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A LETTER FROM AFAR:

Military Doctrine of the Apartheid Regime

By

Thami S. Maphoyi

Now as never before in our history, the conditions for struggle are ripe. The anger of our people has risen and mass activity is increasing. The alternative to live and struggle under apartheid is materialising with rapid force. And the world with its two faces sways and sways.

Two conflicting trends in international relations are rearing their heads for us to see. On one hand, world opinion condemns racist South Africa with an unprecedented unanimity and depth of felling. On the other, some individual states are inconsistently and nervously making tentative feelers for friendship with racist South Africa.

From the former, a team of dauntless young men, who, with their open pens of truth, strive to bring to Africa's claim the strength of unwritten proof. They not only strip Botha and his ruthless clique naked for the world to see, but expose and condemn the two-faced mongrels who run with the hares and hunt with the hounds.

"I will eat them (the African States) before breakfast ...I will hit them so hard that they will never forget..." These words not only express the inhumanity of apartheid, but also the simple fact that South Africa plays an important role in the global strategy of imperialism, and in effect, South Africa is the main striking force of imperialism and NATO in Africa. John Balthazar Vorster, the former Prime Minister of South Africa, uttered these words when he was still a wolf; before he donned the garb of a sheep and had taken on the cunning of a fox; before he took on the role of a "Statesman" and a "reasonable man"; before his "secret" visits to independent Africa. They were uttered before the Angolan disaster.

A study of the military doctrine of the South African racist regime gives rise to a number of questions and difficulties which need to be posed, first, before any attempt is made at answering them. One of the difficulties is the fact that the question of the use of violence as a means to suppress the peoples' struggle has been neglected by those doing research on South Africa. The historians and researchers of African history who are so fond of inquiring into obscure and irrelevant subjects ought to spend more time examining the use of violence and

massacre of peaceful people in South Africa as a technique against protest.

Treated properly, such a study could be part of a broader contribution to the study of the military history of South Africa, whose central theme and driving force are the struggles of the African people against colonialism. This is not to say that the military traditions of our people are simply a reaction to colonization. The African people evolved military strategies and battle tactics before their contacts and confrontation with the whites. This was a result of internal dynamic development. Unfortunately, even the South African National Museum of Military History seems not to be interested in these questions. The other aspect of this manipulation of our military history is represented by some Bantustan Chiefs.

These traitors of African interests ironically portray themselves as custodians and carriers of African tradition and cultural heritage. Matanzima of the Transkei is a typical example. In an interview he once unashamedly denied the historical heritage of his people. *The Transkei is being confused with the rest of the Black countries in Southern Africa which were taken over militarily. Our position is different. We never had any military engagements with the British forces in the Cape Province. The Ciskei did.*"

This division of the Xhosas into *Ciskeians* and *Transkeians* is artificial and serves to reinforce apartheid which fathered the idea.

There are other questions to do with the military doctrine of the South African fascist regime. Are we dealing with a *national army* or a *colonial army*? Is it possible to win over a section of the army or navy to our side? Or even some officers? Can one honestly expect anything of *white civilians* when every white adult (male or female) is armed to the teeth to *defend himself* against the *swart gevaar* (black danger)? There are no easy answers to these questions.

In his contribution to the question of army and politics in South Africa, Mr. Villiers answered some of these questions. He emphasized the need for intensification of political agitation amongst the troops and further stated that some of these questions will ultimately be solved in the course of the maturing practical, political struggle, an important aspect of which is armed struggle. In other words, the answer to these questions goes beyond purely military considerations, it involves a number of questions which are essentially political, including our strategy and tactics.

Here, we shall deal with some of these questions emphasizing the issues which have been worrying our people. One issue was Vorster's hypocritical *detente offensive*; the Afrikaners felt it was wrong to call Africans Natives, and to teach them to regard themselves as indigenous owners of South Africa. They preferred to teach an African to regard himself as a servant and a property of the white man, and if the African refuses, as he does to this day, he must be taught that there is a home for him in the dungeons of apartheid, and in the barren lands now called his *homeland*.

J. N. Le Roux, an academician, in a debate in the all-white parliament, had this remark to make concerning Bantu Education: *We should not give the native an academic education. If we do so we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans and who will do the manual labour in the country?*

The other cornerstone for implementation of the Bantu Education that has made the African a semi-slave for white industry was the statement by the late unlamented Prime Minister, Dr. Verwoerd, who while Minister for Bantu Affairs, said: *There is no place for the native in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. It is to no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in European community and mislead him to the green pastures of European (society) community in which he was not allowed to graze. He continued: What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live.*

The Africans realised that a separate syllabus for African children had been introduced, and that the schools were intended to equip their children with the training necessary to meet the demands of labour exploitation which the economic life of white South Africa imposes. There must be an alternative: Submit or fight for better education. The African National Congress met to discuss the question of Bantu Education and found it to be not only a means of making the African youth hewers of wood and drawers of water, but also a basis on which the whites that rule South Africa can build their myth of African inferiority and white domination. The African people agreed that this myth must be destroyed. They organized massive agitation among the parents and the teachers and a boycott was organized against Bantu Education.

Parents started collecting money to erect schools but the government tried hard to call these schools shanties and destroyed them under the pretext that they were in a wrong place.

The African people then asked the government to build proper schools for the African children and use a universal syllabus for all South Africans; but the Boer government refused. The African people asked for the closure of all schools and asked the teachers, whom Verwoerd has said were teaching the African children "equality or to be masters of their destiny," to leave the schools. Some teachers did leave the schools and some children did boycott the schools. The government wanted to crush the resistance by force. The Bantu Administration wanted the Natives to know that bullets were waiting for them.

However, the Africans were now used to their threats. They are now preparing themselves to use armed force against the oppressor. In short, tomorrow, it won't be water but fire, and the long oppressed, dispossessed nation in South Africa is telling Botha and his clique to read the writing on the wall very carefully and to understand that it spells one thing for his fascist nationalist party that has murdered so many innocent people - that those who rule by the sword shall die by the sword and the people will have the sword now. They are preparing for the final blow and organizing for the most opportune moment to strike that final blow which will burn apartheid to ashes. Then the working people shall install a government for all who live in South Africa from those ashes of decades of massacres, deprivation, hunger, exploitation and disease.

Botha and his gang may laugh at that now, but it is the simple, honest truth; for it is part and parcel of the strong tide of modern world history.