

THE CAMPAIGN FOR SANCTIONS

What follows is taken from a speech Comrade Thabo Mbeki, head of the ANC International Department, made to the Southern Africa Coalition in London in October 1989. He dealt with the situation in South Africa and the urgent need for sanctions.⁽¹⁾

F W de Klerk and the National Party went to the September elections on an apartheid platform, very clearly stated, very consistently stated. It was that fundamental to the solution of the South African problem must be the maintenance of the notion, and the furtherance of the notion, of groups and group rights. That's apartheid. It runs through the so-called Five Year Plan of the National Party, this notion of groups and group rights. And when De Klerk says—as he's been saying—that the issue of everybody having the vote is no longer in dispute, he sees a process within the context of groups and group rights, within the context of apartheid.

The release of the political prisoners is a retreat. It's a victory of the struggle. But De Klerk is not retreating into positions leading to ending apartheid. He's retreating to positions where he thinks he can defend the apartheid system successfully. The victories which are scored shouldn't be read as signifying a change of heart, a change of direction, on the part of the apartheid regime.

Mrs Thatcher puts out the notion that the South African regime entered into the negotiations which resulted in the withdrawal of the South African troops from Angola, and in the Namibia process that we're seeing now, as the result of 'talking to,' of dialogue, diplomacy. She doesn't want to mention the fact that the South African army in Angola was in very serious trouble. She doesn't want to mention the fact that there was a whole unit, a big one, of the South African Defence Force in Angola which could have been destroyed. That's why the South Africans went for a cease-fire, because they wanted to pull out their forces, which could have been destroyed.

Strength of the arms embargo

Mrs Thatcher does not want to mention that part of the reason the South African Defence Force got into that situation was because of the effectiveness of the arms embargo. The military balance changed in very specific ways. She doesn't want to mention the fact that the South African economy; because of sanctions, could no longer support that military adventure.

Pressures brought Pretoria to negotiate that settlement concerning Angola and Namibia, and to demonstrate the point that the South African regime did not enter into that agreement voluntarily, it's been very busy trying to subvert that agreement with regard to the independence of Namibia.

There's a major-general in Namibia, three brigadiers, something like 14 colonels and a whole series of other officers, who are not in military uniform. They are there in excess of the numbers of South African soldiers allowed to be in Namibia in terms of Resolution 435. And what are they doing? They say that they have to take care of the 30-35,000 South West Africa Territorial Force people.

Why the South African regime didn't pay off the South West Africa Territorial Force on the 1st of April is because it did not voluntarily enter into the agreement for the independence of Namibia. It was forced to, and has since been looking for ways and means in which it can produce a result suitable to itself in Namibia.

The Namibian case proves precisely the point that if there is to be any movement at all on the South African question, the struggle inside South Africa and the struggle outside South Africa has to continue and has to intensify.

1. From *Sechaba*, December 1989