



NEGOTIATIONS
— THE
ROAD
TO
BETRAYAL!!

“ . . . the idea that the fundamental rights of the masses can in the present circumstances be gained and protected by negotiation of any kind with the rulers is a disgraceful political hoax.” (NUM Bulletin, Vol 3, No 2).

This sums up the position of the New Unity Movement on the feverish debate that is now being conducted both inside South Africa and in Africa north of the Limpopo. The Unity Movement has rejected proposals made by the imperialist governments through Thatcher, Bush, Mitterand, Kohl and others. Further, there is no way in which we can support the approach of the Soviet Union and China who, according to reports, are trying to ‘compel’ the Congress movement to negotiate with the South African government on the premise that the ‘armed struggle’ is alleged to have no future.

In a statement prepared for the Workers’ Summit held on 26-27 August 1989, we pointed out that negotiations have, in fact, been initiated by the Imperialists as a move to nip in the bud the development of the struggle (in South Africa) on to a higher plateau. It is the imperialist view that a compromise at this stage, when the liberatory movement is in a state of weakness, will be far more beneficial to the local ruling class and the imperialists.

The attitude of the Soviet Union and China shows a complete misapplication of the political and economic considerations which affect *their* relations with world imperialism to the conflict in South Africa. In South Africa the oppressed are locked in battle with a ruling class and its supporters in the imperialist world. The Soviet and Chinese pre-occupation with ‘negotiated settlements’ arises primarily from the frightening impasse that has been reached in build-up of atomic and nuclear arms — a development which makes the thought of a Third World War too terrible even to think about. Moreover, the fact that the non-exploiting Soviet Union and China have been driven to devote such huge amounts of their national wealth to non-productive military expansion, and have seen their economic development strangled as a result, has forced them to re-assess their global position. For them the need to negotiate arms treaties with their political enemies seems inescapable.

To transfer the considerations which have applied in that situation to struggles in Southern Africa, and in South Africa in particular, is something for which there can be no political justification. It ignores the aims

and objectives of the struggle, as well as the changing balance of forces developing in South Africa. It posits the ludicrous idea that the national oppression and exploitation of the oppressed and the emancipating of South Africa from imperialist domination can be resolved by 'talks' with the very perpetrators of the existing order in South Africa.

The fact that segments of the broad liberatory movement have taken up the initiatives of the Washington-London-Moscow-Bonn-Beijing lobby is a disturbing index of the political immaturity and inexcusable dependence (or lack of political independence) of those segments. It is equally an indication of the deep penetration of the liberatory movement by the new liberals and the missionaries (IDASA, Five Freedoms Forum, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, etc) hastening, as did their forebears in the 19th century, to prepare the ground for the reconquest of the rebellious oppressed.

What is of the greatest significance, among many significant changes in the relationships between the rulers and the ruled, is a virtual complete breakdown in structures developed over decades to secure the submission of the oppressed. That is the message in the revolts in the homelands, in the rejection of the tricameral parliament and its second and third tier apparatus (RSCs, JMCs, local authorities, LACs, management committees). There is no future whatsoever for the ruling class in its frantic efforts to secure the co-option and co-operation of the collaborators who have any capability of taking the mass of the oppressed with them. The army and the police have been shifted into the foreground in the desperate efforts of the State to halt this development and its consequences. The programme of the ruling class remains embedded in capitalist exploitation, race-, colour- and gender-based policies which are totally rejected by the principled leadership of the oppressed.

The political voice of the oppressed has formulated for *every* aspect of the lives of South Africans the basic, imperative changes that must be brought about to satisfy the democratic movement. This is not a new development. The Ten Point Programme, a **MINIMUM** programme, and the policy of Non-Collaboration are nearly fifty years in existence; as are the ideas of building **ONE** South African nation, a united, non-racial democratic South Africa with a common citizenship for all and a society freed of discrimination, oppression and exploitation! This ideological flowering is in direct and irreconcilable opposition to the ossified, hated racist ideology of the ruling class.

The New Unity Movement, like several of its allies in the liberation movement, seeks a **SOLUTION** for the problems of this country. The idea that acceptable solutions can be 'negotiated' with the present ruling class is in direct conflict with our position that our problems can only be resolved through **STRUGGLE**. That was the message we conveyed to the Workers' Summit. The oppressed have strengthened their relative position in their conflict with the oppressors. But we cannot pretend that we have developed the full fighting potential of the oppressed. We need, desperately, to eliminate division and to weld unity. We need to heighten the political awareness and confidence of the masses that they must and can change society. We have to build our organisations on **ALL FRONTS** to outmatch the organisational, physical and ideological influences and powers of the ruling class.

To suggest that we simply accept the dictates of overseas sponsors and negotiate with the ruling class and its allies is unacceptable. To suggest further that negotiation is 'inevitable' is no better than saying that death is inevitable. We are at one with Zeph Mothopeng when he says, categorically, that negotiation is out of the question. We are equally opposed to the tactics of those who wish to draw trade unions, student bodies, sports constituencies, church communities and a rag-bag of both 'black' and 'white' liberals into the 'negotiating process'.

We are convinced, on the basis of our political understanding of struggles here, and on the basis of outcomes of 'negotiated settlements' in the neo-colonial world, that all the present talk of 'negotiations' is a cruel hoax. It is a hoax offered to embattled millions reeling under a violent and oppressive society that cannot be patched up; whether by talks, talks about talks, racist reforms or by the weight of slush funds with which nation-wide efforts to head off truly democratic change are being pursued. It must be overturned and re-built upon the foundations of universal democratic principles.

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