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EDITORIAL

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EGYPT AND HUNGARY

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EDITORIAL

THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

In wartime, the first casualty is truth. Newspapers and radio are "mobilised" as a part of the military machine; everything is subordinated to the purposes of propaganda. Thus it is no easy task to pick one's way through the welter of confused, tendentious and often conflicting news reports of the past week or so and arrive at the facts of the present stormy international scene.

Nevertheless, certain realities stand out clearly.

British, French and Israeli troops have invaded Egypt and occupied Egyptian territory by force of arms; a wanton, premeditated act of aggression taken in defiance of solemn undertakings under the United Nations Charter.

History can afford few flimsier justifications than those offered by Sir Anthony Eden for this blatant aggression. If it really was a "police" action following the Israeli invasion, why attack Egypt? It is as if a policeman, seeing an attack on a private citizen by a gangster, were to come up behind the citizen while he was defending himself and bash him over the head. If you saw a policeman behaving like that, you would immediately conclude that his object was not to preserve law and order, but to join with the gangster in robbing him and sharing the loot. And that in fact is exactly what the English and French imperialists are out for — loot. They want to grab the Suez Canal. The Israeli attack was just a feeble excuse (no doubt it was fixed up in advance with the Israeli Government) — an excuse that deceived nobody, for doing exactly what they had been itching to do and threatening to do and preparing to do ever since Colonel Nasser announced the nationalisation of the canal in July; namely, to make war on Egypt.

Even more obviously dishonest was the Anglo-French claim that they wanted to keep the canal free for navigation. The canal has been kept open for navigation ever since Egypt took it over, more than three months ago, despite the sabotaging action of the Anglo-French company in withdrawing pilots. The first and immediate effect of the imperialist military adventure has of course been to block the canal to all shipping for several months.

It must have been quite obvious to the aggressors that this would happen, or at least that it was most likely to happen. The truth is that, despite their hypocritical professions that they are solely interested in keeping this important international waterway open, the British and French ruling classes are not and never have been concerned only or mainly with that question. It is the Egyptian Government that has been striving to keep the waterway open. Britain and France have been playing for much higher stakes.

By hook or by crook, even though illegally, by threats and aggression, in defiance of the United Nations, and at the risk of touching off all the horrors of World War III, the imperialists aim:

to seize the canal,

to overthrow the Nasser Government and re-occupy Egypt as a colony,

to teach the peoples of the colonies and former colonies of Africa, Asia and the Middle East "a lesson".

That lesson is brutally plain. The British and French ruling classes are serving notice that the territories and resources which they seized by force, they intend to hold by force. The peoples of the French colonies of North Africa, urgently demanding their rights to freedom and independence; the Arab States of the Middle East insistently claiming the profits of their rich oilfields, profits which, like the oil itself, are nearly all piped off to Britain, America and France; the awakening millions of Britain's African empire — all of us, indeed, who seek freedom from imperialism and the return of our stolen national resources are intended to "learn" that if we challenge the Europeans' ill-gotten gains, the penalty is invasion, death and destruction.

Such is the basic reasoning behind this desperate military adventure. It is reasoning that is fundamentally false and unrealistic. The English Tory Government and the French so-called "Socialist" Government are living in the past. Instead of frightening the colonial world, they have raised against themselves a storm of mass solidarity, indignation and determination that can only hasten the doom of imperialism and colonialism throughout the world. Already the miserable plan has misfired. Even the United States, in the throes of a Presidential election, was forced to make token gestures of disapproval. In the whole of the United Nations only the Dominion Governments of Australia and New Zealand could be found to approve of the dastardly aggression. The British working class movement showed a militancy and determination against its ruling class that has not been seen for the past thirty years. The plot to conquer Egypt has failed; the "lesson" has turned out to be the greatest fiasco in modern history. As we write, the aggressors' armies are still in Egypt, but we cannot doubt that the massive reaction of the peace-loving people of the whole world will compel them to withdraw unconditionally, and to compensate the innocent Egyptian people for the damage and suffering that they have caused.

THE ROLE OF ISRAEL

A sorry role in these sorry proceedings has been played by the Government of the young state of Israel. The thousands of Jewish people who sought refuge in Palestine at the end of the last war, beguiled by Zionist propaganda, sought nothing but the peace and security which they hoped to find in their new homeland. Their sole hope of finding such security lay in a policy of brotherly peace and friendship with the kindred Arab people who lived in Israel and in all the states and lands surrounding it. Instead of pursuing such a policy the Zionist leaders, inflamed with nationalistic ardour and dreams of martial glory, have done everything in their power to aggravate and inflame Jewish-Arab relations. They cruelly dis-

possessed, persecuted and exiled the Israeli Arabs, and they have acted throughout as open agents for Western imperialism, the mortal foe of Arab independence and aspirations.

No doubt, their Anglo-French patrons have offered them some Egyptian territory as a reward for their jackal's part in the invasion. Such reward is a poor compensation for the hatred and contempt which their action has aroused in the neighbouring countries. Only a radical change of policy and Government in Israel itself can now enable the Israeli people to start anew, and to win a measure of security and peace in the Middle Eastern comity of nations.

THE NEWSPAPER WAR

As we pointed out above, when war comes, the total propaganda resources are mobilised and the wireless and the newspaper become weapons in the military machine, for hurling verbal bombshells against the enemy. But in this respect, the war that began at the end of October has displayed some deeply significant differences to any wars of the past. Officially, Britain was attacking Egypt. Officially, America was protesting against the attack.

But in fact the entire propaganda resources of both countries, together with those of the entire capitalist world, were harnessed to an incredibly virulent hate campaign of fantastic dimensions, directed against — the Soviet Union.

Ostensibly the pretext for this campaign has been the happenings in Hungary.

It is almost impossible, from the welter of confused and conflicting news reports over the past fortnight, to gain anything like an accurate and cohesive picture of what has been going on in that country. The reports are manifestly unreliable. We have not known such reckless and hysterical propaganda since the closing down of Goebbels' Zeesen radio. On November 4 the Sunday papers told us that the "iron curtain had clanged down" and no reliable news could be expected from Hungary. Every day since then Vienna has been pouring out atrocity stories in full grisly detail to the avid newspapers of the world. In the same breath Reuter tells us that the Red Army is "well-behaved" and then that Soviet troops are looting and preventing the removal of wounded from the streets of Budapest. Reporting the U.N. debate on Hungary, the newspapers published extensive extracts from the speeches of Western delegates indicting the Soviet Union — but not a word of the statement of the Soviet representative.

The newspaper and radio treatment of Hungarian events is in glaring contrast with its treatment of fighting elsewhere. For example, on November 7 The Star printed, over three columns on its front page, a picture of a weeping old lady. The caption stated that she was a Hungarian refugee in Vienna, whose husband was killed in the fighting and whose sons were "among those who preferred to stay and die rather than flee from the oppressor." (Note the extravagant language.)

Now, violence is an ugly and pathetic thing, which brings human tragedy and suffering in its wake wherever it may occur. But the whole approach and behaviour of the capitalist newspapers during this critical period exposes their alleged concern for the sufferings of the Hungarians as nothing but cynical hypocrisy. Where was their sympathy for bereaved wives and mothers, when British troops opened fire on unarmed crowds in Singapore the week before? What about the widows of Port Said and Port Fuad and Sinai? What, for that matter, about those who lost husbands and sons when the police opened fire at Vlakfontein and Lichtenburg? The newspapers have no sympathy for these victims of brutal violence; no order has gone forth from the Vatican to mourn these dead throughout the world. These are crocodile tears. Their object is not to awaken sympathy for the Hungarians, but hatred for Soviet Russia.

They publish in flaunting headlines fantastic rubbish about Soviet troops shelling a children's hospital, about "plague spread by Mongol soldiers". And they bury in an insignificant corner the statement by the Italian diplomat in Port Said that 150,000 people are destitute and 50,000 homeless in that city as a result of Anglo-French bombing. They keep repeating the silly lie that "Red China" supports the Hungarian counter-revolution, and deliberately suppress such statements as that of the Peking newspaper Jenminjihpao that "the standpoint of the Soviet Union with regard to events in Hungary is the absolutely correct standpoint of proletarian internationalism." They have suppressed the important Soviet Government declaration of November 4, declaring readiness to discuss steps to eliminate "any possible violations of the principle of national sovereignty" in relations with the socialist countries, including the withdrawal of Soviet advisors and forces.

It is not difficult to discern the purpose of this reckless propaganda. It is to distract attention from the criminal onslaught on Egypt — like the thief who shouts "Stop, thief!" It is to create confusion in the anti-imperialist camp — "Look", they cry, "the Russians are also imperialists." It is to try and rally the crumbling "Western" alliance of the so-called "free world", strained to breaking point over conflicts, economic rivalries and policy differences in the Middle East and elsewhere.

THE TRUTH ABOUT HUNGARY

Obviously no reliance can be placed upon such sinister and biased reports, if we wish to make a true assessment of the Hungarian events. And in conditions of South Africa's iron curtain, with its prohibited index of hundreds of banned newspapers and periodicals, it is difficult enough to obtain reliable information upon which to base such an assessment. Yet it is plain that serious disturbances have taken place. Soviet troops (unlike those of Britain and France which have been in continuous action) have been engaged in serious combat for the first time since the war. It is necessary to make some analysis of these happenings, however incomplete and tentative it must necessarily be, if we are to preserve a rational and balanced view of world events.

We may begin by recalling some well-known facts about Hungary which the anti-Soviet propagandists seem only too anxious for us to forget.

In the first place we should not forget that the Soviet Union has not suddenly "invaded" Hungary, as the British and French have invaded Egypt. Soviet troops have been in Hungary ever since the end of the second world war, and as a result of that war. For the former fascist Horthy Government of Hungary was a partner with Hitler in aggression against the Soviet Union, and helped to inflict untold bloodshed, damage and suffering on the U.S.S.R. In accomplishing the defeat of the Fascist Axis, the Red Army entered Hungary, liberated the people from the Nazi yoke, smashed the Fascist State machine, and generously helped the people to restore the war-shattered country and build up a new democratic way of life.

Thus, the Soviet troops are in Hungary not as invaders, but in accordance with international law and recognised treaties — at present in terms of the Warsaw Treaty. Britain, America and France, we may point out also retain occupation armies in ex-enemy Western Germany. The difference being that (see Marshal Bulganin's Note to Pandit Nehru) the Soviet Union has expressed its intention of withdrawing its occupation troops: the Western Powers have not.

Secondly, we may remind our readers that the Soviet troops only intervened in Hungary when called upon by the former Hungarian Government — the very Government of Imre Nagy who is now so much praised by the capitalist newspapers — to restore order. Moreover, when the same Nagy Government requested the Soviet troops to withdraw from Budapest, they did so. In the meantime Nagy announced his resignation from the Hungarian Working People's Party which had placed him in office, and the formation of a new Government composed of reactionary figures from the old regime, in circumstances that spoke clearly of a counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat*. But it was only when he unilaterally denounced the Warsaw Treaty and openly called for military aid from the West that Soviet troops again moved into action, in support of a new, revolutionary workers' and peasants' government set up to depose the illegal Nagy regime and safeguard the fruits of twelve years socialist construction. It seems almost certain that had the Red Army not intervened, and had Nagy's appeal for "aid" succeeded, the result would have been a serious war, with unhappy Hungary as a battlefield, and incalculable consequences for humanity.

These actions cannot properly be described as "aggression"; much though it is to be regretted that affairs in Hungary had reached a stage where the Government found it necessary to call for outside aid in maintaining order.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

In seeking for answer to the question of what had happened in Hungary that led to widespread disturbances and eventually to rampant counter-revolution, we shall find that many factors are involved: heavily-financed campaigns of subversion directed from the U.S.A., special circumstances of Hungarian history, Vatican intrigues, grievous errors of policy and administration committed by the Hungarian workers' leaders, incorrect policies arising from the Stalin cult on the part of the U.S.S.R.

It is notorious that both Government and private sources in the United States have spent and are spending millions of dollars on financing propaganda, espionage, sabotage, terrorism, disaffection and rebellion in the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe. In addition to the official Gov-

ernment "Voice of America" radio, American capitalists have contributed liberally to "Radio Free Europe", which maintains thirteen transmitters in Munich, Frankfurt and Mannheim in West Germany and Lisbon in Portugal, and employs over a thousand people — mainly Whiteguard emigrés from Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. This sinister organisation, sponsored by Eisenhower, General Clay, former U.S. military commander in Germany, Henry Ford, Spyros Skouras (who now owns most of the South African cinemas) and other leading Americans, aims openly at the overthrow of the Governments of these East European countries. Associated with it is the American National Committee for a Free Europe, which collected over 11 million dollars in one year. It is also sponsored by Eisenhower, together with a number of bankers and industrialists. Its *first organiser was the same General Clay, who said publicly:*

"The way to bring peace is to produce revolutions in the countries behind the iron curtain. The United States is the only country that can provide the necessary leadership"

(New York Times, June 29, 1952).

An equally sinister though less spectacular role has been played by the intrigues of the Roman church in Eastern Europe. Is it an accident that it is precisely in Catholic Hungary and Poland that peaceful demonstrations turn, somehow, into wild riots; that democratic reforms, initiated by working class leaders, are guided by invisible hands into anti-socialist and anti-Soviet channels?

REAL DISCONTENT

Nevertheless, propaganda, subversion and intrigues directed from abroad would have been powerless to bring about mass disturbances on the scale evident in Hungary (and no matter how exaggerated the newspaper reports it is evident that the scale has been wide indeed), were it not for the existence of widespread discontent and grievances among the masses.

No doubt, the former landlords, capitalists and middle classes of Hungary have not all fled to the West. Thousands of them remain, irreconcilably hostile to the socialist regime, and desperately anxious to seize upon any wild gamble that might seem to offer them the prospect of regaining their former possessions and privileges. Moreover, under the former Horthy regime, and particularly under the influence of the alliance with Hitler, the Hungarian people were from 1919 (after the overthrow, though Western intervention, of the short-lived Soviet Government headed by Bela Kun) to 1944, subjected to the most intense indoctrination of Fascist, chauvinistic, anti-Semitic ideologies, and it would be idle to suppose that the years since liberation had sufficed to eliminate these ugly survivals of the past.

But this has been no mere revolt of bourgeois, landlord and fascist elements. Though no doubt spearheaded by them, it must, actively or passively, have enjoyed the support of wide strata of the urban and rural population to have assumed the dimensions it did. These deductions point to the existence of the most serious blunders and shortcomings in the leading Hungarian Working People's Party.

These errors were recognised by the Party itself in a process of searching self-criticism that culminated in the resignation of its veteran secretary, Matyas Rakosi, on July 18, followed by the appointment to the Party lea-

dership of members who had been unjustly expelled and and imprisoned under the influence of the Stalin cult. (They included Janos Kadar, the present Prime Minister.) These internal criticisms and changes were accompanied by sweeping policy changes; unpopular State loans were abolished, far-reaching administrative reforms were announced to eliminate bureaucracy, the functions of Parliament were extended, Party sectarianism overcome. It seems clear that, in its overkeenness to hasten the advance of socialism, the Party had made too heavy demands on the workers, run ahead of the people and called on them for efforts which they were not ready to make. The result was widespread bureaucracy, "commandism" and isolation from the masses.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

The new changes were welcomed by the workers of Hungary with great enthusiasm. It seemed that a new era had begun in Hungary's progress, along her own road, to socialism. What went wrong between July and October?

We must wait for history to provide the answers to that question, at a time when the Hungarians themselves are able to digest and formulate the lessons of these November events. Had, in its enthusiasm for the new line, the Party swung to the Right, towards a confusion between socialist and bourgeois democracy? Had its vigilance towards fascist and counter-revolutionary elements become lulled, in its indignation at the unjust frame-up of Laszlo Rajk and other sincere leaders? Certainly, in the light of what has now happened, the figure of Imre Nagy appears in a most suspicious and sinister light. Suddenly elevated to Party and Government leadership, he appeals to Soviet troops for aid in quelling disturbances. But his own Government does nothing to use its own forces against the rioters — so that, in the public eye, the events are seen merely as a clash between Hungarians and foreign occupation troops. Far from discouraging the uprising, Nagy's State radio and newspaper are reported as "welcoming" the uprising — against itself! Surely history cannot record another eyample of a Government "welcoming" the acts of those who seek to overthrow it! He appeals for the withdrawal of Soviet forces, leaving the country in uproar and turmoil. Finally, he announced his renegacy from his Party, the formation of a new "Government" of counter-revolutionaries, denunciation of the Warsaw Pact, appeal for imperialist aid. Some may see in these strange convolutions the working out of a deliberately contrived plot, with Nagy as the agent of a far-reaching conspiracy, gradually revealing his hand. Others will perhaps think of him merely as an unprincipled opportunist, dominated only by the lust for office and revenge. But whatever the theorising — and time will answer these questions — the ill-fated and short-lived period of Nagy's Premiership has been disastrous for Hungary, and delighted the imperialists and enemies of socialism throughout the world.

THE SOVIET ROLE

Can the Soviet leaders be exonerated of blame for what has happened in Hungary? Are they guilty of intervention and 'colonialism' in Hungary? Should they now, as it is reported has been suggested by the Yugoslav representative at U.N., withdraw their forces and allow the Hungarians to settle their own problems?

We cannot answer these questions fully until we have been allowed to do what our newspapers and radio iron curtain prevents us from doing — namely to study what the Soviet and Hungarian leaders themselves have to say at U.N. and elsewhere.

But it is clear that, whatever actions may, for military and security reasons, in the revived atmosphere of acute international tension promoted by imperialist aggression in the Middle East, and now the United States alerting of all her armed forces — whatever actions may be taken by the Soviet Union, her policy towards Hungary and other independent States of the socialist camp differs from those of imperialist countries towards their colonies as night differs from day. The Soviet Union has never suggested that the Hungarian or any other people are “backward races” unfit for self-government. There are no Soviet capitalists, holding investments and resources either in the U.S.S.R. or in any foreign country. Far from trying to maintain economically under-developed countries in a state of backwardness, an easy prey to foreign domination the Soviet Union has given and is giving every possible aid — not only in China and Eastern Europe, but also in India and elsewhere — to enable these countries to attain that rapid economic development which alone can guarantee their true, not merely formal, independence.

The very hullabaloo which the capitalist press is making over Hungary is itself an unconscious tribute to this sharply different nature of Soviet policy. After all, Britain in Malaya, Guiana, Burma, Kenya, Cyprus, France in Indo-China, Algeria, Morocco, Tunis; Holland in Indonesia; America in the Phillipines, China, Korea, Guatemala, have been doing precisely what they now accuse the U.S.S.R. of doing in Hungary: namely, intervening by force and violence in the affairs of other countries. Why no protests over all that? Why no Red Cross solidarity funds, offers to refugees, withdrawals from the Olympic Games lest Swiss, Belgian or Spanish (Spanish!) athletes might contaminate themselves by contact with those from these countries which use force and intervene? The fact is that with ill-concealed delight, the imperialists have seized upon this action of Soviet troops (the first since the fall of the Axis) precisely because in their hearts they know that the Soviet Union is basically and from its nature opposed to any form of imperialism and colonialism, and that its very existence is the most powerful threat to the whole structure of colonialism throughout the world.

What a fortunate chance it was for Sir Anthony Eden to reply to the sharp Soviet Note over Egypt, that he could not accept the Moscow reprimand because of the Soviet action in Hungary! As if two wrongs make a right, or a crude old-fashioned imperialist ultimatum, followed by the bombing of Cairo, could in any way be compared with police action in an occupied, ex-enemy country!

But whatever Sir Anthony may say, the fact is that the Soviet note did more to bring his Government to its senses, than all the U.N. General Assembly resolutions, Labour Party protests and gentle chidings by President Eisenhower. The Anglo-French imperialists ignored the United Nations appeal for a cease-fire for three days; they have even now at the time of writing failed to withdraw their forces from Egypt. It was only after the Soviet note that they hurriedly agreed to stop fighting. The London “Daily Mail” let the cat out of the bag on Wednesday, November 7, when it reported that:

“Britain and France originally intended to occupy the whole length of the Suez Canal to a depth of 10 miles on either side before ending hostilities. This change of plan is stated to have been due to the increase in East-West tension caused by Russia’s threats.”

— The Star, 7.11.56.

THE ESSENCE OF THE QUESTION

It is here that we come to the essence of the question, and that all the pieces of the complicated international situation begin to take logical shape. In all their desperate efforts to reinforce and restore their disintegrating colonial system, the Western imperialists come up against one hard and immovable factor, a factor which has transformed the heroic but ineffective liberation struggles of colonial peoples in the past into a vast and invincible movement which has swept the banner of freedom from one former colony to another, and abolished colonialism for more than 1,200 million people over the past decade.

That factor is the existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a great power openly and irrevocably hostile to imperialism, a power with an industrial-technological-military potential second to none. It is this factor which has enabled the former colonies triumphantly to proclaim and consolidate their independence, as they did at the Afro-Asian conference last year at Bandung, and that, at the last minute saved Egypt from passing again beneath the yoke.

And, in their hearts, this truth is recognised both by the imperialists and by all colonial people, Communist and non-Communist, irrespective of ideology, Right, Left and Centre. That is why we have this intensive hate campaign unleashed against the U.S.S.R. That is why the far-from-Leftist Parliament of Jordan unanimously passed a vote of thanks to the Soviet Union for its stand on Middle East problems against aggression.

We stand on the brink of the final collapse of the imperialist colonial system, with all its wonderful and glowing prospects of liberation for the people of South Africa and all the world. But these bright prospects are overshadowed by the terrible danger that in their desperation the imperialists may seek to plunge humanity into the unimaginable horrors of a third, atomic, war.

We in South Africa must not imagine that we are in any way detached or separate from these great and momentous decisions of our times. We must join the world-wide demand for aid to Egypt, the unconditional withdrawal of the aggressors, the restoration of Suez to its rightful owners, compensation and reparations to the victims. We must stand vigilant for peace, against the renewed building up of East-West tension and the threats of war. We must advance the tempo of our own bitter struggle for human dignity and freedom for all in our country, and for the advancement of the millions of our great continent of Africa to their rightful place as equals and partners in the fashioning of a new and better world.

THE A.N.C. AND NATIONALISM

—by RO. NGUBENGOUKA

THE Programme of Action passed by the Annual Conference of the African National Congress in Bloemfontein in December 1949 has a history that should serve as a source of tremendous inspiration to all those who are genuinely interested in the liberation of the toiling masses in this country.

From its establishment in 1912 Congress has sought to unite all Africans in the country under one political organisation and advocated somewhat vaguely for some democratic form of government in which Africans would be fully represented. Though there were stubborn and spirited skirmishes now and again its policy was based upon the mistaken belief that by lodging protests, by passing resolutions and by sending deputations across the seas to interview British monarchs, the governing circles of the day could be induced to surrender political power to Africans. Its demands were couched in moderate resolutions requesting concessions and privileges, pointing out to the Government the respects in which the administration was defective and suggesting reforms here and there — all based upon the erroneous belief that if white South Africa could be fully informed of the difficulties under which the African is forced to live and his desire to have an effective voice in the government of his country, the white man would change heart and confer freedom upon the sons and daughters of the soil without any serious political struggle being undertaken.

For more than three decades Congress faithfully pursued this policy and such draconian measures as the Land Act of 1913, the Natives Urban Areas Act, the Native Administration Act and the 1936 Hertzog legislation which legalised brazen plunder and spoliation and despotism and the violation of human rights of all those whose colour is black, failed to bring about any fundamental changes in the policy of Congress. This was due to the fact that the leadership of the Congress was at the time in the hands of middle class people who regarded the organisation primarily as a debating chamber and not as an instrument to prepare the masses of the people for decisive battles against the repressive policies of the Government.

But a time was bound to come when the potentialities of a purely constitutional and reformist agitation would be played out and Congress would have to break new ground and challenge reaction in a more positive and effective manner. This was one of the issues that faced delegates at the Annual Conference of the Congress in September 1949.

MILITANT ACTION

That Conference resolved on a programme of action whose preamble asserted the right of the African people to self-determination and which adopted African Nationalism as the basis of the struggle. It included the

following important matters: the total and complete boycott of the elections under the Natives Representation Act of 1936, the bungas, local and district councils, the advisory boards and similar institutions.

It made provision for the appointment of a Council of Action whose duty was to carry out the programme of action. The Council was expressly instructed to employ the boycott weapon, strikes, nonco-operation, civil disobedience and to work for a national stoppage of work.

It was at this Conference that Congress decided to employ non-collaboration and civil disobedience as weapons of the struggle against racial discrimination. Non-collaboration meant the refusal by Africans to cooperate with the Government in its repressive policies. Provided the objective conditions are correctly gauged in each specific case, non-collaboration can be a very effective weapon since the government of this country depends to a large extent on the co-operation, willing or unwilling, of Africans themselves; and if this co-operation were withdrawn and the boycott pressed forward, it is possible both in theory and in practice to undermine the whole policy of colour discrimination and to render it unworkable.

The Programme marks a stage in the development of the Congress when it ceased to be a talking shop for middle classes and when it began very largely to assume the character of a mass movement and in whose fold there is no place for those who show contempt for the masses of the people. In adopting it Congress renounced and discarded the futile policy of appeasement it had so zealously pursued for thirty-seven years. It had absorbed the vital lesson that no ruling power could ever be induced to part with power through the policy of pleading for concessions and reforms. It had now realised that the only guarantee for the final triumph of the democratic forces in the racial turmoil that is corroding the very life of our country was to mobilise the vast masses of the people and to condition them for a militant and uncompromising struggle against racial inequality.

The Freedom Day Strike of May 1950, the National Day of Protest during June of the same year and the Defiance Campaign of June 1952 were all in the spirit of the Programme of Action and they gave tremendous impetus to the liberation movement in this country.

More than that, these events revealed the powerful resources that lie untapped and the inexhaustible strength and initiative the movement can gain, if correct forms of struggle are employed. Despite its political significance, however the Programme was not meant to be and is by no means a panacea for all our problems and cannot be applied blindly without regard to objective conditions.

For example, the boycott of the statutory bodies referred to above might have been correct tactics during the time of the Smuts Government, whose policy was to give these bodies more powers in order to divert the people from their political organisations and thereby to undermine the people's struggle for democratic changes. But the policy of the Nationalist Government is altogether different. They are scrapping these bodies and replacing them with backward and reactionary tribal authorities. Under such circumstances the boycott become meaningless and nonsensical.

The Programme has frequently been cited by certain cliques and individuals to justify their opposition to the Freedom Charter. They maintain that the Charter is in sharp conflict with the provisions of the Programme and should on that ground be rejected by Africans.

A study of both documents shows, however, that this criticism is wrong and foolish and that it emanates from those who are ignorant of their contents. Far from being diametrically opposed, the two documents are in fact complementary. The former is primarily concerned with the forms of struggle to be employed by the Congress in its fight for democratic changes and the latter defines the future South African society the Congress movement wishes to establish. As a matter of fact it is inconceivable that the democratic changes envisaged in the Charter can be won unless the Congress movement makes full use of the weapons of struggle outlined in the Programme together with such other weapons as concrete conditions might from time to time dictate.

At the Special Conference of the Congress held in Johannesburg in April this year the point was made that the Charter conflicted with African Nationalism as set out in the Programme and as propounded by the African National Congress Youth League. Africanists harped monotonously on this theme.

One of them disagreed with the Charter because of its declaration that South Africa belonged to all who live in it. According to him this country belonged to Africans only. Another said that the Charter was a negation of the slogan "Ma-yibuye i Afrika" and that the question of alliance between the African people and the other racial groups could come only after freedom had been won.

Support for these contentions was sought for in the Programme of Action and in the Basic Policy of the League. In point of fact neither of these documents support the claims of the Africanists. It is of course true that the Programme does not discuss the precise meaning or scope of African Nationalism but the history of Congress both before and after 1949 clearly shows that Congress policy has nothing to do with the rabid racialism advocated by the Africanists. As far back as 1946 Dr. A. B. Xuma, then president of the Congress, signed a joint declaration with the leaders of the Indian Congress and the African People's Organisation in which they announced a policy of co-operation between their respective communities on matters of common interest — a declaration which was hailed throughout the country as the most significant development at the time in the history of the liberation movement in South Africa. Since then Congress has consistently declared itself in favour of democratic unity and implemented it in the course of many campaigns.

When, therefore, the Africanists maintain that the question of alliance can come only after freedom has been won, they do so in the perfect knowledge that the views they propagate are in conflict with the settled and well-known policy of the Congress.

The Basic Policy of the League was published in 1946. In terms of this Policy the aim of African Nationalism is the creation of a united African community out of the numerous tribes of this country, the freeing of the African people from foreign domination and leadership and the creation of conditions which can enable Africa to make her own contribution to human progress and happiness. It advocated for the achievement of true democracy in South Africa. In such a true democracy all nationalities and minorities would have their fundamental human rights guaranteed in a democratic constitution. It called for the redivision of land amongst the farmers and peasants of all nationalities in proportion to their numbers.

It demanded the abolition of the colour bar and other discriminatory measures so that the workers of all nationalities should be able to do skilled work. It declared for a national economy which would embrace all people and groups in the State and which would eliminate discrimination and ensure a just and equitable distribution of wealth among the people of all nationalities. It reviewed the forces in the liberation movement and expressed itself specifically in favour of co-operation on matters of common interest between the national organisations of the African, Coloured, Indian and European people. On page five it warned genuine African Nationalists about pseudo-nationalists and fascist agents in the following manner:

"African Nationalists have to be on the lookout for people who pretend to be Nationalists when in fact they are imperialist agents, using Nationalist slogans in order to cloak their reactionary position. These elements should be exposed and discredited. . . . Still another group that should be closely watched and wherever possible ruthlessly exposed is that section of Africans who call themselves African Nationalists but who are in fact agents of Nazi and Fascist organisations. Genuine African Nationalists should be vigilant and spare no efforts in denouncing and eventually crushing these dangerous vipers."

The Policy of the League has been explained and developed in numerous addresses and articles by A. P. Mda, one of the founders of the League, a former national president and its leading theoretician. In the 1949 Conference of the League he expressly denounced chauvinism and pleaded for a broad and progressive nationalism. In a Political Review delivered on his behalf at the historic 1951 Conference of the Congress which adopted the resolution to launch the Defiance Campaign, he positively advocated the unity of the democratic forces in our country.

AFRICANISTS AND NATIONALISM

From what has been said it will be clear that the Africanists are a new and separate organisation with a distinct policy of their own and in no way connected either with the Congress or the League. It will further be clear that the Nationalism referred to in the Programme as well as that discussed in the Basic Policy of the League have nothing to do whatsoever with the confused and rotten doctrines preached by the Africanists. The former is a progressive nationalism whose aim is the elimination of racial discrimination, the extension of democratic rights to all people irrespective of their colour or creed and the removal of the causes of racial strife and dissension in the political life of the country.

The Africanists fight for exactly the opposite viewpoint and merely use the Programme and the name of the League to conceal their true aims. They fight for the replacement of the racial policies of the Government with a new brand of South African racialism. They demand political and economic power for Africans not for the purpose of achieving true democracy and the maximum happiness of all the people of South Africa but in order that this power might be used for suppressing and exploiting the non-African sections of the country's population. If their viewpoint were to prevail and become the official policy of the country it would mean in effect that Coloureds, European and Indians would be discriminated against, denied rights, subjected to every kind of insult and humiliation and hatred

and contempt fostered against them. None of the basic contradictions and evils of our society would be solved. In a world that is rapidly revolting against all forms of human exploitation and reaction such a development would be harmful to the true interests of Africans themselves.

It is precisely because of this fact that Congress has repeatedly and most emphatically rejected these pernicious views of the "Africanists" for the people know that to win the demands set out in the Charter is the only sure road to the future South Africa of their dreams.

THE TRANSKEI TRAGEDY

Continuing a detailed study of effect of the Bantu Authorities Act in the Union's biggest Reserve.

—by **GOVAN MBEKI**

THE fundamental economic problem of the Transkei, as of the other Reserves, is not difficult to state, or once stated, to solve. The land area is far too small and infertile to support the population. Therefore, in order to end the terrible poverty, malnutrition, famines, suffering and misery of the Reserves, it is necessary to allocate much more land for African peasants. But this statement of the problem, and its obvious solution is by no means agreeable to the rulers of South Africa, and never has been. The wealthy farmers have no intention of parting with the land that was taken by conquest long ago. And, in fact, a condition of poverty and near-starvation in the Reserves is welcomed by the mining-magnates, the farmers and other employers of African labour, who regard hunger and destitution as their main allies and recruiting agents for a bigger and cheaper supply of labour-power.

In the first three months of 1956, the Transkei supplied 44,500 able-bodied men to employers outside the territory. According to figures released by the Labour Bureaux, this total was composed as follows:—

Mines: 28,000
Farms: 9,300
Secondary Industries: 7,200.

At any given time about 80 per cent. of the able bodied men between 18 and 44 years of age are away from home working on the white man's mines, farms and industries.

Only if we constantly remember this terrible truth and seek its reasons and implications can we begin to understand the Transkei.

It is not for the love of glittering prizes on the mines that the menfolk leave the Reserves. Just as in the twenties and thirties thousands of Boer youngsters who had grown up on the platteland and had known and desired no other way of living were forced into the cities through economic pres-

sure; so the African from the Transkei and other Reserves is thrust into the cities by landlessness and overcrowding.

The Keiskamahoek Rural Survey revealed that the density of the population in this so-called farming area was 120 per square mile. Gordon Mears in his "Native Administration in the Transkeian Territories: 1894 to 1943" cites the Annual Report of the clinics around Umtata, which describes very modestly the general standard of health thus:

"The general standard of health is poor. Thin Natives are commoner than plump ones."

Dealing with infant mortality, the same writer — quoting records of mothers attending clinics of the Umtata Health units, shows that out of 1426 live births, 658 died before reaching the age of 16. A death-rate of 46 per cent.

There is a steady decline in the birth rate. Figures taken from the Keiskhama Survey show a distressing picture, as reflected in the following table:—

YEAR OF CENSUS	NUMBER	INCREASE	APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE RATE OF INCREASE
1921	15,489	—	—
1936	16,380	1341	8%
1946	17,243	413	2.5%

The most cursory examination of the above table reveals some remarkable features. Firstly, the growth of the population is exceedingly slow. In a quarter of a century the nett increase has been only 1754. In the two periods under review (1921-1936 and 1936-1946) the percentage rate of increase dwindled at the alarming rate of over 50 per cent. How long, it may be asked, will this process continue before the population remains static? And when the static stage is reached, how long will it take before a dying African nation follows the way of the Red Indian and the Australian Aborigine?

Against a bleak economic background where for more than a quarter of a century three million people have year after year struggled for survival under the shadow of starvation, where the absence of body-building foods has rendered sterile young women in their thirties, where death has taken heavy toll of both animal and human life, where preventable disease has maimed thousands, where the social effects upon family life of the migratory labour policy have ruined family life, where despair is threatening to destroy the purpose of living, so that men cling to life only because it is instinctive to do so — against this background we must examine the alleged millenium of Bantu Authorities announced by Verwoerd.

It is not the first millenium to be announced for the Transkei. There was the crisis of the early forties, when Africans were pouring into the cities, desperate for survival, and the urban authorities were desperately seeking to stem the tide. To deal with this situation, the Government of the day evolved a panacea: a new plan called the Rehabilitation Scheme. This was outlined in a White Paper called *New Era*. The Bunga-gentry who today extol Verwoerd's Bantustan lie, then spoke learnedly of van der Byl's "White Paper", and extolled the Rehabilitation lie. The plan proposed various types of "settlement" in the Transkei. On close examination the

settlements appeared to be little more than rest resorts for African males, between intervals of working on the mines, where they could meet their opposite sex numbers for the purpose of breeding "slave labourers" for the future benefit of mines and farms.

To hide the true purpose of this sinister plan, N.A.D. gospelsellers talked glibly of the people's land being ruined by overstocking. They promised to fence in pasturage and to paddock camps; to free children from the tedious duty of herding, to enable them to attend school by the thousand. This denuded veld would once again be covered with a green cushion of sweet-smelling and health-giving grass. A New Era of plenty was in the offing, they promised.

As in 1894, with the passing of the Glen Grey Act, in 1927 with the passing of the Native Administration Act, in 1936 with the passing of Hertzog's trinity of oppressive laws, so the Rehabilitation Scheme was presented to Chiefs and Headmen as a revival of "the good old days." They accepted it. But though the Bunga accepted it the people rejected it; the talk of "overstocking" to a land starved people was more than they could swallow. They know only too well that the trouble is not "too many cattle" but not enough land.

The latest in this series of "schemes" to solve the desperate needs of a land-hungry people without giving them land, is Dr. Verwoerd's Bantu Authorities Act. Aided by the Native Affairs Department's army of propagandists he has gone all out to "sell" the idea to the African Chiefs and Headmen, employing a variety of appeals to the vanity of some and the cowardice of others, of methods of bluff, blackmail and theatas.

Let us listen to the words of a General of Dr. Verwoerd's propaganda army, Mr. M. C. D. de Wet Nel, Vice-Chairman of the Native Affairs Commission, addressing the Ciskei Bunga.

He rejects as misleading the idea that the Reserves are overpopulated and unable to produce sufficient food for their inhabitants. Even before the advent of Europeans, he said, "often hunger and death were experienced as a result of droughts and warfare." But he concedes the fact of the drift from the Reserves to the big cities, "where young men with ambition make an excellent living by selling their labour or by entering the professions." He holds out a picture of these young men being diverted to "Bantu National Homes." The "establishment of cities within the Bantu areas would draw off those who cannot make a living on the land."

Except that the areas where the hypothetical "Townships" are to be established, this is just a new version of the Reclamation Plan enunciated in the 1945 "New Era" Paaper. In place of the talk of overstocking, which was so provocative, there is substituted an appeal to the aspiring African middle class who see in the Government's plan an opportunity to amass wealth and even to become owners of the means of production; an appeal to the Chiefs, who are made to believe that they are going to be clothed with government-backed powers to rule despotically over their fellow-men.

What are these "industrial opportunities" that are to be opened for Africans in the Reserves? In Verwoerd's magazine "Bantu-Bantoe" a caption to a picture of an African straining at an anvil states:

"Industries such as bakeries, millers, brickmakers, carpenters, furni-

ture-makers, shoemaking, blacksmiths, bicycle shops and garages will be necessary and attractive business propositions."

The truth of the matter is that the new plan does not set out to create opportunities for the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT of the African. Artisans such as carpenters have been with us all along. The best contribution they have made has been to make cheap coffins for the trading stations to sell at exorbitant prices to bury the victims of man-fostered FAMINES IN THE RESERVES.

With the discovery recently of strategic minerals such as titanium along the coast of the Transkei and other minerals of value in East Griqualand, does even the most credulous not realise that talk of the Transkei as a Bantustan is all eyewash! If any industrial development takes place in the Reserves it will not be by the "African for the Africans" as apartheiders would like to make us believe. For the sake of those Africans who have been misled into believing that they are going to be the Transkei's big industrialists in the new plan we would like to pose the following issues. Bearing in mind that ownership of certain factors, such as land, capital, labour and management are necessary for the production of wealth, do the prospective African industrialists in the reserves have access to any of them? As the entire reserves population consists of poverty-stricken peasants and poorly paid wage-earning migrant labour, where is the capital to come from to invest in modern machinery, in modern factories? On whose land are the factories to be established since all the land belongs to the Government? Where are the African prospective industrialists to find the necessary skilled labour to operate their machines since by law and practice, the African worker is precluded from gaining skills? What is the management going to manage since there is no labour, no capital, no land? It is a day-dream that is not worth a minute's consideration.

But this does not mean that industrial development is not going to take place. If from the point of view of capitalist investors of capital and industrialists it is economically more advantageous to establish a certain type of industry in the Transkei they would never hesitate to do so. But such an industry would not be established from a humanitarian point of view because capitalists are not in the habit of establishing factories for charitable purposes. Already a few industries are in existence in the Transkei. Garment, sweets and furniture factories have been operating at Umtata for a number of years, and it should not be surprising if before long a good few more secondary industries were established. When that happens there will come to the fore one of the economic contradictions of Apartheid, because, not only will the African worker be compelled to work for "slave wages", but his wages will have a depressing effect on the white worker's wages in industries engaged in similar activities.

Thus for instance, the establishment of a garment factory at Umtata has not in effect protected the white worker in the European cities. Although in this instance they do not work under the same roof the result is contrary to what the Apartheid gossellers have so often tried to assure the gullible white workers. The same case has been proved beyond doubt in Zwelitsha, at Kingwilliamstown, Ladysmith and other rural areas where textile factories have been established. The wages are very low and any attempt to form trade unions is resisted with the utmost ingenuity by the management. In addition to using anti-union legislation the management resorts to all sorts of mean methods to ensure that there is no unity among

the workers. Blackmail, summary dismissals of workers who organise others, promotion of influential workers into positions of "indunas and shift bosses" and giving them faked powers of employing and dismissing others under the paternal eye of the management, **MASS DISMISSALS AT THE END OF THE YEAR AND MASS RE-EMPLOYMENT OF THE SAME WORKERS ON BEGINNERS' WAGES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT YEAR** — these and other methods are employed in varying degrees to keep the wages down and to pile up profits to the skies.

On this basis and no other, industries may be established in the reserves.

NEW LOOK FOR LIBERATION?

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BUILDING A UNITED FRONT

—by J. MATTHEWS

AS the Nationalists oppression becomes worse, the call for a united front composed of all genuine opponents of Apartheid becomes ever more insistent. It is perfectly natural that this should be so. In its efforts to establish itself firmly in the saddle the dictators in our country are compelled to threaten the safety, comfort and security of all groups and interests except those of the very tiny minority of monopolist mining magnates, landlords and industrialists who profit from the misery of the people.

Under such conditions it becomes historically correct for the Progressive Movement to rally the people on the widest possible basis to resist and finally defeat the dictatorship.

A number of important matters arise for consideration in regard to the tactics of United Front. It is important that the leadership provide complete guidance on the application of such tactics under South African conditions. If we are to use to the full all the possibilities of a united front tactics against Apartheid, we must be clear as to the manner of their operation.

There is, first of all, the need to consider the historical conditions under which United Front tactics become necessary. Needless to say **UNITY** of the people in the struggle for freedom is always necessary. But the application of **UNITED FRONT** tactics are not always called for. Whilst unity is always essential the basis of that unity may require re-definition in the light of compelling objective conditions.

Thus at a time when a semi-colonial country struggling to free itself from imperialism is invaded directly by the imperialist aggressors it might be correct for the Progressive Movement to unite even with vacillating and potentially treacherous elements in the "national" bourgeoisie on condition they will genuinely join in the resistance. A united front here can greatly advance the struggle for liberation (cf. Chinese situation upon invasion by Japanese Imperialists).

On the other hand in an imperialist country which has embarked on a war with another imperialist country, which war has for its object the division of colonies etc. the progressive movement might find it necessary to organise against the war, to reject collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and turn the imperialist war into a civil war in which the working class under its leadership seizes power (cf. Bolshevik Revolution in Russia).

In each case the question has to be decided in the light of an examination of objective conditions and on the basis of the ultimate interests of the people's struggle.

There is a further consideration which is relevant in our situation. Under conditions of a liberal bourgeois democracy it is an important part of the ideological battle to expose clearly the nature of the regime which is

that of a capitalist dictatorship in which civil rights and liberties are a mere facade. Whereas under conditions of fascism, where the strength of the progressive movement has compelled the ruling class to emerge openly as a dictatorship relying on naked force to maintain its rule; abolishes parliament and all so-called liberties, the duty of the progressive movement changes. Under the new conditions the Movement now has to uphold the rights and liberties of the people for which indeed it has always stood and which never really existed for the labouring classes.

Having decided from an analysis of the situation in the country that a United Anti-fascist front is correct policy then the next question that arises is how this is to be implemented in practice.

For instance with whom must the front be organised. On what basis must allies be chosen? Must the Progressive Movement cease to criticise the shortcomings of potential or actual allies, who because of their class interests are necessarily vacillating and unreliable — allies who will not go the whole distance? Should the movement gloss over differences and water down its ideas in order to be accommodating to potential allies? How will it be explained to the people that a particular group can be an ally although it may let them down in the long run?

These are merely some of the problems that arise for solution by the Freedom Movement now that a United Front against Apartheid is on the order of the day. Whilst the problem is by no means easy yet it is also true that if carried out properly united front tactics can considerably advance the struggle — place it on a higher level and enlarge the influence and power of the People's Movements.

So far as the South African situation is concerned enough has already been said, written and experienced to indicate the extent to which our country has been ruined by the Nationalist dictatorship. The Government, determined to push its apartheid policy, is now even prepared to attack the small petit bourgeois interests of Afrikaners themselves (Ficksburg), if these clash with those of the more powerful groups who the Nationalist Cabinet Ministers represent. They are prepared to disturb the comfort of sections whose support they normally require in the interests of big business (cf. Locations in the Sky Act). The interests of numerous groups formerly regarded as immune are now being affected. Of course this is all done "in their interests" to protect them from "the Black Menace" and other similar evils. But the point is they are being adversely affected.

Under the conditions that exist in our country today the policy of United Front needs to be pushed vigorously and skilfully. Generally speaking the following ideas must guide us in implementing the policy of United Front.

Differences between us and various groups and interests must not be glossed over but should be clearly demarcated. This, far from making for division and defeating the object of the united front policy, facilitates unity as it indicates clearly on what basis unity is founded. Fortunately the Progressive Movement has the Freedom Charter. This dynamic People's programme which is now fundamental law to all sections of the Congress Movement is a clear and noble expression of our aspirations. In the present historical period, acceptance of the Charter places one in the camp of progress, freedom and peace against Colonialism, oppression and war.

But should the Charter be the minimum programmatic condition for the United Front? Should we insist that all allies must accept the Charter? We must bear in mind that the essence of a united front policy is that it is always based on **Opposition** to dictatorship rather than common adherence to long term objectives and aims. To expect the policy of United Front to go beyond the defeat of the fascists is mere wishful thinking. It is true that to defeat the dictatorship will considerably advance the country in the direction of a democratic regime. That, however, is another matter. In my view the Charter cannot serve as the basis for a united front. It is our blueprint for a **People's Democratic State** and not a minimum programme for temporary ends.

Does this mean the Charter must be put into cold storage? A thousand times No! We must in fact redouble our efforts to secure greater adherence to the Charter by the masses of the people in order to strengthen the progressive movement. But to accept the Charter means to be in the progressive camp. To be part of the United front requires a different generalisation. Such a generalisation is the Declaration issued by the All-In Conference held at Bloemfontein recently. This Declaration is an example of the kind of thing we want. It has its limitations, inasmuch as it was drawn up by an exclusively African conference called to consider only the Tomlinson Report. That is a matter which can be remedied by the multi-racial conference called for by the President-General of the A.N.C.—Chief A. J. Luthuli.

Once a minimum programme for the United Front has been accepted, it will become the duty of the Progressives who are the most resolute in struggle and have the greatest interest in seeing the last of the tyrants to rally the widest possible support for the United Front. This must be done not merely by securing pious expressions of support but by drawing the people into active struggle against the acts of the fascists. The people will judge the different groups forming the United Front by the manner in which they work, fight and lead them in the struggle.

On condition we maintain our independent command and retain freedom of criticism there is no reason on earth why we should not achieve new successes in the forthcoming phase of the struggle for freedom.

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