

South African Blacks Have Started to Rise Up

By Beyers Naude

The era of protest politics has been set aside in South Africa, replaced by the first phase of a militant revolutionary era. As one youth leader put it last year: "We are now at war."

The 25 years since the massacre in Sharpeville have brought increasing polarization to our politics. The ruling Nationalist Party points to the new Constitution and other legislative reform as proof of real change. Most black leaders disagree and maintain that, taking everything into account, the position of blacks has substantially worsened in the last 25 years.

In the meantime, indisputably, black opinion on political issues has become much better informed, support for resistance has become more widespread both in urban and rural areas, black attitudes have become much more militant and black actions are much better organized. In reaction, white political feelings, in both the Afrikaans and English-speaking communities, have shifted noticeably to the right. This has been going on for some time, as demonstrated by the growth of the Conservative Party, but the recent unrest in



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has suffered under political oppression, economic exploitation, educational neglect and denigrating white attitudes. For too long, the authorities (and those who put them in power) have ignored the warning pleas of millions of young people. For too long, people have been detained, tortured, banned and imprisoned without adequate cause. And for too long, the regime has succeeded in cajoling, manipulating, bribing or pressuring blacks and others to collaborate in implementing apartheid in the hope that they will be incorporated in the system.

Now the moment has arrived when the people, after decades and decades of silent suffering, have started to rise up — burning Government property, bombing the homes and businesses of black officials and other stooges, killing black police officers. Many of us who oppose the regime have foreseen these developments for years — and we believe that all of it could have been prevented if our pleas had been heard and heeded. But now that this situation has become a bitter reality, what awaits us?

South Africans, both black and white, will now have to agonize on how to resolve the crisis. Yet a serious obligation also rests on the most powerful and affluent country in the world to reconsider its responsibility toward South Africa. The United States must help us to minimize the emerging violence and maximize the chances of peaceful change.

To begin with, it must recognize that its lack of meaningful support for the South African black community and its struggle for liberation has created feelings of deep anger and animosity not only toward Washington and its policy of "constructive engagement," but also toward many American institutions and initiatives in South Africa. A word of serious warning has to be sounded to the American Government and people: Do not be surprised if the anger of black South Africans eventually turns to hatred or rejection of an American presence in Africa. Take cognizance now of these feelings of anger and bitterness and consider active steps to create a better attitude.

Second, Americans must disabuse themselves of the bogus concept that the root cause of the unrest in our country is a Communist onslaught created and manipulated by Moscow. Please recognize that the policy of apartheid is the real threat to peace and stability in my country — and all of southern Africa.

Third, Americans should give more serious attention and weight to the pleas of the churches and other organizations in South Africa known for their opposition to apartheid. Please listen to these groups, which are trying to do everything in their power

to bring about fundamental change by peaceful means or, where peaceful change is no longer possible, with a minimum of violence. Americans should also do all they can to support the efforts in their own country — by churches, academic institutions and other organizations — to press their Government to change its disastrous policy toward South Africa.

Fourth, the United States should terminate the policy of "constructive engagement" and initiate more meaningful pressures to hasten fundamental, nonviolent change. The whole disinvestment debate could soon become irrelevant if the current unrest in South Africa continues unabated — for before long it will have created such an unstable economic climate that overseas investors will be frightened to do business here. Before long, they will decide of their own free will not to support any further investment. They will conclude that the risk is too great and will initiate steps toward disinvestment.

Fifth, Washington should encourage Pretoria to ease up. I am convinced that no return to stability is possible here as long as the black leader Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners remain in prison. Americans must understand this, and they should demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners, the right of all exiles to return, the release of all detainees, the unbanning

Protest politics are set aside

of the banned and the banished. They should also encourage Pretoria to grant all South African people the freedom to elect their own leaders to initiate a process of negotiated change.

Sixth, the United States must make it clear that it does not want to see things get worse. The situation in South Africa may eventually become so ungovernable that the authorities would be forced to declare a state of

emergency — and this could very easily lead to military rule of some kind. Such a development would have disastrous consequences for the cause of justice and peace in South Africa, fanning the flames of violent revolution and eventually leading the country into civil war. If the United States is sincere in its concern to prevent further violence, it should take effective steps now to prevent the establishment of military rule, with its serious consequences not only for black and white South Africans, but also for the rest of southern Africa.

Finally, the American Government and people must reassess their policy toward Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe — a policy that is creating increasing frustration, cynicism and bitterness toward the United States in all these countries. The State Department clearly feels their Marxist tendencies and fears to lend them American support. But the sooner both the United States and South Africa accept that the political change that black South Africa wish to bring about will inevitably involve changes in the capitalist system of free enterprise — a change toward some form of socialism — the less traumatic and painful the transition toward majority rule will be.

I do not believe that the United States can determine the direction of momentum of change in South Africa, but it can help the South African Government to understand and accept what is happening. It can also enlist the support of other Western countries to prepare South Africa for themselves for the upheaval of fundamental change that is on its way. I share the fears of many here that the process is going to be painful — as bloody. But the sooner the apartheid system is dismantled, the greater the hope of shortening this period of bloodshed and hastening the transition to nonracial democratic rule.

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What America should do

the black townships is creating a sharp new sense of insecurity and fear.

All indications are that 1985 will see an exacerbation of the hardships endured by the majority of South Africans. It will also surely bring an extension of the struggles waged in 1984.

The recession is deepening, with companies going bankrupt daily and thousands of people being thrown out of work. Wages are not keeping up with rising prices. Meanwhile, as the Government cuts spending on education, conditions in the schools will get worse. As bosses try to hold down wages and push up productivity, tension in the factories will grow. And, as local authorities persist in calling on the police and the military, our communities will surely remain a battleground.

It is clear to me that this year will bring more polarization between the white ruling classes and the majority of the people, more clashes between the police and striking students and workers, more injuries and deaths. It does not require the insight of a prophet to predict that, unless the Government initiates clear and fundamental change, the unrest throughout the country will increase — to the point where violence becomes endemic and eventually uncontrollable.

For too long, the black community

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U!M! out of South Africa!



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WHAT IS APARTHEID?

The word "apartheid" is an Afrikaner word meaning "separateness." Apartheid, or separate development, has been the official policy of the Government of the Republic of South Africa since 1948. It is a policy of rigid racial segregation, designed to ensure the separate social and economic development of the racial groups, and is prescribed and supported by the constitution and legal system of the country. It is a policy that has enabled White South Africans, who comprise less than one fifth of the population, to control the Republic's affairs. It is a policy that has deprived South Africa's Black majority of its citizenship in the land of their birth. Black South Africans are told, without mincing any words, that their only reason for being in South Africa is to sell their labour to the whites. Former Prime Minister Verwoerd has said in an address to the House of Assembly:

"Reduced to its simplest form the problem is nothing else than this: we want to keep South Africa white... 'Keeping it white' can only mean one thing, namely, white domination--not 'leadership,' not 'guidance' but 'control,' 'supremacy.'"

SOUTH AFRICAN LAWS:

- IMMORALITY ACT--Prohibits sexual intercourse and marriage between Whites and any person of another racial group.
- BANTU URBAN AREAS ACT--Prohibits Africans from entering a "White area" or remaining there for more than 72 hours without a pass or a work permit.
- GROUP AREAS ACT--Enables the government to designate certain areas for particular racial groups or subgroups. Millions of Black Africans, Coloureds, and Asians have been forcibly moved under this law.
- SEPARATE AMENITIES ACT--Allows for the reservation of premises or vehicles for the use of people belonging to a particular racial group.
- LAND ACT--Reserves 87% of South Africa's land for Whites (who comprise 16% of the population) and 13% for Africans (who comprise 72% of the population) and other racial groups.

FACTS ABOUT APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

- South Africa is the country in the world where the policy of Apartheid is implemented in the constitution and is reinforced by law.
- In South Africa, 87% of its population (70% of which are Blacks) are considered nonpersons and excluded from any political process.
- In South Africa all Blacks (70% of the population) are forced to live on only 13% of the land, most of it dry and arid desert.
- To date, about 3.5 million Blacks have been forcefully removed from their birth place into the so called Bantustans.
- In South Africa Blacks are not allowed to live in cities without a special permission, and when they do, they are not allowed to bring their families with them.
- South Africa is the only country in the world against which the entire United Nations has imposed economic, military and cultural boycott.
- South Africa is the only country in the world banned from participating in the Olympic Games.
- Divestment is a burning issue throughout Europe.
- In countries like France, England, West Germany and Italy, the divestment movement is very strong.
- In the Scandinavian and other European countries, boycotts and other economic sanctions are already in effect.
- Prudent portfolio management and a staged divestment strategy over several years have not resulted in losses at other schools that have divested.
- No university has experienced loss of corporate support after divesting.
- Increasing violence in South Africa makes divestment the only moral choice.

U.S. out of South Africa!

