

**THE  
REVOLUTIONARY ROAD  
FOR SOUTH AFRICA**

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Now that our newsletter APDUSA is becoming more widely known we have been receiving enquiries from many parts of the world concerning the Unity Movement of South Africa. All the enquiries can be summed up as follows: What is the Unity Movement of South Africa? What is its policy and programme? For whom does it speak? What is its position in relation to the struggle for liberation in South Africa and how does it propose to solve the basic problems of that country? We have therefore decided to issue a special Statement to meet in part these many enquiries. We say "in part" because a proper elucidation of these questions would require a book. We recognise the urgent necessity today to clarify the complex situation in South Africa about which a great deal of political confusion has been engendered.

While this Statement is not intended to be a thesis, it is none the less important to give a brief outline of the objective situation within which the Unity Movement of South Africa has sprung up. It is impossible to grasp the full significance of the activities of the Unity Movement without knowing the milieu within which it has to operate and the problems confronting the oppressed people of South Africa. The peculiarities of the South African situation are many and varied and some of them are of sufficient importance to warrant a variation in the classical formulae with which socialists are familiar.

From the point of view of the White minority, South Africa is an independent state and a highly industrialised one at that. It is by far the most advanced in the continent of Africa. Indeed in this respect it might be said that it is comparable to European states. From the point of view of the Black majority (four fifth5 of the population) South Africa is a colony, a slave colony, with all the barbarous oppression and exploitation that this connotes. The 1910 Act which created the Union of South Africa - what is today known as the Republic of South Africa - was an Apartheid Act. In those days it was called Segregation. It decreed that no Black man shall have a franchise. And every succeeding Act, by whatever government in

power, relentlessly pursued the logic of this apartheid law in every sphere of life, political, economic and social, so that today every Black man is a pariah in the country of his birth. A Black man has no say whatever, directly or indirectly, on who is elected to Parliament. He hasn't even a formal vote. By statutory definition an African is not a worker. That is, he is by law excluded from the classification of an employee, despite the fact that the whole economy to a large extent depends on his labour, and more especially the vital industries, mining and agriculture. He is bereft of all the rights of a worker; he cannot form trade unions and for him to strike is a criminal offence.

The Urban Areas Act robs the African of the right to sell his labour-power to the highest bidder, in that he is forbidden to enter an urban area without a permit to seek work for a specific employer. This means that Africans are recruited in the Reserves as labourers who can be allotted in the requisite numbers to the various concerns of the White man. According to new regulations (April, 1968) under the Bantu Administration Act, the fascistic Nationalist Government requires every African, whether born in the town or in the country, to be registered with a specially created tribal labour bureau under the control of the chiefs in the Reserves. Even schoolboys do not escape the operation of this draconian law which creates ever-expanding reservoirs of cheap black labour. If a man working in town loses his job or wishes to change his employment, he has to go back to a tribal village which is allotted to him. (In many cases he himself has never seen this village but his ancestors were born there.) And he cannot get back to the town in order to work except through the channel of the tribal labour bureau.

Speaking in Parliament, a government spokesman made it quite plain that the new regulations are designed to close every loophole to stop industrialists from circumventing the law. The purpose of the Act is to turn the whole African population into migrant labourers, extending it to include those who have lived all their lives in the city locations (segregated areas). Every African will come under the blanket term "work-seeker", and as such he will be requisitioned from the common labour pool to serve in the White areas. The regulations provide that the maximum period for such contracted labour shall be one year, or 360 shifts, whichever is the shorter. This entrenches the migratory labour system with all its devastating effects on the individual: the destruction of family life, the separation of men from their wives and of children from their parents, the herding of men into

compounds or barracks surrounded with barbed wire. The principle of turning a whole population into shuttlecocks to be tossed hither and thither according to the demands of White employers has been enshrined in the statute book. This is what is called apartheid in practice. The inhumanity of this system staggers the imagination and arouses revulsion in every decent human being throughout the world. And rightly so.

Under the Group Areas Act, designed to segregate the population and settle them into their separate racial pens, the whole of South Africa was turned into a White group area, with little enclaves totalling less than 13% of the land area allocated to the Blacks. These enclaves dotted throughout the country are strategically placed so as to serve as reservoirs of labour for the White man, for gold, diamond and coal mining, for secondary industry, for agriculture and the rest. With one stroke of the pen all Black people were declared foreigners in the country of their birth, and like all foreigners they have no right to live anywhere in South Africa except in their particular segregated pens.

It is abundantly clear that it is a physical impossibility to crowd fifteen million people, i.e. four fifths of the population, into 13% of the land. The fascist law-makers know this all too well. It was never their intention to drive the Africans back into the Reserves to settle there. For this would mean the collapse of the whole economy of the country. What, then, is behind this seemingly senseless, sadistic, indeed one could say crazy law? Their purpose is to uproot a whole population, render them homeless, rightless and without any means of independent livelihood. Wherever they happen to be living outside their segregated enclaves, they must live by permit. The very few who had properties no longer live in them as of right. Their title-deeds are worth no more than the piece of paper they are written on. Once uprooted and deprived of rights of tenure, the whole Black population is thrown into a state of complete insecurity in the fullest sense of the word. Then a whole spate of oppressive laws is let loose on them. They come within the compass of the elaborate system of laws that has been evolved for the control and regimentation of labour, for super-exploitation. (*For a full exposition of this system of inter-related laws see I.B. Tabata's pamphlet The Rehabilitation Scheme: a New Fraud, published by the All-African Convention, 1945.*)

To put into operation this gigantic scheme that affects the entire Black population an army of officials is required, and the savagery

of the laws finds its way from top to bottom, down to the meanest official exercising his brief authority, with all the brutality of, a dehumanised automaton. The pass system is an essential part of this regimentation. No African can move without a pass, and he will be granted a permit or pass to go only where labour is required in the White areas. This is why the greatest number of criminal convictions of Africans under any single Act is for infringements of the pass laws. But the actual operation of a law has its own logic, bringing about untold sufferings to the mass of the people. It is impossible to imagine in human terms the devastating, disruptive effect of the system of laws designed for the super-exploitation of a people. This is apartheid in practice.

Apartheid - a word that triggers off all the emotions associated with the horrors of Hitler's concentration camps; a word that makes the Afrikaner (Boer) Nationalist Government stink like a polecat amongst the peoples of the world. Imperialism, in its internal quarrels with its boss-boys, the Afrikaner die-hards, has itself mounted a whole propaganda campaign, in its press, holding up to execration the abominable deeds perpetrated in the name of apartheid. But what the same press does not tell the world - indeed is careful to conceal from it - is that imperialism itself is the true originator of the vile system it so eloquently castigates. We have only to recall a statement by that arch-imperialist Cecil Rhodes, one time Premier of the British Cape Colony and the man who gave his name to Rhodesia where Ian Smith now struts in authority. When introducing what he called 'a Native Bill for Africa' in 1894, he said: 'My idea is that the natives should be kept in these native reserves and not mixed with the white men at all.' (*The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest, by Nosipho Majeke, 1952.*)

What is this if not apartheid? In order to be quite sure that there was no mistaking his intentions as the spokesman for British imperialism, he declared: "I prefer to call a spade a spade. Let us boldly say: in the past we have made mistakes about native representation. We intend now to change all that. . . . We are going to be lords of this people and keep them in a subject position. . . . They should not have the franchise because we don't want them on an equality with us. . . . These are my politics on native affairs and these are the politics of South Africa. . . . We must adopt a system of despotism, such as works so well in India, in our relations with the barbarians of South Africa." (Ibid.)

This policy was called segregation. But Verwoerd himself would

have found it difficult to express his policy of apartheid any differently. Let us quote Rhodes once more: "It must be brought home to them (the Africans) that in the future nine tenths of them will have to spend their lives in daily labour, in physical work, in manual labour." (Ibid.)

All this was dictated by the needs of the recently discovered diamond and gold mines for a vast source of cheap black labour. It was the British mining companies that instituted the migratory labour system and demanded the introduction of the pass system that accompanies it. As will be seen from the above, the Verwoerd-Vorster regime of the Afrikaner Nationalists has introduced no new principle. It has simply pursued to their logical conclusion, and with a diabolical thoroughness, the policies laid down by British imperialism.

Why, then, did Verwoerd and Vorster after him find it necessary to castigate and even imprison the spokesmen of British imperialism in the persons of the white liberals in South Africa? This brings us to the second peculiarity in the South African situation, which adds another dimension to its complexity. Whoever fails to grasp this point will find himself entrapped in the toils of imperialist machinations. More than this, he will be unable to formulate a consistent policy to guide the liberatory struggle through the maze of conflicting interests and political cross-currents on to a vantage ground from which to wage the struggle that will bring nearer the socialist goal.

The White minority in South Africa, which alone enjoys democratic rights, is divided into two main groups of different origins. They are the Afrikaans-speaking descendants of the Dutch Boers who came to South Africa 300 years ago, and the English who took occupation of the Cape Colony at the beginning of the 19th century, and at the turn of the 20th century conquered the two northern Boer Republics. The Boers, who now call themselves Afrikaners, regard themselves as the indigenous people, claiming priority even over the Blacks of Africa, and viewing the English as foreign conquerors. The emotional attitudes, the hatred against the English associated with defeat, were reinforced by the fact that they represented two different economies. The demands of a unified economy under capitalism brooked neither Boer feudalism nor African tribalism.

It is true that the English wooed the Boers after conquest, making them co-partners for the more thorough exploitation of the Black man. But the die-hards among the Boers continued to fan the fires of hatred even after they had embraced the capitalist system. Regarding themselves as the indigenous people, they saw themselves as Nationalists leading a struggle against the imperialist oppressor.

Two years after the Act of Union created South Africa as a single state we find Hertzog, leader of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party (note the designation "Nationalist") declaring that "the two white peoples must be left free to develop along their own lines in two streams, and that the Union should be ruled only by pure Afrikaners." (Eric Walker, *A History of South Africa*, 1928.) And again, on the occasion of the rebellion in South Africa of the die-hard Boers during the first World War, Walker lists some of their motives as "the longing to regain their lost independence; a desire to avenge themselves on Great Britain for their sufferings during the Boer War. . . . and the feeling that the Afrikaners were an oppressed people, oppressed by all the social, political and economic forces. . . . associated with the name of Britain." (Ibid.)

To this day the economy of South Africa is heavily dominated by British investments and increasingly joined by United States capital. About 79% of all economic activity in the country is in the hands of the English-speaking section, which is closely associated with Britain economically, culturally and politically. But the Afrikaners happen to be numerically more than the English-speaking section, and it is this fact that the politicians utilised to put themselves in power. They dubbed the English as a foreign race, uitlanders, and proceeded to whip up racial passions against them, resuscitating all hatreds of the Boer War with a view to moulding the Afrikaners as a separate race, a separate nation, divinely destined to rule their god-given country.

From this it can be seen that the struggle of the die-hard Afrikaners was from the start, from their point of view, a nationalist struggle led by the rising bourgeoisie against the foreigners. They declared themselves most vociferously as anti-imperialists. The one-time honoured General Botha, one of their leaders in the Boer War, who became the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, and General Smuts who succeeded him, were both denounced as pro-imperialist stooges and traitors to the yolk. There was a split in the Afrikaner camp. The rich farmers and the moneyed section threw in their lot with big business, and joined hands with the local English-speaking representatives of British finance capital.

The existence of the aggressively chauvinistic and racist Afrikaner element which claimed to be indigenous while violently antagonistic to the indigenous Africans, presented in the early days a thorny political problem to the different socialist groups in

South Africa. Many a split took place over what attitude should be adopted towards Afrikaner white nationalism. The problem, from a theoretical point of view, was made more difficult by the fact that at one time there was not even an aspiring native bourgeoisie among the Africans and no national organisation ready to vocalise the concept of nationalism and initiate a struggle on the basis of that concept.

A tragi-comic aspect of this dilemma was exemplified in the fact that in the 1920s the South African Labour Party formed a coalition government with the Afrikaner Nationalist Party, the same party that was later to be led by Verwoerd followed by Vorster. The results were disastrous for the vast majority of the workers, namely the Africans.

On another level, amongst the revolutionary socialists, there was a split over the same question. One section argued that the Afrikaner Nationalists were anti-imperialists and in addition they constituted the rising native bourgeoisie. Therefore it was the duty of the revolutionary to support them. This grotesque courtship, however, was harshly and abruptly terminated when, with the outbreak of the second imperialist world war, the Afrikaners backed Hitler in a big way, and continued to be his most ardent worshippers even after his defeat. It is not surprising that these so-called revolutionaries vanished into oblivion.

A second group of what might be called the ultra-leftists rejected not only the Afrikaners, bourgeoisie and workers alike, but the whole of the White population in South Africa, arguing that they were all exploiters, while at the same time they refrained from organising the oppressed Black masses, on the ground that it was not the duty of revolutionaries to form nationalist organisations or to encourage their formation. This, they argued, was the task of a native bourgeoisie, and since this class had not crystallised among the Blacks, they limited their activities to discussion clubs. This group, too, having choked itself to death in its own verbiage, vanished unwept from the political arena.

It was in the midst of this atmosphere of intensive debate that, in 1935, a political crisis broke out and galvanised into action practically the whole of the African population. It was the notorious Slave Bills introduced by the Hertzog-Smuts coalition government that took away the last remaining voting rights of the Africans in the Cape Province and shattered all hopes of a development towards a franchise for the Blacks. At the same time it robbed the Africans of



the right to buy land outside the Reserves. In the guise of granting them more land, for which the Africans had already been clamouring, the so-called Land and Trust Act by some ruse robbed them of the right to the land which some of them already occupied. Thus it carried a step further the ruthless policy of landlessness and therefore the more intensive regimentation of African labour.

The publication of the Bills first stunned the population, but as the implications became clear, a bitter anger seized them, penetrating every layer to the remotest corners of the country. The intellectuals and the vocal sections, the incipient petit-bourgeoisie received a stunning blow with the finality of the clauses that closed the door to their long-cherished dreams of a franchise that would give them a privileged position. The workers saw the tightening of the net that consolidated the system for the regimentation of labour. The land-hungry peasants **saw** that, far from the Act giving them the promised extra land, their plight was going to be immeasurably worsened. They were doomed to starvation in their ever-shrinking, arid plots of land. Even the most backward section, the chiefs who were by now being resuscitated for administrative purposes, were alarmed at the wrath of the people they were supposed to control. Land was the core of the deep discontent of the peasantry throughout the countryside. It was the prime factor that brought them into collision with all the local government agents in every village.

From every part of the country, from every section, spontaneous protests came flooding in. It was in this situation that a nation-wide conference of all African organisations was called in December 1935. It was the biggest of its kind in the history of the African people. Over 150 organisations were represented by more than 500 delegates. The conference unanimously decided to reject the Bills in toto. At the same time it decided to establish the All-African Convention as a federal body that would be the mouthpiece of the African section of the oppressed people of South Africa.

The force of this political crisis catapulted the socialist groups from academic debate into action. A new situation had arisen. Every revolutionary had either to participate or be for ever reduced to nullity. But the important point at issue was: what kind of participation? This was the crux of the matter. And this was to be determined by the overall outlook of each group, that is, their assessment of the objective situation in South Africa, their ultimate aims and the kind of solution they proposed to the problems represented by the historic epoch.

The Communist Party of South Africa, every reformist in outlook, conceived the struggle as divided mechanistically into categories and stages. The first stage was for equality between White and Black, in

other words for bourgeois democracy. When the oppressed became absorbed into this system they would learn to organise themselves for a class struggle. In short, theirs was a reformist policy of gradualism which determined their strategy and tactics. In practice the activity of the Communist Party in those organisations which it controlled was confined to bringing pressure on the Government to grant concessions, centring all their agitation on isolated issues. Their work in the trade union field was pure economism. Even at a time when the fascist Government had outlawed African trade unions and atomised the rest of the workers into separate racial trade unions, White, Coloured and Indian, the Communist Party still concentrated the major part of its activity on building those racial trade unions whose slogan was "no politics in the trade union movement". It never seemed to occur to them that they were in effect accepting the myth of the inferiority of the Black man and the apartheid policy, and in this regard they were quite indistinguishable from that peculiar species, the South African White liberal who, in the conditions of that country, is the spokesman of international finance capital.

That group which was later to constitute the leadership of the Unity Movement conceived of the struggle very differently. It saw the crisis of 1935 as bound up with the mounting crisis of world capitalism. With a sixth of the world having been wrenched out of the orbit of capitalism after the first world war, imperialism was faced with the necessity of a still more intensive exploitation of the regions under its domination. After a thorough analysis of the objective situation in South African society, economic, political and social, this group came to the conclusion that the problems of the oppressed could not be solved within the framework of the capitalist system. It would require nothing short of a revolutionary socialist overturn. Even the bourgeois democratic demands for the oppressed Black masses could not be achieved except under the dictatorship of the proletariat assisted by the peasants.

In this situation, the vast army of migrant labourers, who are in essence a landless peasantry, will play a significant role. It is the leadership of the proletariat in the conduct of the struggle for democratic rights that will ensure the continuity of the revolution uninterruptedly to its socialist goal.

This concept envisaged a continuous revolution with the one stage merging dialectically into the next, in other words, the permanent revolution. This was the overall strategy when this group entered the field of action within the national movement. It implies several things,

the most important being, first, a recognition of the fact that in our epoch the national bourgeoisie no longer has a progressive role to play. This is particularly so in the conditions of South Africa, where the so-called national bourgeoisie - the White Afrikaner nationalists - is itself a conqueror and is virulently racialistic towards the indigenous oppressed population. Secondly, it implies that, with the attainment of the democratic stage, there will be no long protracted period between it and the next stage, and that, with the seizure of power, the proletariat must immediately put the socialist tasks on the agenda of the day.

Between the formulation of the strategy, however, and the achievement of the goal, all the interim is fraught not only with the manifold tactical difficulties of gearing the population into action along a particular course, but with the pitfalls and hazards of fighting battles on many fronts, fighting the internal as well as the external enemies. This in truth has been the history of the Unity Movement for the last quarter of a century. Marxism alone, used as an instrument of analysis and guide to action, can encompass all the problems, all the hidden snares and impediments inherent in this situation. Only the weapon of Marxism can cut a clear path through the ideological jungle with which imperialism so skilfully trammels up the unwary.

We have mentioned that the All-African Convention was born in a time of crisis. At such times of general ferment the population is receptive to ideas. The problem was how to maintain the new-found African unity and how to broaden it; at the same time how to introduce new ideas that would permeate in the shortest possible period every stratum of the oppressed population and gear them to meet not only the immediate crisis but to set them on the revolutionary road of principled struggle consistent with the whole strategy referred to above.

For the first few years the battle of ideas took place inside the All-African Convention itself. Young militant leaders clashed with the old leaders who by tradition were under the tutelage of the White liberals. It was the young militants who for the first time insisted on the necessity of having a clearly defined programme and policy as the basis of the struggle. The 10-Point Programme was adopted. It was known as the "minimum programme". It was a demand for full democratic rights for all in South Africa. It was calculated to meet the aspirations of the intellectuals and the aspiring petit-bourgeoisie who felt acutely the national oppression; at the same time it voiced the needs of the poor and landless peasantry, as well as the demands of the rightless workers. Basically the programme was designed to unite

two main currents, the agrarian and the national.

Having formulated the programme, the young militants who were now in the leadership of the African federal body, the All-African Convention, turned their attention to the question of broadening the unity to include all the oppressed nationalities in South Africa who for 300 years have been kept in separate and antagonistic racial pens. The All-African Convention opened negotiations with a federal organisation of Coloured people, known as the Anti-CAD (Anti-Coloured Affairs Department) and the South African Indian Congress. The latter body, being under the control of the merchant class, refused to accept the uncompromising policy and programme which demanded full equality, and argued that they were committed to a policy of compromise. In this they were acting true to form, confirming that the present-day rising bourgeoisie can no longer play a progressive role. They instinctively felt that the programme of the Unity Movement, while it was democratic in form, nevertheless, taken together with its uncompromising policy of non-collaboration, is in fact a revolutionary programme. It is essentially directed not to bourgeois democracy, which answers the interests of the merchant class, but must of necessity pass over into socialist democracy. Of this later.

The federal bodies of the African and Coloured sections went ahead to found the Non-European Unity Movement, now known as the Unity Movement of South Africa, and proceeded to go over the heads of the Indian merchant-class leadership to draw in the Indian workers in the towns and sugar plantations, as well as the youth, organised under the Anti-Segregation Council. It adopted the 10-Point Programme as a minimum programme, together with the policy of non-collaboration with the oppressor.

## **NON-COLLABORATION**

The minimum programme, the 10-Point Programme of the Unity Movement, taken by itself, can be regarded simply as a bourgeois nationalist programme, though point seven, which deals with the land question, already envisages a development beyond formal democracy. But when taken together with the policy of non-collaboration, with which the programme is inseparably bound, it takes on a different connotation. It is for this reason that the leadership of the Unity Movement in all its writings, all its propaganda and agitation, always links its policy and programme together. This is of

vital importance to the understanding of the dynamics of the struggle, the approach, and the mechanics of it. To fail to understand the concept of non-collaboration in the given conditions of South Africa is to fail to grasp its significance and its potency. Unfortunately even amongst revolutionaries there are very few who seem to comprehend its full import.

Those who operate in the milieu of the highly industrialised countries are very conscious of the importance of the trade union movement. Their starting point is the recognition that a trade union is a reformist organisation which accepts the capitalist system as given and immutable. These are the confines in which its struggle is conducted. That is why it never goes beyond the demands of a penny increase, shorter hours, better conditions of work, etc. In short, economic demands. Left to themselves, the workers will not go beyond the struggle for pure economic benefits. It is the task of the revolutionaries who work in the trade unions to broaden their vision. For this they need a theory that illuminates to the workers the true nature of the system that exploits them as a class, and enables them to realise the necessity to destroy the exploitive system itself. In order to do this the revolutionary engages in the day-to-day struggle of the workers, including purely economic strikes. Many workers' strikes have in themselves no political significance, but they are none the less necessary not only for the more obvious immediate aims, but for a much more important reason, namely, that the workers begin to discover their own power. The militants utilise such strikes to heighten the workers' class consciousness in preparation for the day when the militants within the working-class movement will themselves use their collective might for political demands which will lead to the overturn of the system. A trade union is the most elementary, we might even say primitive form of organisation arising out of the conditions of social production at a given stage, namely, capitalism. He would be an ultra-leftist indulging in utopianism of the crudest kind who would turn his back on the trade unions on the ground that they are backward and reactionary. He must take cognisance of the actual conditions of existence pertaining to the stage of development in society, and most of all the dominant ideas which are invariably those of the ruling class.

Now the questions we have to ask are: what kind of organisations existed in South Africa when the Unity Movement evolved its policy of non-collaboration? What was the function of those organisations and above all what were the dominant ideas prevalent amongst the oppressed at that time? As we pointed out earlier, the arch-

imperialist Cecil Rhodes enunciated what he called the Native policy for all successive governments, which in effect meant throwing the whole African population out of the body politic. During the wars of conquest it had been the prime aim of the invader to destroy chieftainship, because the chiefs were the rallying point of military resistance. Capitalism itself had to shatter tribalism. The normal consequence of this should have been to absorb the population into the capitalist system, with all that that implied: new social relations, new organisational forms and participation in the economic and political life as citizens of the country. But the white rulers had other schemes for the Black man whom they considered as nothing but a beast of burden. Having thrown the Africans out of the body politic, Rhodes himself proceeded to devise special means for governing and controlling them.

A remarkable man was this Rhodes in his elemental savagery which expresses itself in his turns of thought and the very crudity of his language. Once on beholding a large gathering of Africans in their village he exclaimed: "What a source of labour!" And when introducing his Glen Grey Bill: "Now I say, the natives are children. . . They have human minds and I would like them to devote themselves wholly to local matters that surround and appeal to them. I would like them to tax themselves. . . This was the Act that created the notorious Bunga system, that is, village councils mainly composed of illiterate chiefs who were now being built up as paid stooges of the Government. These Bungas, acting under the chairmanship of the local white "Native Commissioners", dominated the lives of all the people in the villages. It was through them that the many Acts of Parliament passed against the Africans were transmitted. It must be understood here that the white Minister for Native Affairs governed a whole people by proclamations issued in the name of the Governor-General, who, for this purpose, had the title of: "Supreme Chief of all Natives". These, too, were transmitted through the Bungas, which with the utmost zeal saw to it that they were obeyed to the letter.

In addition to this, any piece of dirty legislation which was too inhuman even for the rulers to blacken the Statute Book, was left to the Bungas to enact. It fell to the Bungas to impose the local taxes under which the population groaned, taxes that drove a starving people to seek work in the mines and on the hated white farms where their conditions were those of serfs. It was their duty also to supply forced unpaid labour for road-making so that the white Commissioner's car could go for inspections to the remotest villages.

As industry expanded by leaps and bounds with the exploitation of a vast Black labour force, the Bunga system was extended to the urban areas where the African workers were ghettoed in special "locations" outside the cities. Here they were called Advisory Councils. From the

point of view of the oppressors, these institutions worked so well that they later created a Supreme Bunga, with the grandiloquent name of the Native Representative Council to "represent" the total African population in town and country. This sat under the chairmanship of the White Secretary of Native Affairs, ably assisted by selected White Native Commissioners. Many African intellectuals vied with one another for positions on these bogus institutions created for a "child race". The leading politicians of the old school, protégés of the White liberals, regarded it as a great honour to be raised to this bad eminence, lording it over the mass of the people. All the political activity of the Africans was restricted within these narrow confines: the Bungas, which prevented them from claiming direct representation in the provincial councils where the Whites alone sat; the Advisory Boards, which likewise headed them off from seeking direct representation in municipal councils; and finally the "Supreme Bunga", the Native Representative Council, which blocked the minds of the people from demanding direct representation in the seat of government itself - Parliament.

Thus we see that these segregated institutions created for an "inferior people" were used not only as a machinery for oppression and exploitation but as an instrument for mental enslavement, perpetuating the myth of the inferiority of the Black man.

It was within the setting of these conditions that the policy of non-collaboration was born and marked a turning-point in the history of the oppressed. The devastating effect of these long-standing conditions on the mind can be readily understood. To put it in the words of *The Awakening of a People* (I.B. Tabata, 1950): "Although on paper it may seem a simple thing for a people to recognise themselves as equal to other human beings, yet if we visualise the generations of oppression, the sheer weight on mind and body of a system of slavery armed with all the machinery of the state, all the legal and ideological weapons designed to obliterate from their minds the very capacity to think of themselves as human beings; if we visualise the steady insidious effect of the conditions of their existence, the brutalising squalor and deprivation which of themselves engender the feeling of inferiority - if we take all these things into consideration we begin to understand the leap which the people took at this time."

This is the soil out of which sprang the policy of non-collaboration. The leadership of the Unity Movement was faced with the task of purging the minds of the oppressed of what we call slave mentality and directing their activities towards meaningful political channels, thus releasing the latent energies of a whole people to engage in a struggle that has a significant bearing on their life, a struggle that is intelligible to them, quickened as it is by their imperative needs.

Such a policy with its great potentialities could not but arouse the alarm and excite the enmity of the ruling class and its agents within the folds of the oppressed. For the first time in the history of South

Africa both the imperialist and the Afrikaner press let loose a flood of abuse directed on two main prongs of the new development. It concentrated its attack on the organisational structure and on the new ideas. And no wonder. For these related aspects of the development signified the beginning of a serious challenge to white domination, which in turn would spell the doom of capitalism itself.

The federal structure of the All-African Convention, bringing together all the African organisations, was now extended to a larger federation, the Unity Movement, embracing organisations of all sections of the oppressed, African, Coloured and Indian. This form of organisation, representing a cross section of the oppressed, cuts across not only the lingering tribal affiliations but also those racial barriers so carefully nurtured by the oppressors in the time-honoured policy of divide-and-rule. This form of organisation, uniting a whole people, cleared the way for a national outlook. The new outlook expressed in the programme and in the policy of non-collaboration confirmed the enemy's worst fears and galvanised them into action.

The liberals and the Communist Party of South Africa pulled out of the federation the African National Congress, over which they had considerable influence and indeed control. Once out of the federation, the African National Congress was used as a tool in the attempt to destroy the unity of the people and swing the population back to the old policy of collaboration with the oppressor. Its leaders declared war on the policy of non-collaboration, and the local representative of imperialism put their powerful press at their disposal. The press of the Communist Party of South Africa vied with the press of finance capital in their voluminous vilification of the policy of non-collaboration, while at the same time they praised the leaders of the African National Congress to the skies for their statesmanship, moderation and realism. They accused the leadership of the Unity Movement of adopting a negative policy and advocating inaction. Its advocacy of the boycott of elections to the inferior apartheid institutions was held up as an example of what they damned as inaction. This was political dishonesty calculated to create the maximum confusion. The real issue was not action versus inaction, but what kind of action. All their outcry against the boycott was a cloak to conceal their own commitment to collaboration with the Government. For to operate these segregated institutions for any reason whatsoever was to accept the inferiority of the Black man and to involve the population in working the machinery of their own oppression.

The policy of non-collaboration, far from advocating inaction and abstention, was, on the contrary, in the given conditions of South Africa, an injunction to engage in political action of the highest order. When the leadership of the Unity Movement put this policy before the people, it was compelled to explain its full meaning and significance. To do this it had to unfold the nature of the system that oppressed



and exploited them and the methods used to maintain it. The leadership had to bring home to the masses how they themselves were being deceived into assisting in the operation of the machinery of their own oppression, and convince them that without their participation it would be impossible to maintain the present oppressive structure.

Here was an opportunity for the Unity Movement to illuminate the whole range of the political, economic and social set-up in South Africa. In the economic sphere it placed the people in the very centre as the prime producers of the country's wealth and all its vaunted progress, while they themselves received in turn the very dregs, the offal of civilisation. In the midst of the splendour which they themselves create, the Blacks live in hovels, segregated like lepers. Their infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world. All this because they are bereft of political rights. They have no say in the government of the country of their birth, no say in the planning and the distribution of the wealth they produce.

The policy of non-collaboration caught the imagination of the people. As ever-increasing layers of the population began to understand the meaning of this new policy, they threw themselves with vigour into political activity. Every new law and every issue was seen by them as part of the sum total of an inter-related system for their exploitation. The struggle began to take on a new meaning. With a growing knowledge of their own position, they threw off their dependence on the ideas of the ruling class and struck out on an independent road of struggle. This liberation of the mind released the energies of the people. It was now no longer a question of seeking palliatives, of begging for the "improvement" of this or that institution. It was a total rejection of the whole system. They had turned their back on the "establishment". Any official or anyone connected with the government or its institutions was suspect in their eyes. It must be understood, of course, that the population had no clearly defined conception of the kind of society they wanted. But they knew what they did not want.

The leadership of the Unity Movement, sensing the changing mood of the people, increasingly involved itself in their day-to-day struggles, using every issue, whether in the countryside amongst the peasantry or among the workers in the town, in order to broaden their political consciousness. Their first targets were those hated institutions, the Bungas in the villages and the Advisory Boards in the urban areas, and on a national scale the bogus Native Representative Council.

Since these were important pillars of the administrative system, the rulers took alarm at the new turn of events. When the people boycotted the elections to these segregated institutions and isolated the quislings, bringing them into contempt, this meant the breaking down of the channels of control. With their success in jamming the

administrative machinery in one village after another, they became aware of their power. This was a big undertaking which called forth the involvement of the whole population in ever-widening areas throughout the Union of South Africa. Everywhere the question was posed: the new road of non-collaboration or the old road of collaboration. Or to put it another way: with the people against the Government, or with the Government against the people. There was a deep cleavage in which all the oppressed became involved, village by village and town by town. Every organisation had to declare itself on this vital question. As time went on a political polarisation took place. The majority of the masses threw in their lot with the new road and those organisations whose leaders were committed to collaboration began to lose their following. The African National Congress found itself in this plight. All the attempts of the imperialist press to bolster up its leaders were of no avail.

A new phenomenon took place. As the people turned their back on the Bunga, they began to create their own village committees and elected their own spokesmen to present their demands to the government officials. The Government replied with machine-guns. Much to the amazement of the rulers, these brutal reprisals no longer deterred the people but rather hardened them in their resistance. Peasants' organisations sprang up in all the provinces, so that today the biggest single organisations in the country are those of the peasants. The immediate cause of the phenomenal growth of these organisations was the need for self-defence. They had learned from bitter experience that it was the easiest thing for the white army to surround a village, mow down the people and burn their crops. In this way they saw the futility of an isolated struggle and responded to the new slogan of the Unity Movement: We Build a Nation. Most of the peasants' organisations and certainly all the biggest ones threw in their lot with the Unity Movement and affiliated to it. Individual peasant leaders at the same time joined the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA), which is the most highly developed political organisation affiliated to the Unity Movement.

The imperialist wing of the South African herrenvolk raised the alarm and put all the blame for this state of affairs on the apartheid policy of the Nationalist Government. They advocated a relaxation of some of the more stringent laws to allow at least the Black intellectuals some measure of privilege. The fascist wing of the herrenvolk rejected any such suggestions and relied on the use of force to crush the rising movement. The liberals, the local representatives of finance capital, tried every means to oust the Afrikaner Nationalists from power. They even utilised their Black protgés to stoke up trouble in the form of one-day strikes and carefully controlled acts of sabotage with the express purpose of frightening the White electorate into dislodging the Afrikaner

Government. In its turn the Government hit back by summarily arresting the liberals, the Communist Party leaders and their Black protégés. As would be expected, even in this instance there was a differentiation. The Blacks, who were being used by the wily liberals, received the most vicious treatment, some of them being hanged and others receiving life sentences. The tragedy of it is that some of those African leaders were brave and honest men who sincerely believed that they were making sacrifices in the struggle for the freedom of their fellow men. True enough, their concept of freedom was a neo-colonialist regime and this is why they were acceptable to the farsighted representatives of imperialism in South Africa. It never occurred to them that they were caught up in an internal quarrel between two sets of vultures struggling for power.

The enormity of the crime committed by the liberals and the Communist Party against the oppressed people of South Africa is to be seen in their role outside South Africa. They deliberately conceal the real struggle for liberation with the express purpose of smothering it, while at the same time they mount a vast anti-apartheid campaign to win the support of well-meaning people all over the world. For what? In fact Africa and the peoples of the world have been subjected to a huge confidence trick. In terms of the South African set-up, anti-apartheid means anti-Afrikaner Nationalist Government. It means the return to power of the English-speaking sections. It means the entrenchment of imperialism in South Africa and all that that connotes for the exploitation of the mass of the Black population.

To suit the prevailing climate outside, some of them even don the cloak of anti-imperialism. But again, in the terms of South Africa, what does this mean? Verwoerd himself and all his die-hard cohorts in the Afrikaner Nationalist Party proclaim themselves as sworn anti-imperialists. This is another deception to win the sympathies of the more progressive forces in the world, particularly the socialist orientated countries. In a highly industrialised country like South Africa, to prate about an anti-imperialist struggle which is not at the same time directed to the overthrow of capitalism, is to perpetrate a gross political fraud.

The unpalatable fact that faces the liberals and the Communist Party of South Africa is that the only force that is committed to and is capable of conducting a consistent struggle for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited workers and peasants in South Africa consist of that group of organisations united under the banner of the Unity Movement of South Africa.

The programme and policy are clear. They serve as a guide through the various stages of the struggle, a guide to the revolutionary road of armed struggle, the only road that leads to the socialist goal.

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