APDUSA VIEWS

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OBSERVE 16TH JUNE !!

DON'T LET DEEDAT DIVIDE US

INTRODUCTION

APDUSA adds its voice to the wide-spread condemnation of Ahmed Deedat's disgusting attack on the Hindu religion. We do so on two grounds:--

1.We hold that people have the right to worship and to practise their religion as they choose. Our standpoint flows from the realisation that people feel very deeply about their religion and regard it as one of the most important aspect of their existence. Provided that religion does not offend civilised conduct, the freedom of worship must be guaranteed and defended by all enlightened people. Belittling other religions by making hurtful or disparaging remarks is a gross violation of a basic human right and therefore must not be tolerated.

2 The unity of the Indian people amongst themselves, as well as with the rest of the oppressed people in South Africa, is a matter of life and death. Any person, who attempts to destroy that unity on the grounds of "race", colour, religion or sex is doing the work of the government and is therefore nothing less than a IIIRELING of the oppressors.

HISTORY OF UNITY

South Africans of Indian descent who belong to the Christian, Hindu and Islamic religions have lived in peace and harmony with one another for over a hundred years. There has not been a single incident in all these years which has marred that relationship. Their common suffering, the denial to them of ordinary human rights in the country of their adoption and later of their birth, their humiliation and persecution at the hands of a racist ruling class have all helped to forge strong bonds of unity. This unity cut across religious differences and cultivated a respect and tolerance of each other's religions. Even at the height of the Hindu-Muslim massacres in post independent India, Indians in South Africa did not allow those terrible events to sow division and discord amongst them.

It is this outstanding example of unity that Deedat and his clique now wish to destroy. We ask: Who will benefit most by the disunity among the Indian people? The answer is clear - the ruling class. Therefore Deedat and Co., are doing the work of the hirelings of the government.

REACTIONS TO DEEDAT - POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

If the letters and statements which have appeared in the newspapers are a representative sample of the reactions of the people, then most reactions have been positive and encouraging.

The President of the Natal Indian Congress issued a statement in which the defence of the freedom of worship and religious tolerance was clearly set out. The Islamic Council of South Africa correctly showed its position by attacking

Deedat. Many letter writers soberly and with devastating effect replied to Dcedat and his defenders.

NEGATIVE REACTIONS

Unfortunately, not all reactions were positive or helpful. Angered by the unwarranted attacks on their religion, some people were provoked into OVER-REACTING. They launched a broadside against Islam in general and against the Prophet Mohamed. Without realising it, these people did exactly what Deedat had done - attacking and belittling another religion. One such person was Mr Rabbi Bugwandeen. Mr Bugwandeen has deservedly earned the reputation of being as fearless civil rights lawyer and a fighter for freedom.
That makes it all the more regrettable that he should add fuel to the fire instead of dousing the flames with water.

Our attitude is: Denounce Deedat for his misdeeds! But why attack Islam'! Deedat and Islam are not the one and same thing. In truth many Muslims regard Deedat as a paranoiac misinterpreter of Islam
Equally regrettable is the attitude of the Islamic Students Association. When called upon to speak out publicly against Deedat's misdeeds, the Association side-stepped the issue by describing the affair as "trivial".
We strongly disagree. When the freedom of worship and religious tolerance is being assailed and when there IS a threat to unity of the oppressed, the matter is anything but "trivial". We can only hope that members of the Association will reconsider their position in light of the truism, that on matters of importance when there is a duty to speak out, SILENCE will be justifiably interpreted as SUPPORT and CONSENT!

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REMEMBER 16 JUNE 1976

"He was of the blood
And bore the mark
Loved the land
So gave his life for it" - ***William Hussey***

On the 16 June 1986, the entire population of South Africa and people from many parts of the world will recall the events which took place in Soweto ten years ago.

For family members and friends of the victims of the massacres of that period, it will be an occasion for grief and sad memories. For the oppressed people in general, the occasion will recall with awe and amazement the ferocious courage of the youth. For the oppressors, 16 June is a recurring nightmare. That is when their troubles began in earnest.

On the 16 June 1976, the children of Soweto showed the rest of the oppressed people the real meaning of struggle and sacrifice. Armed only with stones and dustbin lids and a grim determination flowing from their hatred of oppression,

the youth challenged the armed might of the State. In the ensuing battles, thousands of young people were killed and wounded.

When recalling the events of 16 June 1976, it is also necessary to recall the reasons why the youth went into battle. The spark was Afrikaans which was forced on the students. It was a language which the youth did not regard as their own nor of their choice. The fight against compulsory Afrikaans was part and parcel of the struggle against the whole degrading system of Bantu Education. But the struggle did not stop there.
The Youth also declared war on the collaborators who were operating the dummy Urban Bantu Council (UBC). So great was the fury of the youth against the collaborators that within days the UBC's were abandoned.

There we saw youth linking their struggle for a democratic system of education with the rejection of dummy institutions and the demand for true democracy.

In 1976 the oppressors believed that they had crushed the revolt of the youth by means of the gun and sjambok. They believed that by killing the body they had also killed the IDEA OF LIBERATION. They have now learned to their horror that they were wrong! If anything at all, it has proved that profound truth that the spirit of freedom is bullet-proof!!

Today, when we survey the political scene, we see debris, not only of cars, buildings and collaborators, but also of the slave mentality and those dummy institutions designed for an inferior people. It was 16 June 1976 which gave impetus to the forces of liberation which have reduced to shambles the schemes of the ruling class.

It was 16 June 1976 which triggered off the series of cosmetic reforms in the fields of education, petty apartheid, trade union rights, the tricameral circus etc. These reforms were designed to halt the heightening of the struggle with bribes or sops. But it was the spirit of Soweto which prevailed and put paid to all that.

The spirit of Soweto - that is the spirit of resistance and refusal to compromise on fundamentals has grown by leaps and bounds over the past ten years. It has reached a new plateau and no amount of repression, massacres and bribes is going to stop that process.

It was 16 June 1976 which carried the oppressed people on to that new plateau. It is for this reason that long after the system of oppression and exploitation would have been destroyed in this country, the people of free South Africa will always gratefully remember 16 June 1976. They will recount to their children the heroism of the power of the youth who eagerly shed their blood so that the future generations would not have to endure the misery and shame of oppression. It was also their desire that the future generations should be born in a free and just society where they would enjoy all the benefits which our rich and beautiful country is capable of giving.

In remembering 16 June 1976, we, of APDUSA and the New Unity Movement, salute the fallen brave and courageous youth. As tribute to their memory, we present two articles in this issue of APDUSA VIEWS which deal with the theme of the policy of DIVIDE AND RULE and the burning need for all true democrats to unite and to strive for the building of a single NATION which will be free of racism, oppression and exploitation.

CONCLUSION

We are living in a history making period. The oppressed people are on the March to liberation. Unity of the oppressed is our PRIORITY NUMBER ONE! The ruling class will do everything in its power to break that unity. It will do so through its army of agents - paid and unpaid. These agents come in all shapes and forms. And always disguised. Some will pose as educationists, others as civil defence organisers and others still as holy men. Increasingly these agents will ply their filthy trade by using every trick in the book to divide us,

The various sections of the oppressed must learn to trust each other. It is only in an atmosphere of trust and confidence that true unity can thrive and flourish. As a first step we must be on guard 24 hours a day against the mischief-making of the Deedats of this country.

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CITY PRESS - MISCHIEF-MAKER:

- An attempt to sow division between the Unity Movement and Azapo

Newspapers, radio and television playa powerful role in society, not just as the disseminators of news, but also as moulders of public opinion, In S.A. the Press, radio and television are all controlled by the ruling class, and frequently play sinister games in the spreading of news and ideas. Depending on circumstances, they are able to project people, organisations, individuals and events in a special way, which, while not out· right lies, are biased to one extent or another. In this way, they influence and shape people's thinking because of the manner in which news is presented. It is with this background in mind that we have to view a feature article in "City Press", (owned by the Afrikaner Nationalist establishment, Nasionale Pers) on II May 1986, on the name "Azania" for South Africa.

The one article, by historian, Makhaola Bolofo, for the Unity Movement in exile, traces the history of the word "Azania," and comes to the conclusion that "Azania" is an unsuitable name for S.A. because it has "imperialist, colonialist and slavery connotations", "City Press" drops the bombshell that the Unity Movement has suggested an alternative name to "Azania," namely, "Maluti". Right next to this article is the Azapo viewpoint expressed in an article taken from "Frank Talk" by George Wauchope. It in turn makes a case for the use of the word "Azania" to describe S.A., and ends by saying that to some people "Maluti" is artificial and arbitrary. We say that "City Press" has now taken on the role of mischief-maker, amongst its other functions. We, in the Unity Movement have never taken a decision on a name for South Africa. Worse is to follow. Upon enquiry we have discovered that the Unity Movement in exile has also never taken a decision to call or suggest that S.A. be called "Maluti". Indeed, "Maluti" is as strange and "artificial" to members of the Unity Movement as it is to George Wauchope!

If "City Press" is trying to drive a wedge between adherents of the Unity Movement and Azapo we would like to set the record straight and clear. We have always treated Azapo as a sister organisation of the oppressed and exploited, in the liberatory struggle, and our relationship with Azapo has been a friendly and warm one. We may differ on aspects of our struggle, or aspects of the Black Consciousness philosophy, or its stand on a particular matter, but at no time whatsoever was the name "Azania" an issue. Indeed, some of us may have reservations about the word, but it is very clear that no-one is going to fight over it. What is significant is that "City Press" is being mischievous in trying to drive a wedge between the two organisations by pretending that a major dispute exists on the issue of the name for S.A. A casual reader, not informed of the truth, would indeed believe that Azapo and ourselves are at loggerheads over the name "Azania".

Nothing can be further from the truth. Let us be on guard against the divisive tactics of the ruling class and its agents. Our attitude is that a free and democratic S.A. will choose its own name. At the appropriate time the Nation will decide. It is not our wish to enter into a self-defeating arguments with our brothers in struggle. **City Press, take heed!**

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