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UNITED FRONT OR UNITED FRAUD?

On the 15 December 1987 the Daily News headlines screamed : "ANTI-NAT FRONT BUILDS UP". At a glance the idea of uniting against the Nats appears to make sense. Or does it? This episode again raises the question of UNITY. Unity of whom, unity for what purpose, unity on what basis — these are some of the questions we must answer.

What is this "Anti-Nat front"? From the newspapers we are able to glean the following:

1. It is described as "a large scale multi-racial grouping working within the system".
2. It is to consist of a "white" section made up of the PFP, the NRP and the Independent Movement, an "indian" section made up of the Progressive Reform Party and the Solidarity Party and a "coloured" section made up of the Labour Party and the United Democratic Party.
3. Its declared purpose is to win a majority in the House of Delegates, the House of Representatives and, if the Conservative Party (!!) wins 50 seats in the next "whites" only election, to hold the balance of power in the House of Assembly. As a bonus they hope to win over verligte Nats.
4. Spokesmen for this group identify their unifying factor as "opposition to apartheid" and their common strategy that flows from this is to unite in an attempt to "dislodge the Nats".

So we see that, firstly, this grouping is racist in that their "multi-racial" approach deliberately confines the oppressed to their various racial pens as "indians" and "coloureds" — so rejecting the principle of non-racialism and the very basic idea of the equality of all people.

Secondly, we see that this grouping enjoys little credibility. It consists of "white" groupings that have been all but decimated in the last "white" election and collaborationist groupings who have been consistently and increasingly rejected by the oppressed themselves. The only thing "large scale" about this grouping is their vision of a large scale sellout !

Thirdly, their schemes to win control of the various dummy structures in the Tricameral circus represents part of the continuing drive to win credibility for this rejected government-created instrument of oppression and degradation. The fact that the success of their mad-hatter schemes requires Conservative Party success is a measure of the bankruptcy of their plans.

Fourthly, their stated opposition is solely to apartheid and their sole aim is to "dislodge the Nats". The problem with waging a struggle solely against apartheid is that it does not direct itself against the eradication of oppression and exploitation that degrades and humiliates the millions of oppressed in South Africa. This is the basic failure of all strategies that style themselves as being simply anti-apartheid — irrespective of whether or not the goal to "dislodge the Nats" is dressed up as being a "seizure of state power"

Yet it is this united fraud that some newspapers have presented as a "united left-wing front". Others, such as that shady character Dennis Worrall, dress up this grouping with the term "creative opposition". In fact, apart from being not in the least creative, all that this group opposes is the crudity of the overt racism of apartheid. What they do not oppose is the continuing degradation of human life in South Africa that flows from the vast majority of people in South Africa being denied fundamental democratic political rights.

For those of us concerned with the elimination of oppression and exploitation the vital question is that of the unity of the oppressed. This unity must be built on the basis of an independent struggle for the complete democratisation of South Africa. For us in the New Unity Movement the minimum basis for unity is the Ten Point Programme coupled with the policy of non-collaboration. This latter policy breaks any links with ruling class elements that attempt to dilute and misdirect the life and death struggle of the oppressed for liberation. In this struggle the only road for the oppressed is forward. Forward to freedom !

DITHERERS NOT WANTED!

Introduction:

The strife which has broken out in the ranks of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) has become the talking point in political circles. We have no intention of getting embroiled in the internal matters of the NIC. Matters like the existence or otherwise of a CABAL or alleged unconstitutional conduct are best dealt with and sorted out by members of the Natal Indian Congress themselves.

What does concern us, however, is the very serious allegation by top NIC person, Mr. M.J. Naidoo, that there are persons in the leadership of the NIC who have been putting forward the line that the oppressed people should participate in the Tricameral Circus. That is not just an internal matter of the NIC. It concerns the entire liberatory movement.

In writing as we do, we are mindful of :—

- (a) A public denial by the NIC that any member of its leadership has recently advocated participation, and
- (b) The re-affirmation by the NIC that it would not participate in the Tricameral Circus.

NON COLLABORATION SHOWN TO BE THE CORRECT POLICY

1. The question as to whether the oppressed people should participate or not in government created political institutions, designed specially for the oppressed, was first raised and discussed in 1935 when the Fusion Government of Smuts and Hertzog took away the last remnants of the African vote. In its place was given the dummy Native Representative Council and three White Native Representatives to "represent" the African people.

2. Those who advocated participation used arguments which have been taken over by the collaborators in the Houses of ill-fame i.e. Delegates and Representatives. We are all familiar with such arguments— “fight from within”, use of dummy bodies as “platforms”, “boycott candidates” etc ad nauseam. Time has shown that these arguments are devoid of any substance, thoroughly spurious and false beyond doubt.

The only beneficiary from these arguments was the ruling class because the liberatory movement was divided from top to bottom on the issue of collaboration.

3. The bantustans, the end product of dummy bodies, have been exposed to the oppressed and to the world at large to be nothing more than organised gangsterism engaged in savage repression and shameless robbery of the public coffers.
4. By the early sixties, all segments of the liberatory movement committed themselves to the policy of non-collaboration. The only exception was a coterie of individuals belonging to various organisations — e.g. Arenstein from the Congress of Democrats, Koyana from the Unity Movement, Letlaka from the PAC and Joe Matthews of the ANC and the Communist Party. These individuals were exposed without mercy and the oppressed regarded them as traitors.
5. From that time until the present, the policy of non-collaboration became the official policy of the entire liberatory movement and not just that of the Unity Movement which founded and consistently upheld that policy.
6. From about the early seventies when all the older political organisations were either banned or driven underground through repression, it was the Black Consciousness Movement which kept alive and advocated the policy of non-collaboration. By this time the oppressed people as a whole, regardless as to whether they belonged to any political organisation, seized this policy and adopted it as their own. Hence in rapid succession, the Urban Bantu Councils, the Community Councils, the South African Indian Council, the Coloured Representative Council, the Local Affairs Committees etc were consigned to the refuse dumps of discredited dummy institutions.
7. It was the wholesale and sustained rejection of these dummy councils and the refusal of the oppressed people to work the machinery of their own oppression which set the stage for the nation-wide rejection of the Tricameral Circus. A whole people stood on their feet. Only the clowns remained on their knees — providing degrading entertainment for their masters.
8. The struggle for the acceptance of the policy of non-collaboration by the liberatory movement as a whole spanned some fifty years of our recent history. It was a fierce and a protracted one. It had divided the entire liberatory movement. It divided families and friends. The oppressed paid a heavy price for the time spent in the in-fighting.

The result of this struggle is one of the most outstanding victories scored by the oppressed people. Today the policy of non-collaboration has become deeply ingrained in the political psyche of the people.

9. We have reached the position when no organisation in the liberatory movement, and, no individual (apart from sellouts) regardless of reputation or image, will dare to publicly advocate participation in the Tricameral Circus or to advocate abandonment of the policy of non-collaboration. Those who have tried it received a sharp rap on the knuckles. Others were not so lucky.

DITHERERS NOT WANTED

In this ethos of high political consciousness and militancy in relation to the dummy bodies, we still hear voices of ditherers. We are told that the boycott is "a tactic and not a principle". The implication is clear. "Today we boycott and tomorrow we participate". We are told of an "ongoing debate" as to whether to participate or not. The names of those who stand for participation are carefully concealed. In view of all that has been said above, we find this approach not only sterile but highly dangerous. **IT IS BUT A SMALL STEP FROM DITHERING TO ACTUAL COLLABORATION.**

CONCLUSION

It is the task of the leadership to:—

- *consolidate the achievements and victories of the oppressed people.
- *take the struggle on to a higher plateau.
- *work for greater unity of the various segments of the liberatory movement.

It is NOT the task of the leadership to:—

- *confuse people by acting and behaving inconsistently.
- *to undermine Unity which has been achieved on a fundamental policy.
- *undo a major achievement of the liberatory movement as a whole.
- *try and slip through the back-door a reactionary policy which has been soundly discredited.

THE POLICY OF NON-COLLABORATION IS HERE TO STAY!

BARTOLOMEU DIAZ

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Bartolomeu Diaz on the southern shores of South Africa. On the 3rd February 1488 Diaz landed at Mossel Bay. Four years earlier, in 1484, another Portuguese, Diago Cam landed on the coast of Namibia near Swakopmund.

The ruling class in South Africa are celebrating the event with much pomp, ceremony and tax payers' money. The oppressed in this country see this event as the beginning of the invasion of South Africa. The oppressed have no cause to celebrate and are boycotting the celebrations just as they have boycotted the Van Riebeeck celebrations in 1952. Even Hendrickse and his cronies of the House of Representatives did not attend the Diaz festival at Mossel Bay. Beach apartheid is still enforced at Mossel Bay. And we know how Hendrickse likes to swim.

Diaz's circumnavigation of the Cape enroute to the East was an economic expedition for gold, silver, ivory and slaves. Portugal was one of the first European countries to embark on these expeditions which led to the invasion of African states and the establishment of Portuguese colonies.

These colonies enhanced the Portuguese trade not only in minerals and raw materials but in slavery. During the 15th Century the Portuguese and the Spanish established a flourishing slave trade from the West Coast of Africa to the colonies in Central and South America. The Dutch, French and British soon entered the field, fought and competed with each other for the slave trade and also established colonies in Africa. Africa enriched Europe. Europe raped Africa.

In this regard "Mnguni" in his book of "Three Hundred Years", states:

"Africa made a particularly heavy and notable contribution to "Western" civilization, for it was from Africa that the main supply of slaves came for two continents – the Americas and Africa itself. The slave traffic, traffic in human beings was the most important and major trade of all. This traffic laid Africa in ruins. The total European slave trade in Africa cost some thirty million lives, ruined the tribal and feudal civilizations of the indigenous peoples, and enabled the masters of Europe to live in luxury and democracy."

It is no wonder that the Portuguese joined the racist regime in South Africa in commemorating this 500th anniversary.

It is symbolic that Dr Eduardo Serra Bandao, president of the National Geographic Society of Lisbon, Portugal, presented to Mr P W Botha, president of the racist regime in South Africa, a replica of an astrolabe, a navigational instrument used by Dias in his voyages.

To the oppressed in this country, the voyage of Dias to South Africa paved the way for the eventual conquest of South Africa and the subjugation of her people. The oppressed have no cause to celebrate.

WORKER SHARE-OWNERSHIP

Share-ownership by workers in South Africa ushers in a new method to exploit and continue the servitude of the oppressed workers. It has received a mixed reception from workers' unions and has become a major talking-point in business circles.

WHAT IS THE SCHEME?

The scheme is called Employee Share Ownership Plans (ESOP's). Through this plan employees are offered shares in the company in which they work. The concept of co-optation of employees by the capitalists is by no means new, but, the ingenuity of the scheme now being proffered is that whereas previously this option was only available to employees in executive and managerial positions, it is now being dangled at the mass of the workers in the companies employing this plan.

There are numerous methods of practically setting this plan into motion. In South Africa, essentially two methods are practiced. The one method entails the buying of a certain proportion of shares by the workers individually. The workers are then paid the dividends from the company's profits at the end of the financial period in question. The other method employs a collective ownership of shares by the workers. The dividends on profits are paid into a trust fund to be used for community and collective worker projects. Most companies utilize the first method, the latter only having recently been introduced for SAMCOR workers.

WHAT DOES MANAGEMENT HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

The reasons for the introduction of this scheme in South Africa are, euphemistically, given by management as:

1. to engender among workers a sense of common interest with management and thereby convince workers to adopt a less antagonistic approach to them;
2. to instil loyalty in the workers via their having a personal stake in the company and
3. to ensure greater efficiency and productivity of the workers.

These reasons underplay the driving force behind the plan and are essentially:

1. to create, in an economically and politically turbulent period, more available capital to be utilised by the profit-hungry capitalist on the stock exchange and
2. to blunt the class divisions between the workers and the management (who are the agents of capitalism) and ultimately to waylay the class consciousness and working class perspective of the workers in South Africa.

THE ACTUAL BENEFIT TO THE WORKER

ESOP's has absolutely no effect on the daily running of the company. Equally unchanged is the structure and hierarchy of the company with worker occupying the bottom rung of the ladder. Employees are never allowed to own enough shares to wield any semblance of power at any level of the corporate structure. The majority of companies offer their workers a paltry 1 – 2 percent of total shares, one of the exceptions being SAMCOR which has 24 percent of shares allocated to the Workers Trust Fund, which is still NOT enough to make a telling intervention in policy matters.

THE WORKERS DUE

The wheel of this country's economy turns on the backs of the toiling workers. All the wealth, comfort and privileges enjoyed and abused by the privileged minority are amassed by the superhuman toil and sweat of the oppressed workers. They are responsible for a 100 percent of the profits, not a meagre 1 – 2 percent of shares and dividends. What rightfully belongs to the workers then, is total control of the distribution of the wealth they engender, total control of the profits they generate on the farms, in the factories and in the mines, **THIS IS THE RIGHT THEY WILL HAVE TO STRUGGLE FOR !**

AFTERMATH OF THE FLOODS

As if the suffering of the exploited and oppressed were not heavy enough, nature contributed even further to the misery and suffering. The floods in September 1987 ravaged and devastated large areas of Natal. The people in the rural areas, townships and locations lost not only their meagre possessions but the lives of their loved ones. Even in natural disasters, the poor always pay the heaviest price.

So vast was the devastation, that a Disaster Fund was established. People were called upon to dig deep into their pockets to assist the victims of the floods and donations were made in cash and kind. The government also announced that it will make state funds available to alleviate the plight of all those affected. This act **MUST NOT** be considered as a magnanimous gesture. Any state, which in the final analysis should have the welfare of the people uppermost in the mind, is expected to rally to the aid of its citizens, who are in distress. So, in essence it is the duty of the state to offer such assistance and does not require an applause for its performance. All that the state is doing is distributing the tax payers money – that is, money paid by the citizens of the country to the state coffers.

Despite vast amounts of money that were collected and despite the government's intention to assist, the position after six months is that very little assistance has in fact been given to those who have been gravely affected.

The stance of the quislings in the House of Delegates, in this regard, is utterly reprehensible. They are attempting to score political points at the expense of the victims of the flood. Rajbansi is depicted as a hero in photographs in which he is handing out keys to some of the people who lost their houses in the recent floods, and to make things worse he considers such a move as something tangible which the sell outs have achieved.

The construction of the houses were financed from public funds. In other words, the people paid for these houses. The sell-outs did not use their own money. To make political capital out of the misery and unfortunate plight of these victims is, at the least, appalling.

HOSTEL SITUATION AT UNIVERSITY DURBAN-WESTVILLE

Despite being subjected to an inferior education in the bush colleges, the students at these institutions are still saddled with more problems and obstacles. This article is referring particularly to the "hostel situation" at the University of Durban-Westville in Natal. Students who are married and students who are not in their first year are being hindered from seeking hostel accommodation. This ridiculous aspect of the situation (and there is always a ridiculous aspect in these situations) is that there are (according to the Sunday Times Extra, Sunday 14/2/1988) 200 – 300 vacancies at the hostel but students are still being turned away and are being forced to seek accommodation at high cost and at great distances from the campus, which increases costs as students now have to pay for transport services to the university.

It is these senseless, and bureaucratic decisions that continue to infuriate one further.