

'Unholy alliance' of racists said weakening

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the country is one of constant tension, endless racial and social strife. The ruling white upper crust pursues a policy of total militarization. Military spending has grown more than 10 times since 1968; the Vorster government has imported more weapons and ammunition into the South African Republic than all the other countries South of the Sahara taken together.

But though armed to the teeth, the racialists do not feel secure. Disavowing the Prime Minister's soothing statements, Defence Minister Botha admitted quite recently that "terrorism" (Pretoria racialists' term for the liberation struggle of South African patriots) had reached a



stage where it had become "an escalating war of low intensity". According to the Johannesburg "Star", even schoolchildren are being trained to fight against the "terrorists".

To this it should be added that ever broader strata of the country's non-white population are joining the liberation struggle, which is assuming diverse forms. The scope of the strike movement, which is beginning to shake the very foundations of the regime, is also highly indicative. In 1973, hundreds of thousands of African workers went on strike, as against a few hundred in 1970. By dint of stubborn struggle, the strikers were able to wrest a number of social concessions from the employers and from state-monopoly capitalism.

Bantustans

The growing struggle between the exploiting white minority and the oppressed non-white majority in the South African Republic is accompanied by the aggravation of other conflicts stemming from the very policy of apartheid. Passions run especially high over the problem of Bantustans, the so-called "national centres" for Bantu Africans.

According to the apartheid

"theory", the settlement of all Africans to the homelands, as they are called, is supposed to solve the racial problem and to make life safer for the whites. The authors of this racist project believe that it will realize the main concept of apartheid - isolation of the main race groups inhabiting the country.

But life itself has shown the falacy of this idea. The South African economy cannot exist without the millions of African workers. Except for a few sincere "idealists", nobody in the South African Republic's ruling circles seriously considers effecting the complete separation of races. In his parliamentary address last year, Vorster himself was quite explicit on this score. "The blacks work for us," he said, "and they will continue to work for us for generations, in spite of the ideal we have to separate them completely... The fact of the matter is that we need them."

Apartheid and its product - Bantustanization - have always had the purpose of turning the country's African population into migrant workers deprived of all political and civil rights in the so-called white areas which make up more than 86 per cent of the South African Republic's territory. The Bantustans are regarded as an inexhaustible source of cheap manpower and a convenient place of exile for the Africans who are "redundant" at the moment.

There is a political aspect to this matter as well. Feeling that there is a limit to direct colonial oppression, the Afrikaner rulers decided to resort to neo-colonialist methods. The Bantustans, set up on the territories of the homelands, have been promised self-government now and even complete sovereignty at some future date. The idea is to divide Africans according to the tribal principle, tying each Bantu tribe to its "own" homeland. This policy is designed to lead to the emergence in the Bantustans of a bureaucratic stratum of "politicians" - African officials through whom the white minority could rule the Africans.

Crisis in the Homelands

Pretoria hopes that the policy of Bantustanization will consolidate the tribal division of the African population (tribalization), give rise to reformist illusions and compel tribal chiefs and African officials in the homelands to enter into unprincipled collaboration with the racist regime. That danger does indeed exist. However, another trend, one which the racist did not bargain for, is becoming increasingly manifest - intensive political activity in the homelands. Under pressure from below, the leaders of the

Bantustans are demanding that Africans be given full power at once within the limits of their "national centres" and are even claiming a number of territories proclaimed "white" by the South African authorities.

Moreover, the system of cheap migrant manpower, which met the needs of the South African economy for decades, no longer measures up to contemporary economic requirements. It first emerged when unskilled labour was needed for the ore-mining industry. Today, the owners of modern industrial enterprises need permanent skilled personnel. However, there are no end of colour-bar restrictions preventing the African workers from acquiring higher skills - a whole complex of laws banning the employment of Africans on skilled or even semi-skilled jobs. On the other hand, there are not enough white specialists. Even if all the white population of the South African Republic worked in the industry, the shortage of skilled workers would still amount to an estimated 12,000 - 13,000 men annually. Therefore, the employers (including Afrikaners, for whom it would seem, the dogmas of apartheid should come first) resort to all sorts of subterfuges to circumvent the racist laws.

Election Returns

The "victory" won, by the Nationalists in the April elections should give Pretoria rulers much food for thought. Racist hysteria and the scaring of white voters with "black danger" and "Communist menace" brought the ruling party 55 per cent of all votes and almost three-quarters of the seats in Parliament (122 out of 171). This was largely achieved by recarving electoral districts.



The ruling party employed the sharp practice typical of bourgeois democracy - it increased the number of electoral districts in the countryside where the pro-Nationalist feeling among white voters is more strongly pronounced and decreased the number of electoral districts in the cities where the opposition - The United and Progressive parties - have a larger following. But the majority scraped by the ruling party is shaky, and this already worries the country's elite.

The United Party, made up

chiefly of English-speaking South African, sustained substantial losses in votes and seats because it failed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Nationalist floundering in the blind alley of apartheid. That is the price it paid for lack of principle, for its inability to put forward an alternative programme to apartheid, for its attempts to outrun the Nationalists on the Right. As a result, the reformist wing of the United Party, referred to as "Young Turks" and headed by Harry Schwartz, the leader of the party's Transvaal branch, is gradually strengthening its positions. The reformists hold that the attempts to win over a part of the Afrikaners who vote Nationalist by a further shift to the Right should be abandoned. Instead, they want a programme that would be a real alternative to sterile apartheid. And although these alternatives are conceived within the limits of the same "baaskap", the crisis is eroding the foundations of the rule of the white racists, who formerly presented a much more united front.

The Progressive Party has improved its position in Parliament at the expense of the United Party. The name "Progressive" is rather farfetched, for the party represents the interests of ore-mining magnates, various strata of financial capital and Big Business. However, some representatives of these circles object to the "extremes" of apartheid for the objective economic reasons mentioned above - they want to remove the obstacles in the way of capitalist economic development. True, Colin Eglin, the leader of this party, holds that the "one man, one vote" policy would be a disaster for South Africa since it would lead to the Africans taking over power. In other words, the Progressive Party would like to modernize rather than abolish the existing system of racial oppression, to adapt it to the changing conditions, to the needs of white capitalists.

The Patriots' Struggle the Main Thing

The above does not mean that the contradictions inside the "baaskap" can, in themselves, destroy the regime existing in the South African Republic. Far from it. There is an increasing tendency to smooth over the former, at times sharp differences between Afrikaner capital and the capital controlled by English-speaking white South African, and their personal and property interests become ever more closely intertwined. We can already speak of a single economic

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