

**A.N.C. Secretary Duma Nokwe analyses fifty years  
of the Union of South Africa.**

## **EX UNITATE VIRES**

**FIFTY** years ago the founders of the Union adopted a great motto for our country: "*Out of unity grows strength.*" But they made a mockery of this motto. They divided the people instead of uniting them. Dr. Donges says to all South Africans that they must rally to commemorate the Golden Anniversary around the Festival slogan, yet the Nationalists are actually proposing to partition South Africa.

Before Union, South Africa was a land of strife; a land of hostile groups and of violence between English and Boer, between African and European. It was a land arbitrarily divided by the whites among themselves. On the one hand, there were the two Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and on the other hand Natal and the Cape Province. The divisions were more than physical. They represented a sharp division of policies with regard to the non-Europeans.

The Cape of Good Hope constitution of 1852 made provision for representative government for the Colony, and gave the franchise to all male persons, European or non-European who possessed the required qualifications. There were: the occupation of property valued at a minimum of £25 for twelve months, or an income derived from salary or wages of at least £50 a year, or £25 a year with food and lodging.

Subsequently various changes were made in the qualifications, but the "civilisation test" remained for all, irrespective of colour or creed on the basis of what the Secretary of State said in 1852:

"All Her Majesty's subjects without distinction of class or colour should be UNITED BY ONE LOYALTY AND A COMMON INTEREST."

In Natal, in the terms of the Charter of Natal of the 15th July, 1856, the franchise was extended to all, irrespective of colour, qualified under a "civilisation test." Unfortunately this principle was flouted in practice until by the year 1896 Africans were virtually excluded from the franchise.

In the O.F.S. and the Transvaal Republics, the principles of no-equality and the limitation of the franchise to the Europeans were the basic principles from their inception.

There was, therefore, a conflict between the Republics and the Cape on the fundamental question of discrimination against the non-Europeans. The Convention which met in 1908 to unite the Republics, the Cape and Natal was faced with a choice between these systems. The one naturally meant progress, the other retrogression.

The so-called National Convention was a strange one. Although it called itself national, it represented at the most only 1,276,319 Europeans, or 21% of the people, and it discussed the fate of the country as though

## *The Festival of Union*

*Elaborate preparations are being made by the Government to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Union (May, 1960) with a festival. The Minister of Interior, Dr. Donges, has appealed to all South Africans to take part in the celebrations, and to put political differences aside, since all sections of the people have benefitted from 50 golden years of Union.*

*The festival theme is UNITY IS STRENGTH, following from the motto of the Union—"Ex Unitate Vires". The "torch of civilisation" will burn at the foot of the Jan van Riebeeck statue in Cape Town, and will be carried to other parts of the country and "large-scale festivities will also be organised for the various non-White groups, stressing cultural and sporting aspects of the life of the people." (Mr. Pauw, Director of the Union Festival.)*

*During the festivities, the Provincial Administrators will hand their flags to the European youth of South Africa, presumably to urge them to carry on the traditions of the country.*

the rest of the people, more than 78%, did not matter.

The very basis of the Convention was a negation of the motto *Ex Unitate Vires*. The results of the Convention followed naturally from its constitution. The "civilisation test" for the franchise was rejected. The Cape retained its franchise for the non-Europeans which was "entrenched" in the Constitution. Exactly how well entrenched it was became evident later. In the Cape and Natal non-Europeans were allowed to stand for elections in the provincial councils. In return for all these concessions, the Cape delegates accepted the colour bar by denying non-Europeans the right to sit in an exclusively white Union Parliament. The rot had set in.

John Xavier Merrimen smelt it, and would not hear of the inclusion of a prayer to the Almighty God in a constitution that embodied the colour-bar. "*Ex Unitate Vires*" chanted the delegates of the Convention. It was the strength of the unity of the reaction. Many a more liberal delegate must have left the Convention with an uneasy feeling that the constitution should be given a chance, and "alles sal regkom," salving their consciences for having betrayed the people of South Africa by being party to a constitution which denied four-fifths of the people a say in the government of the country.

When the draft Bill was going through the British Parliament, two delegations went to England with two conflicting purposes. One was led by De Villiers, went to see that the Convention's wishes were met. The other was a delegation of Schreiner, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, John Tengo

Jabavu and Walter Rubasana. They were sent to try and convince the British Parliament and people that the colour bar in the draft South Africa Act was a "blot on the constitution," that the so-called entrenchment of the vote for the non-European people in the Cape was a trap; and no safeguard at all.

Despite their warnings, the South Africa Act was passed.

In his *History of South Africa*, Eric Walker comments:

"Thus did the liberals in the United Kingdom, and like-minded men of all colours in South Africa, willy-nilly accept a statute which they *believed and prayed* would lead to the victory of the Cape's well-*tried civilisation principles throughout the Union. It was a huge political gamble*, which took too little account of the strength of South African tradition in European policies. . . ."

It was a tragic gamble; for the lives and destinies of millions of people were at stake. Walker continues:

"But it was a gamble that seemed justified. The gamblers are not to be blamed overmuch for plunging thus, even though the events were to prove them wrong and Schreiner right."

Perhaps they are "not to be blamed overmuch." But the history of the Union is a sound lesson that gambling in politics is a dangerous game; nothing can be left to chance; men must stand firm for principles of human rights, take the bold, honourable and sure stand rather than hang the fate of millions of people on the capricious hope of a "change of heart," or the illusion of "a slow but sure extension of rights." It would be inexcusable and treacherous to repeat this gamble in the face of such a clear lesson from the tragic history of South Africa.

The blot of racial discrimination and all the oppression, exploitation and humiliation which accompanied it grew bigger and bigger until today it darkens every aspect of the lives of the people of South Africa. In 1913, under the pretext of enforcing segregation, the African people were denied the right to purchase and own land in 87% of the country. Colour bar was introduced in industry, employment and trade unions. Colour bar and racial discrimination grew and spread to the economic and cultural life of the people. For the race maniacs there is no common interest between the Europeans and non-Europeans of our country: "Ex unitate vires" has become the slogan of white domination. Yet more than a hundred years ago, in 1852, the Secretary for State said: "All Her Majesty's subjects without distinction of class or colour should be UNITED by one loyalty and common interest."

Today we do not even stand where the Cape Colony stood 100 years ago. The entrenched clauses were indeed a trap. In 1936 the Africans in the Cape lost their franchise, and some communal representatives were allotted to them—3 in the House of Assembly with 153 members for 20% of the people. In 1952 the Coloureds lost the franchise. Today the State

has abolished all representation for Africans in the government, and hope to push them back to tribalism through Bantustans.

How ironic that the Nationalists should light "the torch of civilisation"—they who have extinguished all the lights of liberty and civilisation in our country!

And how fitting that they should say they will stress the "cultural and sporting aspects" of the life of the non-European during the festival; there is nothing else to stress. Unless they wish to stress the people's poverty? the restrictions on them in every walk of life?

There is nothing golden about the 50 years of Union, nothing of which we can be proud. The decision of Congresses not to participate in the Festival, but to organise counter-demonstrations is unquestionably correct. This follows a fine tradition, established by the Inter-denominational Ministers' Federation since 1946, of observing Union Day as a National Day of Prayer. We can take as *our* slogan "Ex Unitate Vires," and draw strength for the liberation struggle. Only when we have wiped out the blot of the 1910 Constitution, shall we truly be able to build a *Union* of South Africa.

# AFRICA'S ECONOMIC PATH

## *A Review of Ghana's Second Development Plan*

By D. DHLAMINI

**A**FRICA today strides forward towards emancipation. Colonialism is being driven out in more and more parts of the Continent. But as the administration of African territories passes out of colonial control into the hands of the people, new problems arise. Formal independence by itself is not enough. It is the essential pre-condition for the development of Africa and the release of its unused or wasted assets of manpower and resources, but by itself it does not answer the needs of the new Africa.

The newly-independent states in Africa face formidable tasks; they must find ways to overcome the lack of basic development, the terrible poverty and ignorance which are part of the heritage of imperialism. Without political emancipation the people cannot advance beyond a most limited extent, but once having achieved it a second revolution must take place: