemy and isolate them. But often in issues of this nature solutions are not so simple. Throughout its history the movement has drawn into its ranks many who once believed that their aspirations could be realised by co-operation with the government, but who were

forced by truth and experience to change their views, and who later occupied top positions in our political organisations. We can reason with the pro-apartheid parties in the Bantustans and amongst the Coloureds and Indians and at least try to neutralise them. The anti-apartheid parties are amongst the forces inside the country that continue to expose the evils of colour oppression and in their respective areas fill the void that was left when we were driven underground or into exile. There may be plenty to criticise in the policies and tactics of the Democratic Party of the Transvaal, the Seoposengwe Party of Bophuthatswana and the Coloured Labour Party. A major criticism against all of them is that they confine themselves only to legal activities, when the limitations of such an approach have become all too plain. But which political organisation anywhere in history has been free from criticism? Can we afford to label anti-apartheid parties such as these as stooges merely because their tactics differ from ours? Would it not be in the interests of the struggle as a whole to work with them and give them encouragement in their efforts to defeat apartheid? Or better still, has the moment not arrived for us to establish our own political organisations in the Bantustans through which we can address the people directly and through which we can work with other anti-apartheid groups? But a divided movement in which freedom fighters fight among themselves cannot win over any substantial section of the population. Only a united movement can successfully undertake the task of uniting the country.

The success of the regime in carrying out its separate development manoeuvres highlights the weakness of the liberation movement, particularly in the countryside. Throughout its history the movement has been essentially an urban movement with hardly any significant following in the countryside.

The chiefs have played a key role in the acceptance of the regime's Bantu Authorities and Bantustan schemes. However, attempts to place all blame for the introduction of Bantu Authorities on them are made hollow by the introduction of the Urban Bantu Councils in the principal cities, where the liberation movement commands more influence. This emphasises the importance of looking at our own weaknesses and problems objectively and from all angles.

One of the major contradictions is that the Bantustans will be dismembered from the Republic of South Africa when economic forces demand ever greater cohesion between South Africa and the new 'homelands'. The major industrial areas of the country all fall outside the Bantustans and so far the whole border industries scheme has not lived up to the much-vaunted promises that it would stem the influx of labour from the Bantustans to the Witwatersrand, the Durban-Pinetown area, the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage area and Cape Town and its environs. Moreover, the main network of rail and roads falls outside the Bantustans. It will require large capital reserves to solve these economic and financial problems. In the meantime acute social problems are likely to arise. Hardly any critical review of the policy of separate development has omitted the glaring contradiction of squeezing more than three-fifths of the country's population into less than 13 per cent of the highly over-populated and highly over-stocked part of the country, whilst the tiny minority of whites clings to the rest, monopolising the most fertile

areas, its mines and industrial areas, which were built with our own sweat and blood. No serious comment on the whole situation can fail to point out that one of the weakest links in the whole scheme is the simple fact that more Africans live in the so-called white areas than in the Bantustans today, and no people will ever accept any system that gives them political and other basic rights away from their homes and places of employment. The banner that should be hoisted on all the rooftops of our country should declare that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities.

The campaigns we have waged since the present regime came to power in 1948 have been mainly in the cities. There have been some stirring demonstrations in the rural areas involving opposition to the Rehabilitation Scheme, the pass system, the dipping tanks and the Bantu Authorities Act. In some cases the movement inspired the demonstrations itself but, in the main, they were spontaneous. At no time did we reach the level of organisation in the country areas that existed in the cities.

In exploiting our weakness in the rural areas, the regime probably realised that the independence of each Bantustan would result in a sharp drop or total disappearance of whatever following we had there. Once people enjoy the right to manage their own affairs they have won the only right for which they could join the liberation movement. We would be very optimistic if, in spite of these developments, we still expected much support from an independent territory unless we devised new methods of neutralising them or drawing them nearer to us through the exploitation of some of their unresolved major grievances, such as the land question and economic independence. But an even more serious danger for us is looming on the horizon. Our movement is the product of the very social conditions against which we fight and is influenced by changes of these conditions. The emergence of no less than eight ethnic states requiring qualified men to fill the new positions that will become available will revive regionalism and clannish attitudes and cast a severe strain on a movement that is recruited from all the ethnic groups and that lives in exile under extremely difficult conditions, where divisions and quarrels can be very frustrating. Already the fact that some men who were once politically active have crossed over to the enemy should serve as a warning to us of the centrifugal forces future developments are likely to set in motion. If we do not iron out our differences and close ranks immediately we may find it difficult, if not impossible, to resist the divisive pressures once independence becomes a fact.

In this regard we can draw important lessons from the standards set by our Indian people. They are the only national group in the country that maintains a high degree of political unity. One central body – the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) – has for 56 years served as the undisputed mouthpiece of the entire community. In its manipulation of separate development, in so far as the Indian community is concerned, the regime indirectly acknowledges this fact. Although ‘elections’ have been held in almost all the Bantustans and amongst the Coloureds, the regime – realising the strength of the South African Indian Congress and the unity of the

Indian people – refuses to allow elections to the statutory body, the South African Indian Council, and relies partly on nominated members and partly on those ‘elected’ by electoral colleges. Of course, in spite of the numerous restrictions on the economic development of the Indians, they have made great progress in this field and class divisions are emerging. They are the only black group here that has produced a merchant class and now they are developing a class of industrialists relying on enormous capital and large-scale wage labour. Up to the present moment this particular development has had no significant effect on the unity of the Indian community.

A final word on the question of our weaknesses. Whilst the enemy has penetrated deeply into our ranks and uses our own people to retard our progress, we tend to treat him as a homogeneous group with a uniform and unalterable attitude on race matters, holding that no useful purpose will be served by trying to reason with him.

Feelings become particularly strong when our people think of the Afrikaner, the group that dominates the political institutions of the country, and sober discussion becomes difficult. The attitude is understandable, since it is mainly the Afrikaners who enforce the regime’s policy and who, as soldiers, policemen, pass and poll tax officials and jailers, are in daily contact with the black man. It is mainly Afrikaners who serve us in the railways, post offices and other public services, often with contempt and discourtesy. In addition, although lately there have been exceptions, their literature portrays us in an unfavourable light and shows no proper respect for our history, culture, aspirations and for the role we have played in the development of the country. These things have made us bitter and reluctant to have any dealings with the Afrikaner. It may well be that the black man’s hostility and contempt for the Afrikaner has also been influenced by the well-known hostility and contempt of the Englishman for this group. Be that as it may, in matters of this nature we cannot afford to be governed only by our emotions. Afrikaner politicians have no monopoly of their people just as we have none over ours. We ought to speak directly to the Afrikaner and fully explain our position. Honest men are to be found on both sides of the colour line and the Afrikaner is no exception. We have a strong case and the Afrikaner leaders will command undivided support only as long as their people are ignorant of the issues at stake. To penetrate their ranks enables us to be informed on trends of thought on current problems and to base our own actions on accurate data and not on mere speculation.

This also has relevance to the question of dialogue. We have always favoured peaceful settlement and urged our people to avoid violence. But the regime took advantage of our desire for peace and burdened us with more repression, forcing us to turn to violence. A violent clash is now unavoidable. When we have fought it out and reduced this country to ashes it will still be necessary for us to sit down together and talk about the problems of reconstruction – the black man and the white man, the African and the Afrikaner. But we are not interested in talks between Vorster¹¹ and Houphouet-Boigny¹² and any suggested solutions within the framework of apartheid would be an insult to us.

The problems facing us appear insurmountable only so long as we try to solve them through a liberation movement which is divided and which cannot rally the people to concentrate all their resources on the defeat of the common enemy. We will be able to consolidate past gains and to face the future with confidence only if we link up without delay. Within the country the vast majority of the people, including a significant section of the whites, are at war with apartheid. In Parliament the most forthright condemnation of apartheid has come from Helen Suzman, who until 1973 was the only member of the Progressive Party in the House. She has spelt out the numerous hardships it has brought to the black man. She has emphatically denounced detention without trial and called for the repeal of the Terrorism Act and the release of all political prisoners. The return to Parliament of six members of the Progressive Party during the 1973 general election revealed an increase in the number of whites who are in favour of a non-racial South Africa. In addition, the split in the United Party, the official opposition party in Parliament, the emergence of the Reform Party and its merger with the Progressive Party has strengthened the anti-apartheid forces in Parliament. Not only is the new party – the Progressive Reform Party – playing an important role in educating the whites on the evils of colour discrimination, but by condemning apartheid it is exposing the regime's propaganda that in opposing racial oppression the black man is merely responding to incitement by communist agitators.

Outside Parliament there is a wide range of influential individuals, groups and organisations who clamour for the total scrapping of apartheid. Industrialists, economists and other intellectuals, the Institute of Race Relations, the Christian Institute, churchmen of all denominations and other public figures have become more outspoken in their criticism of apartheid. The activities of student organisations like SASO and the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and students outside these bodies from the black and English universities are particularly noteworthy. They have shown tremendous initiative and courage in the face of difficulties and have staged successful anti-apartheid demonstrations. NUSAS has long been in the field. Since the early 1960s it has concentrated its main attack on the suppression of civil liberties and supporting the general demand for the abolition of detention without trial, the repeal of the Terrorism Act, the release of political prisoners and helping the latter with study funds. The links that NUSAS is trying to develop with Frelimo of Mozambique show that a rather remarkable development has taken place in the thinking of our white students. SASO and the BPC are comparatively new and entered the freedom battle when the enemy was at the height of its power. They have acquitted themselves well and are worthy comrades in the fight for democracy.

A significant development between 1971 and 1974 was the waves of strikes by black workers that erupted throughout the country. Their demands centred on higher wages and a general improvement in working conditions. There was hardly any evidence that the workers were now looking beyond the limited horizon of purely local and immediate interests. The speed at which the strikes escalated, the stubbornness of and solidarity among the workers, and their defiant attitude showed that in their respective factories they were no longer prepared to

tolerate any kind of discrimination. In the struggle against apartheid the black workers will strike the most decisive blows. Without their participation the impact of the liberation movement must remain limited. Fortunately they are in the centre of the battle against racial discrimination and constitute the mighty force that will lead the way to a democratic South Africa.

The anti-apartheid forces are strong and vocal both inside and outside Parliament. Their continued existence during such a critical period and the rise of new organisations in place of those that have been driven underground show that the masses refuse to accept white supremacy and that in spite of the great damage the enemy has done, ultimate victory will certainly be ours. The enemy has reached the height of its power and cannot be stronger than it is now, whereas we are growing stronger and will ultimately outstrip him.

South African whites are making a fine contribution to the struggle. Since 1962 no less than 45 of them have been jailed for a variety of political offences ranging from sabotage to furthering the aims of a banned organisation. The majority of these belong to the COD, and the rest to the ARM. The severity of the sentences and the danger of being ostracised by the white community do not deter them. One was hanged for sabotage, two were sentenced to life imprisonment, whilst others are serving long sentences. In the case of the Weinbergs, both husband and wife were jailed together with their daughter.¹³ The COD has since 1953 worked closely with the ANC, SAIC, CPC and SACTU and provides a platform for all those whites who fight for full equality between black and white. From the outset they were subjected to all forms of political persecution and no less than 23 of them were arrested for treason in 1956. The COD has brought to the movement a group of dedicated men and women who enjoy all the numerous advantages and comforts the whites are privileged to have, but have chosen to identify themselves with the struggle of the black man. Their record is impressive and right up to the present moment there is a hard core that mans the fortress of freedom in the firm conviction of the justness of the cause.

The ANC is part of a powerful alliance in southern Africa involving Frelimo, ZAPU, the MPLA and SWAPO. We cannot resist being optimistic that the prospects of a new era have been greatly advanced by the liberation of Mozambique and Angola. It is only a question of time before the ideal conditions exist which the movement can fully exploit to come to grips with the last racist regime in our continent. When that moment comes, the enemy may be forced to fight on many fronts.

The climax of our own struggle will begin at a time when the rest of Africa has been liberated from colonial oppression and when the African states can give us material and moral support. It is the African states and the OAU which make it possible for the liberation movement abroad to exist and to prepare for the struggle that lies ahead. That support is bound to grow as the African states gradually solve their economic and social problems, and the prospect of victory will be even brighter. The socialist countries have attempted to meet all our needs and to make available all the wealth of experience they possess in solving the kinds of problems we are sure to meet in future clashes with the enemy. Above all, the condemnation of racial

discrimination by the whole world and the expulsion of South Africa from many world bodies are a crushing diplomatic defeat for it and a great victory for us.

Forced by internal and external pressures the regime is backing down on several fronts. Today there are so-called 'mixed' sports in the country and some theatre and other public facilities are being made available to blacks. Our main demand is the total abolition of all forms of white supremacy and the extension of the vote to all South Africans. These relaxations, clumsily made and bureaucratically controlled, do not at all remove our grievances. But at least they show once more that the government has become sensitive to pressure. We have consistently condemned the colour bar and maintained that no man of principle could surrender his dignity and submit to it. After persecuting and even slaughtering our people for more than 60 years for demanding these facilities, white South Africa is at last beginning to acknowledge publicly that our grievances were genuine and our demands reasonable, and that the government was wrong. In particular, the granting of independence to the Transkei shows that we were right to fight racial oppression and to demand the right to manage our own affairs in the country as a whole.

But we cannot exploit the strength of the anti-apartheid forces internally and externally without a strong and united liberation movement. A powerful movement that is able to rally and co-ordinate the political activities of all the oppressed people and with a firm grip on the course of future developments is the first condition for victory. The internal and external climate may fluctuate; today it may favour us and tomorrow the enemy. We will be safe only if we rely primarily on our own strength and if we concentrate our resources on building a machine that can vigorously prosecute the struggle and free our people from the evils of race oppression even if we are alone in the world.

The ANC can fulfil its historic mission single-handedly, if need be. It has survived the most ferocious onslaughts from the enemy, launched powerful campaigns from underground, rallied world opinion on our side and is now well poised for the beginning of a new era in the fight against white supremacy in our country. Its daring and initiative have encouraged new organisations to emerge and join the struggle. The PAC was hardly one year old when it launched its 1960 campaign, and a political organisation that was baptised by the fire of action would be a worthy ally. Few developments in the history of the liberation movement would assure victory more than unity between the ANC and the PAC. This is a crucial moment for big decisions and time is not on our side. I have confidence that my views on this matter are identical with those of Oliver Tambo¹⁴ and Potlako Leballo¹⁵ and feel certain that both of them will take the initiative to remove the disturbing uncertainty arising from the existence of two rival organisations and two rival armies competing against each other on important questions. I like to think that their lead will receive the support of Yusuf Dadoo, Reggie September, Rusty Bernstein, I.B. Tabata and Randolph Vigne.¹⁶