

A POLITICAL REVIEW (A summary)

By Mr I.B.Tabata, the President of the Unity Movement of S.A.

Delivered at an Executive meeting in Lusaka on 12 February, 1971.

It is necessary to review where we are now and make plans to fit ourselves into this. We should go back briefly to the end of World War II. We have seen the validity of the statement that war is the locomotive of history in the tremendous amount of change since the end of the war. We are even likely to forget how historical events have brought about great changes in the short period of 25 years. The Soviet Union then controlled every Communist country and those countries that broke from the grip of imperialism. Britain had become a third-rate power, but the U.S. had become the gendarme of the world. It seemed impossible to break through these two giants.

World-shaking events, however, took place: Korea, then Indo-China when France was ousted and the U.S. moved in and got bogged down ever since. The U.S., too, has an Achilles heel, it is not so invincible or capable of holding back world history. Progressive forces have broken up the monolithism of the USSR. China and the Socialist world have found more elbow room for themselves; discussions on the reassessment of Marxism took place freely, away from the stifling umbrella of the USSR. Britain opened up the epoch of neo-colonialism: first India, then Africa and the Caribbean. France had to follow suit after Indo-China.

America itself had to alter the old system. Cuba became the catalyst which taught America many lessons: the Cuban revolution carried Castro far beyond what he ever dreamed of. Once a revolution has started it will go by its own logic and momentum beyond the bounds of capitalism. Thereafter, all revolutions had to be crushed, even if they were 'democratic' revolutions. The U.S. could tolerate only dictatorships in these countries and had to get rid of democratic reformism. Europe opened the way towards neo-colonialism, which had now to be reversed or changed.

We can now draw the conclusion that the epoch of granting independence has come to a close. We are living through the era of the re-conquest of Africa. All signs show they have found neo-colonialism too dangerous. A new period has opened up. Gradual stages in a revolution is not possible in modern times certainly. A revolution must go the full distance, unlike what the petit-bourgeois thought. Even bourgeois democracy has now become a danger to imperialism-capitalism. Hence various coups-d'etat which are all part and parcel of the re-conquest of ex-colonial countries. The lesson we have to learn once again is that to stop a revolution half-way, to consolidate what we have won, is to lose it. Our National revolution must of necessity pass over to a Socialist revolution in one and the same struggle. This is what we have learnt from the rest of Africa. But it merely confirms the position we had arrived at theoretically a long time ago. We must continue to think in terms of telescoping the stages in our revolution without necessarily skipping them. We cannot think of consolidating at any stage.

We must, therefore, consider the National Movements within this milieu of re-conquest by imperialism-capitalism. Many have been caught unawares in this period. It has been the fate of many movements that the petit-bourgeois occupied the leadership and the centre of the stage. It was the era in which they played their role, but neo-colonialism came too late on the scene for them to play their classic roles in any significant manner. It was inevitable that those movements that reflected the neo-colonialist outlook were to occupy the centre of the stage. The ANC of South Africa is no accident. The ANC has always been supported by the liberal bourgeoisie for use internally against the openly fascist wing of the herrenvolk. The C.P. of S.A. played its part in the same thing, whilst the C.P. of the Soviet Union pushed Nationalism and bolstered it. Moscow captured these movements and stopped the revolution, thus finding itself on the same side of the barricades as imperialism-capitalism.

Now imperialism itself is closing this epoch because of general world events. This has given rise to a new situation for what is to-day called Trotskyism to come into its own - for Marxism, that is, to do so. Left-wing parties and tendencies are now able to develop. The Soviet Union has had to ally itself with imperialism and stamp out any genuine revolution. Even mildly left movements have had to be subjugated by imperialism.

Regroupment of forces have had to take place. Vietnam has revealed this; China drawing unto itself some satellites. There has come about a re-alignment of forces in the Socialist camps. The Third World is suffering the strains. Thus the OAU is beginning to disintegrate soon after its formation. This is not a bad thing, though - that the OAU is falling apart and a new alignment of forces in Africa is to take its place. New cohesions and alliances are being revealed. Events are pushing them one way or the other.

Liberatory Movements also are being forced into their respective positions. Those Lib. movements pushed by the OAU now find themselves in a void, a vacuum having been created. This is the situation we are finding ourselves in to-day: the vacuum has to be filled by either progressive or reactionary forces. We are faced to-day with having to fill the vacuum, the situation being favourable to all revolutionary forces.