

white children climb on to the ponies, and the donkeys, and up the high steps on to the elephants, and they watch them ride away, and they watch as they come in again for the next batch.

Some of them have as much as a ticky on them, so they could afford to buy a ticket for a ride, if the notices and the keeper were not there. They cannot read the little white notices which say: "European Children Only," so the thoughtful authorities have placed the tall keeper there to read this message to them with his stick.

THE BAFABEGIYA

By DAVID BOPAPE

IN a broad organisation such as the African National Congress one does not expect complete unanimity on every idea and every activity. In fact disagreements discussed in a healthy atmosphere and hammered out on the proper occasions can lead to nothing but good. If this was not so then it could truly be said that dictatorship and despotism by the leadership has replaced the democratic procedure of decision by the majority after a proper airing of conflicting views. Where a genuine desire exists on the part of all Congressmen to iron out disagreements a way can generally be found to let all viewpoints be heard and a democratic decision arrived at.

But in the present-day Congress and in years past minority groups have exploited minor disagreements on policy, have intruded personal rivalries and jealousies, and have even spread slander and made malicious attacks on democratically-elected Congress leaders in an attempt, not to reconcile conflicting points of view and strengthen Congress, but for such purely ulterior motives as capturing the leadership of Congress.

This type of manoeuvre even goes several steps further.

Such dissidents not only fail as individual Congressmen to carry out the organisation's decisions, but they form factions within the organisation to win support for their point of view and to undermine the influence of the Congress.

Such an organisation is the Bafabagiya.

From the outset its promoters tried to lure into its ranks the most courageous and heroic of Congress members. By the adoption of the title (Bafabagiya means "We Die Dancing") by which Chaka's crack regiment had been known the impression was

given that this would be the home of the most self-sacrificing and devoted of Congress members

The Bafabagiya is probably of not more than two years standing. The public at large first heard of its existence when a Johannesburg African National Congress official criticised its activities in a press interview. All along those who have now been revealed as the founders of this group filled important posts in the Congress and used their official positions to get hearings at Congress meetings and among Reef and Johannesburg members. The Bafabagiya is understood to have a constitution but it has never been published and the organisation makes no public appeal for members. It functions as a select and secret club to which access is possible only if a Bafabagiya member makes a direct approach to an individual to join.

The Bafabagiya claims that the leadership of the African National Congress has proved inadequate to its tasks. It names, incidentally, some of those in leadership against which it directs specific slanders. It advocates a more "militant" policy for Congress. It tries to trade on the reputation of the former members of the Communist Party, claiming that the Bafabagiya is an attempt by left-wing Congressmen to carry on that tradition.

Yes it is hard to discover exactly what policy the Bafabagiya is advocating for Congress. Thus far its only consistent activity has been of attempting to replace the elected Congress leadership with its own personnel

It has held no advertised public meetings. Its spokesmen went from one location to another alleging embezzlement of funds by Transvaal Congress officials, and promising that under Bafabagiya leadership a new period of Congress militancy and political action would be entered. Yet these Bafabagiya founders, many of them key organisers in their branches in this province, at the same time as they were urging that Congress embark on more militant campaigns, neglected their Congress duties and permitted their branch organisations to decline in strength and activity.

Like their political bedfellows and rivals in demagoguery, the Unity Movement, these bold men advocate "revolution," large scale offensives against the Government, more militant policies but they are the ones found most wanting during actual Congress struggles, as was shown, for example, by the virtual collapse of the Orlando branch during the Defiance Campaign, despite the fact that its leading official was one of the Bafabagiya inspirers.

The Bafabagiya have conjured up all manner of accusations against Congress to elevate their policy as the only correct one. Many of these grounds for criticism are even conflicting and incongruous. They claim on the one hand to be internationalists,

and on the other they criticise the participation of the African National Congress leaders in recent international conferences and in the World Youth and Student Festival.

They stand, they say, for racial unity and almighty alliance of the Non-Europeans for freedom. Yet they stoop even to racialism by spreading anti-Indian propaganda to the effect that Indian politicians control the African National Congress and force it to fight the battle of the Indians.

Those who formed the Bafabagiya are not well-meaning but confused. They have consciously embarked on a path of disruption. They have unfortunately won the ear of some honest Congress members who, fed on slander and distortion, have joined the faction in the belief that as a result of the activities of a pressure group within Congress, the organisation will emerge the stronger.

All who work in the Congress are aware of its shortcomings. Enthusiastic but disciplined participation in Congress work and criticism in the proper manner and at the right time will overcome these failings.

The Bafabagiya fastened on to some of these shortcomings, traded on the willingness of many genuine Congress supporters to recognise failings and criticise themselves, exaggerated these failings out of all proportion, and claimed the sole credit for bringing them into the light.

All enemies of the African National Congress, the Nationalists not excepted, should be appreciative of what the Bafabagiya is trying to do to split the Congress.

Fortunately their disruptive influence has been rejected by all but a tiny discontented fringe in the organisation and their role has been exposed as one of wrecking and splitting.

But one lesson must be learnt from the activity of the Bafabagiya at this time.

During periods of relative lull in mass political activity, the doubters, self-seekers, the traitors, the splitters, emerge to do their worst. Direct disciplinary action against factionalists must be taken but this is only part of the solution. The more necessary is day-to-day endless active political campaigning in all branches and nationally; the democratic airing of viewpoints and the formulation of Congress policy at continual meetings and conferences; a close link between leading bodies of Congress and its rank-and-file; and the unceasing education and training of the membership so that Congress slogans are not only cheered at rallies but are also carried out by an enlightened membership that has had a share in their formulation.