



AFRICAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC  
UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA  
(APDUSA)

Affiliated to the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA)

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NEGOTIATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

The deepening crisis in South Africa has given rise to strong calls for a resolution of the problem by means of negotiation between the ruling class and representatives of the oppressed. Who are making these calls and why are they telling us that negotiation is the only path that we can follow in our struggle for freedom?

Firstly we have the Western imperialist nations - America, Britain, Germany and France amongst others. They are concerned that unless the crisis is defused they face a growing threat from the liberatory struggle of the oppressed to their continued ability to suck vast amounts of the wealth out of this country by way of profits on their capital investments. They want a reformed South African socio-economic system in which they can safely make even more investments for greater profits at the expense of the Black working class and peasant population.

Secondly we have the mainly English speaking white liberal bourgeoisie - the local junior partners of imperialism, who are fighting to safeguard their share of the spoils that they enjoy in all the shallow glamour of their luxurious lifestyle. They are reluctantly joined by the Afrikaner Nationalists who are fighting to save their privileged position which is artificially preserved through the agency of crude baasskap. But this has now become an historical anachronism - a naked obstacle to any form of progress.

These, the rulers of South Africa, are joined by the Soviet Union which is placing sustained pressure on the ANC to forsake its version of armed struggle and to accept a negotiated settlement. The approach of the Soviet Union is determined by its policy of glasnost which seeks to minimise the threat of devastating global conflict and which will at the same time enable it to allocate less of its economic resources to defence and the production of arms and more to improving the quality of life in its troubled society. The Soviet Union thus maintains a policy of socialism in one country. Its approach to the South African problem is based on its own interests and not on those of the oppressed here. This we cannot but reject. WE HAVE A RIGHT TO DETERMINE OUR OWN FUTURE.

The ruling class is now telling us that negotiation is a means of ending social inequality in South Africa. According to them a negotiated settlement will solve the problems of the Black majority. Even they cannot avoid recognition of the fact that were it not for the growing demand of the oppressed workers and peasants for liberation from their enslaved condition there would be no crisis to resolve. This means that the oppressed are the real motive force for change and only their interests can determine whether a negotiated settlement can be a solution to the problem or not. Yet, in the present situation they are not even allowed to discuss the validity of negotiation as a means of progress in their struggle. Where is there any semblance of democracy in this process when the oppressed are gagged by a welter of repressive laws, their organisations are banned and restricted and their leadership languishes in exile and in the prisons of the ruling class?

The ability of those who govern South African society to prosecute their exploitative interests is founded on the twin pillars of LANDLESSNESS of the Black majority and their NATIONAL OPPRESSION - their exclusion from the body politic of the country and from any right in deciding the manner in which wealth should be produced and distributed. Without serious and revolutionary attention to these problems there can be no fundamental change and there can be no resolution of the crisis in South Africa. Yet what does imperialism and the local liberal bourgeoisie propose? They call for the elimination of the

crudest, legally entrenched forms of racial discrimination such as the Group Areas Act. They propose a rationalisation of the multiplicity of costly and inefficient departments of state within the framework of a federal system of government with special protection for minority group rights. Over and above this they are prepared to offer special concessions to Afrikaner Nationalism because the Afrikaners still hold control over the repressive armed forces of the state. Hence, while political race distinction may be blurred, it will not be eliminated and the concept of democratic majority rule is denied. Other than offering Blacks the right to buy and sell land on the open market and some token concessions here and there, they are not prepared to forsake their claim to legal ownership of 87% of the land which they partly share with the small Afrikaner Bourgeois class. This means that they have no intention of relinquishing their status as the bosses of industry, farming and mining and this means no fundamental change to the grossly inferior economic condition of the millions of exploited workers and landless peasants.

Now imperialism and the local liberals have been working feverishly to co-opt the emergent Black petit-bourgeoisie into their nefarious schemes with the promise of special economic rewards and an elevated social status when their aims are accomplished. It is our tragedy that large numbers of these petit-bourgeois intellectuals and professionals who act within the organisations of the oppressed have accepted the bait and have allowed themselves to be beguiled by the fawning flattery of the liberals into accepting the task of selling this gross fraud to the oppressed and exploited masses. With the millions in funds made freely available by imperialism and the enormous amount of publicity afforded them by the liberal bourgeois media, they are elevated to the status of leadership with the sole intention that they should get the people to accept this negotiated betrayal in a fanfare of pseudo-liberation. The only rationale that they can offer for this role is that a negotiated settlement will offer the liberatory struggle more breathing space and that only a united front in which the workers and peasants compromise their interests with other self-seeking classes can lead us forward. But the very word - "settlement" means the establishment of a new equilibrium in a basically unaltered system of oppression and exploitation which they will join in operating and maintaining at the highest political level. Their proposed "Anti-Apartheid" united front simply means that the oppressed masses must accept to become cannon fodder in the battle for suzerainty being fought between the racist Afrikaner petit-bourgeois and liberal imperialism.

If the crisis in South Africa is to be resolved then the demand of the workers and landless peasants for liberation from oppression and exploitation must be squarely addressed. We see nothing in the idea of a negotiated settlement that remotely approaches this question. We reject it as nothing but another in a long string of frauds that the ruling class has attempted to foist on the people. In the interests of the oppressed and exploited majority - the workers and landless peasants we can demand NOTHING LESS THAN FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR ALL IN A UNITARY STATE without any qualification of race, sex, education or property ownership. We demand the total abolition of all discriminatory and repressive legislation that is designed to keep the oppressed majority in subjugation. We demand a NEW DIVISION OF THE LAND IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS - those who work the land and who create the wealth of this country with their labour. The struggle for liberation can only be carried forward via the organised national unity of the oppressed and their mobilisation on the basis of these MINIMUM DEMANDS as contained in the TEN POINT PROGRAMME of the UNITY MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA and the policy of NON-COLLABORATION WITH THE OPPRESSOR.

**WE BUILD A NATION!**

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