

Sons of Africa,

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I must start by saluting you. All of us have you constantly in our minds. We think with pride of your sacrifices.

I went up to Johannesburg recently and the Daughter of the South Africa, who during this letter informed me that the leaders wanted a report on the general situation. It has taken me some time to write it out because the situation is such that nobody knows what will happen the next day. South Africa is a completely different country from what you knew. The Police State is here in all its ugliness. But the challenge to it has never been presented with greater determination. You see it in the faces of people everywhere on both sides of the colour line. South Africa is virtually an armed camp. The locations are run like occupied territory. The state of emergency has been on since shortly after the emergency.

Movement is exceptionally difficult now. But in spite of everything the struggle goes on magnificently, if perhaps not as dramatically as one would like it.

I must start by saying that I was profoundly distressed to hear of the conditions in which you live. I can say that the headquarters of the International Red Cross now knows about the conditions described in JD's letter. One of these days, somebody might turn up at your place of detention from the world authority to see what is happening; that is, provided the government allows him access to you. But please be assured that everything is being done, first and foremost, to improve your conditions in jail.

I know you are not worried about this side of it. But your friends are worried. While we are carrying on the fight, we cannot be indifferent to your personal trials in jail.

Now, for the report. I do not know how far familiar you are with the course events have taken since March 21. I assume you have some knowledge and I will, therefore, give you a brief review of events and then go into the implications of some of them for us.

You went into action on March 21. Nearly a hundred people were shot at Sharpeville where 20,000 went to the Police Station. There were shootings in Cape Town and also in Durban. The finest demonstration was at Cape Town where 14,000 men and women marched peacefully against oppression behind Philip Kgosana. Sharpeville and Evaton did exceptionally well. Durban sent 13 PAC men to jail. The masses from Mkhumbane demonstrated, more in sympathy with the ANC leaders.

Philip Kgosana was subsequently arrested in very treacherous circumstances. He had been promised safe conduct by the Police and when he went to the city for negotiations with a highly-placed official in the department of Justice, he was arrested. I suppose that was the Beers' way of avenging Piet Retief.

The size of the demonstrations shocked the government. A

state of emergency was declared and thousands of people were rounded up and thrown into jail. Peter Brown was among a number of White Liberals who were locked in for well over three months. When he was later offered a conditional release, he refused it. He and others have since been released, however.

The government took the line that the massive demonstrations were organised by the tsotsis. The task force was described as a tsotsi element and over 1,800 people were locked up within the first few days, in every part of the country. These arrests are still going on. Nobody knows precisely where all these people are. There are rumours that concentration camps have been erected. The one that is known with certainty, I hear, is at ^{Edder B.} near Boneni where 18 Africans died over a week ago as a result of the bad conditions in jail.

Internally, opinion on all sides was shocked by the shootings. On our side something new emerged, in spite of the emergency. The demoralisation that had come on us after the great shootings of the Bondelswarts, of Mgijimi's people, of the ICU, was no longer there. People thought of the dead as martyrs. People felt that the dead had left behind a challenge which had to be met.

I found this mood strongest in Cape Town. Even if the Anti-Pass had failed in every respect, the fact that it shocked the Whites into realising that African power is a factor to reckon with in South African politics would continue to rank as an outstanding achievement.

Externally, I cannot find words to describe what happened. If I say the result were sensational, I shall only be dramatic where the tragedy is too deep for this sort of thing. In any case, the results were most unexpected. I cannot tell you of everything that happened. I do not have the time to do that with so many dependants to look after.

The British House of Commons passed a unanimous resolution of sympathy with the Africans. It deplored the Union's rulers' actions. The American Secretary of State publicly deplored the shootings and sided with the Africans. The United Nations Security Council met and passed a resolution condemning apartheid, warning Verwoerd of the way he had persistently flouted the resolutions of the United Nations. It sent Hammarskjöld to come and negotiate with Verwoerd to change the latter's apartheid policy and fellow policies in accord with the United Nations Charter.

The Prime Ministers' Commonwealth conference met in London. In spite of every effort to keep apartheid out of the discussions, the Prime Ministers found themselves involved in a first class row over apartheid which for days captured the bannerlines of the world's Press. The Prime Minister of Malaya was so furious, he had a personal quarrel with Louw whom he attacked bitterly in the Press almost every day he was in London. He was so furious he refused to meet Louw again. When he got to Malaya he ordered a complete boycott of South African goods and of trade with the Union. When you remember that much of this country's trade comes from Malaya, you will have a glimpse of what the ban meant. Since then Ghana has followed with a complete ban, too and challenged South Africa to take the issue to GATT—the body responsible for seeing that the General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs works. Louw has not made up his mind as yet.

Louw was to have visited Western Germany on his return from London.

The Germans asked him not to come as it would be inconvenient for them to have him. Canha made it quite clear that the issue of apartheid might affect that country's attitude to Verwoerd's application to have the Union republic admitted into the Commonwealth.

Practically every country in Western Europe, in Asia and Africa raised voices in protest. The Ambassadors accredited to the Court of St. James refused van Rhijn's invitations, to Union Day celebrations.

Summing up South Africa's position against all these developments, "Die Burger" said South Africa "had become the skunk of the world." For a few days the government was dazed. Rademeyer announced that the Pass Laws would be relaxed. Saner said apartheid was dead; it had seen its end at Sharpeville. He spoke of a new deal. Verwoerd quietly sent him on a mission of goodwill to ~~Argentina~~ Brazil. The PAC and the ANC were banned for a year. In this confusion Verwoerd was shot but narrowly escaped death.

The state of emergency was proclaimed; meetings were forbidden and any criticism of the government became a crime. To demand a change in any law became a serious crime. The state of emergency has since been lifted in many places. It remains in the major urban areas. The Pass Laws relaxations have since been abandoned.

In its panic after Sharpeville the government had jailed a number of people—PAC-men, Congressmen and liberals before the state of emergency. Some of these went to court and won their freedom. A number of the released who were in the ANC cleared out of the country before the state of emergency. Dadoo escaped; so also young Matthews, Mabhida and a number of lesser lights. Dadoo subsequently found his way to London with Tambo and Ronald Segal. JG is in Basutoland with Mabhida, the Natal ANC chief.

Mahome and Moletsi got safely to Accra. In London Make worked with Makiwane for a time. I received word that attempts were being made to set up a united front of the PAC and the Congress Movement against apartheid. I was approached about this too. Since then some of the South Africans have been to the Addis Ababa conference of African States which committed themselves to complete boycotts of South Africa. The group has now settled down in Leopoldville where Nkrumah has given it £30,000 to run the bureau it has just set up.

What effects did the PAC campaign have on ~~liberal~~ political organisations on both sides of the colour line? It crushed the ANC in Cape Town. There is no hope for the ANC in the Western Province. The PAC and the Liberals worked magnificently. I met PAC men and they were full of gratitude. They informed me that the leaders had told them about me. This made my job very much easier and I was able to give help where it was needed.

In the Transvaal, Luthuli burnt his Pass, as you know. That merely made him ridiculous and opportunistic. Even the London "Observer," which had always been particularly nice to him and unfriendly to the PAC started admitting that he had been outmanoeuvred.

In Natal, the ANC was badly disorganised, for a while. Its leaders from underground started talking of a united anti-apartheid front. New Age had been banned and the Congress Movement was finding it extremely difficult to direct the ANC-men in all parts of the country.

Since the releases Natal's position has improved considerably. The ban forces the ANC to work underground and it cannot, therefore, call public meetings. One called by the Congress Movement recently attracted about 4,000 people.

The ANC is trying to regroup from underground. It would appear as if there is a genuine desire on the part of some of its members to work with the PAC in a united front. With the PAC already on the Leopoldville bureau with Congress Movement fellows, it might be difficult to refuse internal cooperation.

I will not bore you with how the PAC has fared because you already must have had reports from your own men.

The Liberals have moved considerably nearer the PAC. We have had more resignations, but I am glad about two things. In the hour of need the Liberals loyally stood by the African victims of oppression. Their leaders went to jail like everybody. Peter Brown even refused to accept the release offer from the police. Secondly, the PAC revealed clearly in the hour of crisis that it meant it when it said it seeks to establish a non-racial democracy. I have been grossly misunderstood when I said the PAC stood for this. In the moment of testing, the PAC vindicated me. For this I was personally grateful.

What effects have all these developments had on the government. Here I must warn that the realities are most discouraging. The government is carrying on as though nothing had happened. It is more annoyed than worried about the attacks on apartheid. But the temper of the slave-owner is as dominant as ever.

This does not mean that it is any stronger. Far from it. Only, it is determined not to move an inch. But there are serious weaknesses in this. It is now almost completely isolated. Britain, America, Russia are not on its side. I am not sure whether the first two would at this stage support the demand that United Nations forces should intervene in the South African situation. I doubt very much if they would.

What problems have been created by the events I have referred to in this report? Firstly, the money, I hear has been received by Khaketla. You know your men best. It is most difficult to get the exact truth from them. But it would seem as if they have received a fairly substantial portion of it. Mende asked me to have a hand in the control of these funds before the three local members of the PAC national executive were released. I could not. What I saw in Mamosburg confirmed my feeling that inadequate arrangements were made for any troubles likely to arise when the leaders were in jail. Money might be squandered. There is no authority accepted by all. Contradictory orders are given. There are dangerous personal rivalries and, I am certain, from the way I have been handled in given situations by the Police, that there are people in the PAC who are in the pay of the Police.

In the meantime Mende has not up to now handed me my letter of

authority. Without this, I could help only individual cases. He will tell you more about this.

Organisationally, the PAC has been shaken by the state of emergency. It is too weak and poorly-led to be an effective force in the struggle at the moment. It might regroup underground. But then the problem of experienced leadership will remain. To ask the movement to be more aggressive is very much like telling a dazed boxer, lying prostrate on his stomach, to hit his victorious opponent.

Other complications have set in. The decision to go back on the no fine stand has had a shattering effect on those people who cheered the PAC. The enemies of the PAC are running around saying that the PAC is unpedditable and opportunistic. I myself have been embarrassed by the decision to go back on the no fine stand. It might affect the flow of help from outside if pressed too far.

I am the son of a policeman and I know fully what you are undergoing. But I must say that I am unsympathetic to any abandonment of principle at this stage. The White Press gives prominence always to all talk of paying the fines. It does not matter who organises the payment. The acceptance of the payment is an abandonment of principle. The Press has every reason to rejoice that under the stress of jail life, PAC men are realising that they are no match for the sacrifices they said they would make. It is the African people who judged wrongly when things like these happen.

I have a second objection. The money thus paid to the government would be a free gift to Erasmus. The PAC men would certainly be released as soon as part of the fine was paid in. But what would stop the government detaining you people under the emergency regulations or any other law, a few minutes after the fines have been paid? The money thus wasted would have been used for wrong purposes.

I am here merely expressing my own personal views. I will not do anything to discourage the payment of the fines. But I have the feeling that if you go too far in this direction you could very well dig the grave for the PAC and project Muthali once more to the fore as the steady man who knows what he wants; who plans his strategy carefully and will not lead his people in opportunistic ~~XXXX~~ adventures and then squeal when he finds the consequences unbearable. As I pointed in my letter to the leader, just before the campaign, I would sooner have postponed the campaign than rush into it before I was sure that my people were ready for every sacrifice.

I am filled with grief to know that Sivisa has died. But it was an act of free choice. He is here because he knew he was sickly. He knew that he might die in jail. He joined the PAC knowing this fully and did not like other people, run away from jail. We honour him and are proud of him because he has vindicated us. We are certainly with you. I personally am doing all I can to help in the Red Cross. That is all I can do with a clear conscience at this stage. If I went to jail, I would not want to be bailed where I had committed myself to no bail and no fine. These are only my views. You asked me for a report and I owe you the duty to express myself frankly.

Problems arise also on the political plane. The ban on the PAC and the

ANC has created a political vacuum which needs to be filled. The ANC is trying to walk cautiously back to public life. Residents Associations have been formed in some of the urban areas. The idea is to carry on agitation in the urban areas in readiness for a stay-at-home. The ANC knows now that the final battle will be fought by the urban worker and is preparing accordingly.

There is just the possibility that this could represent a situation where the grip of the communists on the ANC might be weakening—largely as a result of the ban and the suppression of New Age. On the other hand, the communists are now preparing to come out on their own steam. If they thought there were no prospects of moving events in their favour, they would not do this.

I think, personally, that they are realising that it will not do them much good to try and ride on the back of African Nationalism—even of the mild ANC type. They seem to want to concentrate on the worker whom they are keen to lead to goals they will set for him from time to time. We should be on the alert for a possible conflict of interests between the ANC and the communists. While doing nothing to enable the ANC to free itself from the grip of the communists, I think we should at the same time hold out before most Congressmen the prospect of a re-united African community which could be strong enough to free itself.

My own opinion is that any organisation working from underground cannot effect this re-union. I think there is need for an altogether new organisation which will continue the struggle along new lines and set itself new goals in the light of what has happened since Sharpeville. When the bans are over it could come to terms with the PAC and the purged ANC and, possibly, the Liberal to confront apartheid with a formidable and truly united opposition.

Some people are of course thinking of sabotage. I have a personal difficulty. I am against violence. The question has been put to me: What do you do when you come across a Police ammunition dump which will be used to shoot kids in the location? I am trying to find out my own answer first before I can advise other people.

I have been told that sabotage is the cheapest—in terms of manpower—form of effective opposition now that the ban has sent political organisations underground. It is being said that one man can set a whole cane field on fire or a wattle plantation or an oil refinery. People say we are in war with the men of apartheid. Again, I have not fixed up these questions with my conscience. When I have, I shall know what to do and will make it public.

The real problem that arises from all these issues is: How do we continue the struggle from here to victory within the shortest time possible? I should like to get your considered views here.

My own thinking goes along these lines. Internally we need to continue opposition to apartheid along non-violent lines, using wholly new techniques suited to the requirements of life in a real Police State. We should keep up the spirit of resistance no matter what the price.

Externally, we should encourage every pressure, short of war, to crush apartheid. That will ensure that the smallest number of innocent little girls

are shot in the Sharpevilles of the future. We should welcome with both hands the boycotts because they will narrow down the area of bloodshed and cripple apartheid. We should welcome United Nations intervention because South Africa is a member of the international organisation. Such intervention will ensure that the change takes place with the minimum of bloodshed; that the crisis thus produced is manageable; that there is a speedy return to the job of reconstruction.

It seems to me the new situation after Sharpeville allows only of this line of action where the people do not have the arms to wage war. We have to combine the internal and external pressures and confront apartheid with the reality of disaster. The United Nations intervention in the Congo sets an important precedent for Africa.

I have not been in touch with your head office for about two months and am, therefore, not in the best position to give the latest information on what is going on there. But please, whatever you have in mind, we live in a Police State. You have no idea what the thing is like. After Sharpeville there are not many people who want another mass demonstration. Rather, people would consider a stay-at-home.

With salutations from all of us this end,

Yours, for a Free Africa,

Son of Africa.

P.S. You had asked me to tell you of difficulties, say, in the first one is happening. I see the difficulty here in some respects: First I go to Johannesburg I cannot meet your people. I could understand this as long as there was no money. I myself had no difficulty in running to Johannesburg when you called. But now, I hear the movement has the money and I am no longer needed.

Secondly, I think far too many people were given overlapping responsibilities. Mande has not up to now given me the money credentials. He says they are in Basutoland. You said money should be sent to Makhela. Makhela wrote to say I must not send money to anybody other than the committee. The result was that I stopped sending money to anybody and stopped anybody sending money to me. I also stopped negotiating until I heard from you.

Thirdly, Mahemo and Molotai have never written a line to me ever since they left. They do not keep me informed and this makes it extremely difficult to write on the PAC because I just do not have the facts with me. I hear they are now in the Congo, which is a free state. They are said to be working hand in hand with the ANC fellows and here in the Union their activities are encouraging people to want a united front. Dadoo is there too. Mrs Tambo recently flew out to Keopeldville to join her husband.

I am finding it difficult to work with some of the PAC men. The women have always been wonderful. Nkosi came down to Durban and spent nearly a fortnight here. He scrupulously avoided seeing me. I subsequently heard that he had been expelled from the movement. Which was long overdue.

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