

ON UNITY AND PEOPLE'S WAR

"The proliferation of liberation movements and their dissensions in Africa is harmful to the very cause of freedom. At any rate, I believe that we should consolidate all movements as long as their weapons are aimed at the colonialists, our common enemy."

Excerpt from address of His Excellency, Muammar el Gadhafi, Chairman of the RCC of Libya to the OAU-ALC meeting. Benghazi, 13/1/72.

The quest for unity within the liberation movement of our country is surging vigorously from the rank and file and is spreading panic in high places. The Pan Africanist Congress, as a party that represents the accumulated feelings and ardent aspirations of the African people, has been best equipped ideologically to diagnose this throbbing pulse for unity and give it political expression. PAC therefore, as constituted of and directed by, the oppressed, debased, exploited and militant people of our country is firmly biased on to the side of the people's will - the will of the people, to us, is supreme.

Our incarcerated beloved leader, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, in his historic call to the nation in 1959, enunciated the policies that are our guiding principles:

"We are here to make appeal to African intellectuals, businessmen, African urban and rural proletariat, to join forces in a determined, ruthless and relentless total war against the demi-god of white supremacy. We say to fence-sitters and waverers: choose now for tomorrow may be too late; choose now because very soon we will be saying, with biblical simplicity, 'he who is not with us is against us'".

This was a clear clarion call to the oppressed people of our country to seek unity in struggle around the principal contradiction confronting them - white domination.

In preparing the African people for the arduous struggle they were about to undertake and whose first phase they subsequently launched on March 21, 1960, under the aegis of PAC, Sobukwe said:

"There are only two contenders in the South African political arena, the oppressor and the oppressed. The decks are cleared, and the battle must be joined. This is an unfolding and expanding campaign involving the political, economic and social status of the Africans. It is all-embracing and multi-frontal, but it is itself part of our dynamic nation-building programme. We shall therefore call upon first, the members of the Pan Africanist Congress, who are the hard-core, the advanced guard that must lead the struggle, and second, on the African people in general. All of them, without exception, must wait for the call, and when the call comes, we expect them to respond like a disciplined people. There is plenty of suffering ahead. The oppressor will not take this lying down. We are aware of the nature and size of our task, and we will not shirk it. We are ready. We will not look back, we will not go back, we will not deviate, come what may.

"This campaign will be maintained, unfolded and expanded. We will go on until in every shanty, in every bunk in the

compounds, in every hut in the deserted villages, in every valley and on every hill-top, the cry for African independence is heard. We will continue until we walk the streets of our land heads held high, as free men and women. We will go on until the day dawns when every person who is in Africa will be an African, and a man's colour will be as irrelevant as is the shape of his ears. We will go on steadfastly, relentlessly and determinedly until the cry of Africa for Africans is a fait accompli.... Sons and Daughters of Africa, we are standing on the threshold of an historic era. We are about to witness momentous events. We are blazing a new trail, and we invite you to be, with us, creators of history. Join us in the march to freedom. March with us to independence. To independence now, tomorrow the United States of Africa".

These policy speeches and other pronouncements and writings, in conjunction with our party manifesto and other basic documents, have at various stages of our struggle shown the great importance we attach to unity. It is not to score debating points or to display omnipotence or righteousness that we make an earnest call for unity. At certain historical periods in the development of our struggle we have had to criticise particular tendencies which would have the effect of diverting the liberatory struggle from its goals. The very emergence of the P.A.C. in 1959, had as its aim to inject the lofty ideal of African liberation back into our body politic and infuse the liberatory struggle with militancy and a prospect of achieving its goals.

The Acting President and National Secretary of our party, Potlako K. Leballo, said of our revolution in 1967:

"It is needless to state that the urgency of execution demands a unified liberatory movement comprising all the oppressed of our land who aspire to real freedom and genuine independence under the banner of a common nationhood".

The speech of President Gadhafi quoted at the beginning of this article goes to the pith of our subject. It has been fashionable for some so-called international organisations and foreign governments to regard our struggles in Africa as a gamble. They back certain organisations, as they would with horses, because they have led themselves to believe that organisations of their choice will win; they speak of "authentic organisations", disparage those not of their choice by claiming that they do not exist and even go to the extent of sabotaging the progress of the organisations they have not put their stakes on. In recent months we have witnessed the formation of fronts between organisations some of which were said to be "non-existent" only weeks before. Who can judge the authenticity of a movement either than the oppressed peoples themselves. Sobukwe's speeches, also quoted here, make it succinctly clear that liberation will be attained through the combined efforts of all the oppressed people in our country, in particular. The people themselves will be their own liberators, liberation will not be endowed to them by anyone. Therefore a movement has to attain the complete unity of the masses, revolutionize them and launch a PEOPLE'S WAR.

Several arguments have been advanced which are designed to stifle the people's will for unity. Legalistic arguments have been presented, arguments to protect vested interests cloaked in political sophistry parading under the guise of "ideological differences", have also been presented. We have rejected the contention that there are ideological differences in the liberatory movement of our country. We have categorically stated that every oppressed person in our country knows who has deprived him of his liberty, how this was done and how it shall be regained. The difference lies in the top echelons of movements depending on the extent to which foreign vested interests have contrived superficially manipulated differences.

We have shown how the liberatory movement of our country speaks with a multiplicity of voices that, like the Merchant of Venice, want a pound of flesh without spilling even a single drop of blood. Our differences, by manouvre and contrivance, stem mainly from the influence that the "friends" and "sympathisers" of our revolution have within the liberatory movement itself. We have singled out the deleterious effects of the Clergy, the liberals and the Communist Party of South Africa (which is devoid of any socialist content). As a consequence, organisational differences inevitably came into being.

The Church came to our country as a political tool of British capitalism. The missionary devoted his energy to what he called the conversion of the heathen to christianity, and the emancipation of the slaves, "to the glory of God and the profit of England".

Cecil John Rhodes, a pioneering missionary explorer, is reported to have once said:

"I was in the East end of London yesterday, and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches which were just a cry for bread; and on my way home I pondered over the scene, and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism ... The British Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question".

Dr. John Phillip clarified the missionary's role later by saying:

"While missionaries are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilisation, they are extending British interests, British influence, and the British empire....Wherever the missionary places his standard among a savage tribe, their prejudices against the colonial government give way, their dependence upon the colony is increased by the creation of superficial wants, and industry, trade and agriculture spring up".

The Church in our country, unfortunately, is a direct descendant of the mission station that was created to serve imperial economic interests. Though men who are inspired by celestial fire have sprung from within the Church, from time to time, they have never found it to be in their interests to destroy the slave state, they have only sought modifications in the administrative apparatus. A generation of our earlier intellectuals was taken in, especially because the missionary school was the only educational institution then. Movements founded earlier could not escape these subtle influences. We are not impugning the Church as a religious force but as an instrument of imperialism.

The white liberal in our country is a bourgeois democrat. An African, by his very economic position, does not constitute, nor can he become part of, the bourgeoisie. The liberal whites and the whites that tinge bourgeois democracy with socialist pronouncements, the architects of the Communist Party of South Africa, have not been able to escape the influences of the racist environment of their social origin. They insist on imposing their values on the liberation movement in an effort to side-track the revolution. This has been their main pre-occupation over the past fifty years. Till this day these bourgeois democrats have presented formulae that are intended to pull the chestnuts of the imperialists and white supremacists out of the fire.

We are not anti-anyone because of ones colour but we do, however, insist that the liberation movement should develop its own values freely and untrammelled, its own morality, unfettered and unhampered, which flow from the objective situation in our

country within which the African people who constitute an overwhelming majority are the most ruthlessly exploited and inhumanly degraded section of the population and who, by their material position, are the only section that wants the most radical change by the most radical means. That is why, therefore, we rejected purposeless demonstrations of placard carrying in our country as ineffective forms of struggle which may be able to let off pent up steam but leave the fascist regime intact. And this is why we are not enchanted by later modifications of this form of struggle, distribution of leaflets through explosive gadgets and the placing of blaring tape-recorders at some public centres. Both methods do not reach the people who disappear hastily from such areas or face crushing prison sentences.

We contend that effective political struggle can only be attained by a system of mass mobilisation coupled with armed revolutionary struggle on the basis of a People's War. This is not a monopoly of anyone and everyone has a part to play, men and women, old and young. The people have very great creative abilities, once they have been politically aroused and are convinced that they are not just fighting to replace one set of exploiters for another, they will themselves be prepared to make super-human sacrifices and carry the struggle through to the end. This is where the conflict of material interests lies. This is what causes the multiplicity of voices in the liberation movement. What is the purpose of the struggle, for whom any by whom?

Liberation cannot be given it has to be taken. It is by mobilising the masses and relying on them that liberation can be won and not through the actions of a few revolutionaries. People's War, as we understand it, is a revolutionary war of the entire oppressed people and takes the form of guerilla warfare. This can most effectively be done by mobilising the masses in the country-side and encircling the cities, isolating them and gradually corroding the power of the city-based fascist rulers.

It had been fashionable in the past to deny the existence of some liberation movements. So was it when the CPP came into being in Ghana, UNIP in Zambia, the examples are legion. So has it been in the immediate past amongst those organisations abroad which belong to countries not yet liberated. To a limited extent now this attitude still exists, encouraged by forces that are inimical to African liberation. Having found it difficult to deny the existence of some organisation, especially ours because of its dynamic role within the country, the detractors of our revolution turned to villifying our movement, rapidly and rabidly venom spat out of their mouths and printing presses, in the process they out-settled the settlers in our country in their hysterical condemnation of PAC. We remain undaunted.

Many arguments, no doubt, will still be presented in attempts to block the unity of our people. Our fundamental principle upon which a United Front should be formed is a measure of agreement on what constitutes People's War, and how it should be waged. We hold that all schools of thought which are neither willing to capitulate to nor compromise with imperialism in general, and white domination in the domestic scene, can be accommodated within the unified strategy of People's War.

We believe that those who lead the alliance should retain their political independence and military initiative to ensure that the revolution will not be disrupted or led astray by the probable vacillation or betrayal consequent upon political rivalry within the machinery of the alliance.

As Sobukwe said: "Here is a tree rooted in African soil, nourished with the waters from the rivers of Africa. Come and sit under its shade and become, with us, the leaves of the same branch + the brs of the same tree"