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CODESA - A GALLERY OF ROGUES

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INTRODUCTION

Those of us who, out of a sense of duty and for the sake of accuracy, spent more than 12 hours in front of the television viewing the antics at CODESA, found that the time was well spent. Newspapers are simply unable to capture an event in its entirety. Even the most skillful journalist has to contend with the constraint of language and expression. It is not possible to convey in words (nor is it feasible), all the happenings recorded by the brain. Apart from this limitation, there is also the deliberate slant in presenting the news. It is notorious that editors and owners suppress or distort news which goes against their plans or policies. A recent incident comes to mind. It relates to the outburst by Nelson Mandela against his "Man of Integrity", De Klerk. The English Press gleefully reported the whipping administered by Mandela. What they failed to report is that even before he ended his speech, Mandela began back-peddaling. His opening and closing remarks starkly contradict one another. While his opening remarks referred to De Klerk as the head of a discredited illegitimate regime, he closed his speech by saying:

"Because without him (De Klerk) we would not have made this progress."

WHAT IS CODESA?

In its essence, CODESA is a conspiracy hatched by the Imperialists (USA, Britain, Japan, West Germany, etc), giant local factory and mine owners, the banks, the Nationalist Party, the ANC and other lesser forces. The purpose of the conspiracy is to ensure that in the long and short term, the interests of capitalism and imperialism in Southern Africa are safeguarded through stability. As a by-product ANC officials who have political ambitions to occupy government posts, including the presidency, will be duly rewarded for their co-operation with the capitalists and imperialists.

In his attack on De Klerk, Mandela proudly claimed:

"It is the ANC, not the National Party or De Klerk that started this process (CODESA). I have been discussing with Kobie Coetzee and top government officials since July 1986 when I was still in prison."

However, Moeletsi Mbeki, Head of COSATU's Communication Department is of the view that CODESA is a major component of the National Party's "risk management strategy." We agree with Moeletsi Mbeki's assessment that CODESA is a creature of the National Party. What needs to be added is that this strategy has been worked out very closely together with imperialism. If that be the case, then it means that Mandela and the ANC have been very

subtly brainwashed into not only accepting the CODESA strategy but also into believing that THEY were the originators of that strategy!!

Looked at from the point of view of the poor workers and peasants, CODESA is one more step along the road of betrayal politics of negotiations. CODESA is the organisational expression of that betrayal.

GALLERY OF ROGUES, SCOUNDRELS AND MURDERERS

The conclusion of betrayal is further strengthened when we look at the cast of main and supporting actors at CODESA.

Paraded before us were the racist Nationalists like De Klerk and Pik Botha (the latter has been a professional white-washer of apartheid for many years), Gerrit Viljoen (ex-Chairman of the secret and sinister Afrikaner Broederbond), Rajbansi (declared unfit to hold any public office due to corruption), members of the House of Shame (scoundrels who defied the will of the people and sold their damned souls for money, privileges, the "right" to take bribes and to feather their own nests), Bantustan "leaders" (murderers, scoundrels, dictators and outright crooks), Stalinists (who spent a whole life time propagating and defending the Great Lie that Stalinism was the same thing as Socialism), Zach de Beer, the representative of the giant monopolies which have exploited the toiling masses to the point of starvation, representatives from the USA, the Commonwealth, France, etc, were present on behalf of Imperialism. Ask the bereft mothers of Iraq. They will tell you about Imperialism.

Honest persons in that whole crowd of the evil and degraded were not easy to spot. And if, indeed, there were, the question is: What were they doing there? Honest people should know their duty, which is, not to be found anywhere near where CODESA meets!

CONCLUSION

When the false prophets sing their "Hallelujahs" for their "Nuwe SuidAfrika", they make sure that the people are not told that "Suid-Afrika" has been fathered by a gallery of rogues, scoundrels and murderers!

WITH SUCH SIRENS WHAT WILL THE "NUWE SUID-AFRIKA" LOOK LIKE?

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CODESA - DECEPTION CONTINUED

It was with much jubilation and acclaim that the ruling class staged the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in December 1991.

An examination of the twenty organisations that attended show, that apart from the Nationalist Party and the Government (who were separately represented) the majority who attended were the Bantustan leaders, puppets from the homelands, the thoroughly discredited coterie from the Tricameral farce and an assortment of quislings and collaborators - these organisations are the creation of the very ruling class that oppresses us - these unholy creatures are funded, defended and protected by the ruling class.

The Capitalist class (which includes powerful businessmen who control 80 percent of South Africa's economy) were represented by the Democratic Party. Further, to emphasise and underscore the point that the Capitalists (who are, in fact, the agents of the Imperialist powers) were calling the shots at CODESA, Zach de Beer, leader of the Democratic Party played an important and pivotal role.

In addition the SACP-COSATU and ANC (and NIC and TIC) sought to give credence and respectability to CODESA by their presence at this motley gathering. These organisations, which are described as part of the liberatory movement, felt very much at home in the company of representatives of the Capitalists, a thoroughly discredited government and contemptible assortment of sellouts.

No matter what fancy terms are used to describe CODESA, APDUSA is firmly of the view that CODESA was nothing more than an extension of the negotiation process which commenced in secret and in private sometimes in 1986.

Those organisations which are serious about Liberation have, amongst other criteria, a simple yardstick to measure the nature of any convention or conference. If such a conference is praised by the ruling class and the imperialists, then it is an indication that a deal is being struck between the various parties where that interests and aspirations of the masses are being sold out. History has taught us, that no ruling class voluntarily gives up power. When a ruling class feels threatened and comes to the realisation (like South Africa) that it cannot continue to rule by adopting jackboot tactics, it takes stock and re-emerges under another disguise. The imperialists had warned the South African ruling class that it cannot continue to rule like in yester year. After much soul searching, the ruling class came to the conclusion that they must embark on a reform programme. Fundamental changes were not considered.

There is nothing more dishonest than to present CODESA as a mechanism to eliminate oppression and exploitation. It would be extremely naive to believe that the oppressors and their hirelings would be concerned genuinely to uplift the lot of the masses. What matters most for the ruling class is the improvement of the economic situation and preservation of their assets and investments without endangering their power. Throughout history this is now the dominant classes have always acted.

We in APDUSA have rejected CODESA as nothing more than a continuation of the negotiation process - as a sellout and as a betrayal of the hopes, aspirations and expectations of the working class and rural poor.

We must continue independently our struggle for Liberation - for a single Democratic South Africa free of oppression, discrimination and exploitation, where the interests of the rural poor and the working class will be paramount.

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MANDELA'S MOMENT OF TRUTH AT CODESA

CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa - even the name belies its function) has come to pass; and for the oppressed the only truthful statement made throughout those two days was, unbelievably, that from Nelson Mandela. Not his sugary opening statements nor his conciliatory closing remarks, but that which lay in between.

F.W. de Klerk, after asking for permission to address CODESA last on the opening day, launched an attack on the ANC, saying: ". . . an organisation which remains committed to the armed struggle cannot be completely trusted when it also commits itself to peacefully negotiated solutions. "

Nelson Mandela, asking for special permission to speak thereafter, launched a counter-attack. He stated, amongst other things, that De Klerk:-

- * Was less than frank.
- * Is the head of an illegitimate, discredited, minority regime.
- * Is the type of person with whom very few people would like to deal.
- * Was abusing his position.
- * Is regarded by the people as killing innocent people.
- * Was taking advantage of this meeting for petty political gain.

He went on to say that:

- * The Nationalist Party had a double agenda - of talking peace and at the same time conducting a war.
- * De Klerk is not fit to be head of the government if he was unaware about government funding of Inkatha.

At the end of his speech one wondered what the ANC was doing there in the first place if that was its honest assessment of the government.

In ruling class circles, Mandela's tirade was greeted with dismay. He was accused of marring the proceedings; of breaching the good faith between De Klerk and himself.

For the oppressed, however, for once in a long time the ANC was saying something that was true and induced some revolutionary fervour in them; what a pity it had to be in that den of thieves, CODESA.

Mandela, however, was not motivated by any sudden inspiration to reveal the truth; he was not serious about taking his accusations against the government to its logical conclusion and disassociating the ANC completely from any further negotiations with the government. So what was the real reason? The real reason was that Mandela was angry at De Klerk - not because his accusations against the government were true but because De Klerk had attacked the ANC without giving prior notice to him, Mandela. Mandela also wanted CODESA to present a harmonious picture to the outside world; he wanted it to be a gracious occasion - rather like a banquet where everyone heaps praise on one another; not a meeting concerning the liberation of the oppressed. Therefore, when De Klerk attacked the ANC, Mandela saw red. He lost his temper (and found the truth), revealing the true nature of the government.

The ANC's behaviour thereafter though was a spectacle. They met the National Party delegation and ruefully made up. At a press conference later, Mandela said that it was past history, as though it were a lover's tiff and not issues pertaining to the life and death struggle of the oppressed. Mandela kowtowed to the only principle he now espouses that of compromise - and the happy relationship between the ANC and the government was put back on track.

The little game of deceit, however, was and will be one of many. CODESA cannot hope to deliver the oppressed out of the political servitude and socio-economic deprivation that is their lot. The oppressed have to learn that hope alone, whether it be in an organisation, in an individual or in an ideal - cannot realise our liberation. History teaches us that only sound organisation of the people themselves, guided by scientific principles of political struggle can win our freedom in South Africa. Any other route or quick-fix solutions can only set us back in this quest; and this is the very task of CODESA - to hijack the struggle in this country.

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"I'M NOT THE LAST WHITE HEAD OF STATE"- F.W. De Klerk

Mr. F.W. de Klerk recently told a German political magazine, "Der Spiegel", that he did not believe he would be the last white head of state in South Africa. At the same time he warned that if South Africa became "ungovernable" . . . "we (the government) have a lot of options left (to reverse this) . . . Unfortunately, they are not attractive ones." Nor did he rule out the possibility of reimposing a state of emergency if political talks failed to "achieve desired ends". He insisted that "whites will play a critical role in any (future) government, no matter under what constitution". (The Star, the Johannesburg International weekly, 20 November 1991)

De Klerk added that he wanted a system of government by coalition which would be representative of all players and have "a rotational presidency"! "The Westminster system in which a group with 51 percent of the vote has all the power, is unsuitable for South Africa. . . . For example, we need a second parliamentary chamber to look after minority interests." There would be "trouble" if a new system led to "the suppression of minority rights and violation of property rights," he added. There should not be "a repeat of the conditions in other African countries." By the same token, De Klerk contended that "there are no landowners in South Africa who did not pay for their property. Legitimate landowners have a right to protection." Blaming the ANC for "delaying tactics" in his attempts to bring about "the new society", De Klerk said: "We are in a rush and we had hoped to achieve more . . . and we should have a multi-party conference before the end of the year. "

CONVENTION WITH ONLY ONE "LIBERATION" MOVEMENT

On 29-30 November, therefore, an all-party/multi-party meeting was convened to plan for a conference that would bring about negotiations. De Klerk assembled a motley collection of largely homelands/Bantustan/tricameral collaborators - 14 of them out of a total of 20 persons at the meeting, each representing some 'organisation' or other. Apart from De Klerk (Nat government), Gerrit Viljoen (Nat Party), J de Beer (Democratic Party), Nelson Mandela (ANC), J. Slovo (SACP) and Clarence Makwetu (PAC), there were three tricameral 'MPs' (Hendrickse of 'Coloured' Labour Party; A. Rajbansi and Reddy of Indian collaborator parties). To make up the 'majority' were eleven homelands/Bantustan chiefs, which included Holomisa (Transkei), Oupa Gqozo (Ciskei), Mangope (Boputhatswana), etc. Though the PAC was present at the start of the meeting, the delegation subsequently withdrew by walking out of the talks after alleging that the ANC and the government were in collusion. The PAC would, at a special conference on 16 December decide whether it would be part of the Convention for a Democratic South (CODESA) affair¹.

¹ The PAC decided at their special conference in Cape Town on 16 December that they would boycott the talks scheduled for 20-21 December because of the undemocratic composition of CODESA, Clarence Makwetu, the PAC President, had told the meeting that it was doubted whether the government was sincerely interested in ending white rule or merely trying to lure opposition groups to accept an undemocratic system. The boycott decision

There was the likelihood that the PAC would boycott the meeting scheduled for 20-21 December and this would mean that since the AZAPO/BCMA, the New Unity Movement and WOSA would not be part of the "Convention", the only "liberation movement" to attend it would be the ANC-SACP alliance.

COSATU had earlier wanted to be represented in their own right on the "Convention" and not as part of the tripartite alliance of the ANCP, but the government had decreed that COSATU was not a 'political party'. Apparently COSATU was now satisfied to be represented by the ANCP grouping.

SELLOUTS HAVE NO FOLLOWING

But what is significant about this array of 'leaders' that De Klerk has assembled is that he (and Pik Botha) have carefully groomed the homelands/Bantustan/tricameral collaborators over the extended negotiations period to the point where all (or most) of them came in response and support of his initiative, even though most of them have no real or democratically elected followers/membership in the so-called political parties in their 'constituencies'. Politically they have been spurned, rejected and constantly boycotted by the freedom movements and the people whom they now claim to represent. Many of the organisations mentioned in their profiles are of very recent vintage! About eight of these bodies were formed as recently as this year, last year or the year before. Two of them are 'military councils' that had come to rule after a coup in the Transkei and the Ciskei. Most others had no real membership since the chiefs autocratically largely outlaw any kind of progressive peoples' organisations, the most notorious being Boputhatswana under Mangope.

An example of how the Labour Party of tricameral Hendrickse is representative can be gained from the December 1990 conference they held in Cape Town. The story was related (together with a front-page colour picture) in "The Sunday Times" newspaper of how busloads of elderly pensioner ladies were tricked into believing they would be given a Christmas treat for the day. Instead, they were taken to a not very full hall at the Goodwood Showgrounds to applaud De Klerk when he came to address the conference. Hungry and angry, the women recounted how they were told to vote by raising their right hands, even though they were not members of the Labour Party, and had never been even its supporters.

Also among the tricameral rump is A. Rajbansi, shameless sellout of the tricameral circus, who was booted out of the leadership because of corruption and dishonesty. But he got back into 'parliament' despite his track record. In any event, both in the case of the 'Coloured' and the Indian dummy elections, most of the largely unopposed candidates obtained around 5 percent of the possible votes, some as few as less than 10 people voting, thanks to the nationwide boycott of the farcical elections. For De Klerk, time apparently is of the essence. The National Party lost a very significant by-election in Virginia in the OFS. In 1989 the Nats had a majority of 43 but in this last by-election the Conservative Party of Treurnicht had a majority of over 3 000, meaning that the Nat voters were joining the CP and deserting De Klerk. The usual experts with their

was unanimously accepted by the 2 000 delegates and supporters at the conference.

computers have come up with the projection that at this rate the CP and rightwing Afrikaners would get a majority of 10 in the white parliament if there is an election; and that the whites would vote 55 percent in favour of the CP and its allies in a De Klerk referendum.

COMPROMISE AND CONSENSUS TO BE REACHED

This has very crucial bearing on the negotiations of De Klerk, since he has once again promised that in the referendum scheduled for early 1992 the white vote will be counted separately. This would give the white and rightwing the victory. In such a situation, De Klerk would most likely push his ideas of a compromise much harder and get the ANC and others to accept that whites were entitled to self-determination. As Patrick Laurence, assistant editor of The Star, said in Harare recently, when he and Vincent Maphai and William Breytenbach tried to sell the idea of the CODESA affair: "However, the major players at the conference, the ANC and Mr de Klerk's National Party, realise all too well that they have to reach a consensus as far as possible, on a sufficient and pragmatic consensus."

Well, De Klerk has categorically declared that he and his Nat Party are against any form of majoritarianism and that community interests (read: white minority interests) would have to be taken into full account.

A significant aside: US AID has given the ANC R12,5 million and Inkatha R7 million for their "negotiations" expenses.

STATE'S POLICY OF DECEPTION

Rejecting any participation in the negotiations meetings of 29 November and of 20-21 December 1991, the New Unity Movement says in its latest statement that the conference has nothing to do with the promotion of the struggle for democracy, except to confuse it and destroy it.

"The De Klerk government has created this forum to secure the collaboration of certain sections of the political movement of national liberation; the sole purpose of this is to strengthen the hold of the ruling class upon the political, economic and other machinery of the State, with the help of these willing collaborators. . ."

The statement says further: "It is being made to seem as though the IFP, the ANC and the PAC are co-sponsors of this Conference. That is only part of the State's deception policy and part of the self-deception which, regrettably, has become a feature of the political posturing of a section of the leadership among the disfranchised. It is in fact a glaring example of the success of the tactic used by Hitler and Mussolini in the early phases of the world crisis, namely, WHEN YOU CAN GET PEOPLE TO DEMAND WHAT YOU WISH THEM TO HAVE (like a multi-party conference, negotiations, etc) then you have them completely within your control. The New Unity Movement will have nothing to do with this contemptible sort of deception."

EDITORIAL NOTE

This article was written prior to the PAC Conference of 16 December 1991. At that conference, the rank and file delegates wasted no time in rejecting CODESA. The collaborationist elements in the PAC's top leadership came under scathing criticism from irate militants for its participation in CODESA. In fact, the militants came out for their scalps. The collaborationist section had to do some fancy footwork to hop from a collaborationist to an ultra-militant position. All this to escape the ire of the militant cadres of the PAC, PASO and AZANYU.

To these principled comrades we say: BRAVO!

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THE PRAISE-SINGERS OF BETRAYAL

Whilst most living creatures accept mortality with a resignation, born out of ignorance, human beings are in constant war against it. Even where there is acceptance of physical mortality, people aspire for immortality through descendants or through some act which will make succeeding generations remember them. For such people, to be forgotten is final death - something their entire being revolts against.

Persons with such aspirations will do anything to be remembered. One such method is to get themselves a place in the history books. For most of the participants in CODESA, the occasion was not only to get a dose of respectability but also a place in history. One has merely to listen to the opening speeches of the delegates. They were all designed for the history books.

It began with a certain Mr. Corbett who officially opened CODESA. By profession, he is a judge. By rank he is the Chief Justice of the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein. Initially there was some half-hearted opposition from the ANC to him opening CODESA. After all he does occupy the chief position in a judiciary known for its naked racism, its cowardice in matters of justice and human rights and its slavish eagerness to implement some of the most inhuman laws in modern history.

Corbett, as a true servant of the system, adhered strictly to the entrenched language clause in the 1910 racist constitution. He divided his speech equally between English and Afrikaans. In the course of his opening remarks he referred to Sir Henry de Villiers as "distinguished". And who was this "distinguished" knight in shining armour? He was also a Chief Justice. He also opened a constitutional convention -the 1908 Convention which gave birth to Racist South Africa (RSA). The person who was midwife to RSA is described as "distinguished" by the official midwife of CODESA.

Corbett saw no contradiction between the 1908 Convention and CODESA. In a real sense he is correct. The fate of the toiling masses in a society fashioned by CODESA will not be substantially different from their fate in the society fashioned by the racist 1908 Convention.

Corbett, the praise-singer of the racist Sir de Villiers was, in turn. the object of a praise song from Ismail Mahomed, now known as the judge without the vote. Of Corbett he sang that he (Corbett):

" . . . graced the occasion by the dignity of his office and the sensitivity of his character and the wisdom of his intellect. . ."

What was the cause of this unsolicited song? The chief praise-singer of CODESA was merely warming up!

Ismail Mahomed, then unofficially opened CODESA. With TWO openings and both by learned judges, CODESA's day was made!

Ismail Mahomed, more than any other participant. scrambled the hardest for his place in history. He came to CODESA with two prepared speeches. One for the opening and one for the closing. Both speeches cried out loudly for a place in the history books. Both speeches were overdressed with ostentatious imagery. They were contrived and phoney as paste jewellery. It reminded one of Neil Armstrong's artificial speech on the moon. For the benefit of the doubtful reader we set an extract from Mahomed's closing speech:

"Experience matured us all . . . sometimes opened painful wounds and some times lifted us to states bordering on spiritual intoxication. And even pain acquires a strange kind of sweetness under the balming influence of a renewed faith. . . We have argued, we have confronted and we have loved all at the same time.. ."

Surely, Ismail Mahomed could not have employed this extravagant language on the likes of the Rajbansis, the Nats, Bantustan stooges and killers, sellouts and traitors, capitalist bloodsuckers etc. But that is precisely what he did. That ought to earn him a place in history. An intellectual composing an Ode to Human Garbage!!

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