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LAND AS A FACTOR IN BLACK COMMUNALISM.

Land is an issue which is central to any economic model, because it is one of the four factors of production viz:- land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship. It is therefore appropriate that Black People's Convention should examine the question of land closely in its quest for a new society.

Historical background:

Through out history wars have been fought over the control of land and resources accruing from it, it was in this quest for control over more land that colonialists left Europe to colonise less industrially developed countries, which could then supply their home countries with raw materials and other natural resources for use by these colonialists. The colonised countries were thus deprived of the right to control their own land, they were regarded as the extensions of the so-called mother countries for the benefit of the latter. The colonies were accordingly discouraged from developing beyond the primary industry stage in keeping with Mercantilistic policies pursued them.

Our country has inherited a permanent settler population that has become a permanent feature of our society.

Given the above background the next question to consider is what the structure of society was like in pre-colonial Azania and what philosophical basis was used in structuring this society?

Our forefathers were living as individual tribes each with its own chief who ruled them with the assistance of the elders in the tribe. These communities had one central philosophy around which their life style was based and this was the spirit of sharing and togetherness.

Land was communally owned by the whole tribe with the chief as the trustee. Each family unit in the tribe was allocated land on an equitable basis for residential purposes, but there were no title deeds over this land as is the case in western society, which meant that the land was not the property of that particular family but only allocated to it for use. Grazing land was set aside for use by the whole community and boys of a certain age looked after the livestock of the community jointly.

The chief had a bigger piece of land for cultivation purposes because of the greater responsibility he had to shoulder in terms of entertaining visitors to the great place and also helping those families with crop failures when in need.

Work on the land was also undertaken on a communal basis. People rotated in helping one another to plough, hoe and reap with no consideration for remuneration for the work done except being provided with food by the person being assisted for the day. No human being was regarded as a factor of production to be exploited hired and fired as is the case with capitalist societies.

This type of society was self-sufficient in many respects, but was geared to producing surplus goods for barter purposes, partly because of the primitive tools used then and also because of their economic outlook which suited their particular era. Other forms of exploitation of natural resources like mining, forestry etc. were not undertaken on a large scale for the same reasons aluded to above.

One can boldly state that this type of social org nisation like any other could have evolved to meet the challenges of modern economic needs if the process of colonisation had not interrupted this evolution.

Present position:

The distribution of land in this country today reflects its economic policy of capitalism - which places emphasis on the ^{material} society as a whole. It is further complicated by the political policy which denies Black rights as full citizens with needs like any other human being. Blacks have been deprived of land which their forefathers had, which was taken at the point of a gun by whites who now own the greater part of the land leaving blacks with only small arid areas in the so-called homelands.

White farmers are a very important part of the white community and recognition of this fact has led to the entrenchment of the present government in power. More effort is spared to encourage and assist white farmers to ensure a good return for their investment ~~in the form of~~ and presumably for the overall good of the economy of the country.

Measures aimed at assisting white farms include: readily available loans from the land bank and other finance houses, cheaply available black labour which is virtually tied to the farm for life or offered through prisoners' labour with a minimal fee paid to the state, and direct financial assistance by the government in times of floods, droughts and other disasters.

Farming amongst blacks has, for political reasons, never been encouraged with the result that most blacks who dare to live on agricultural produce are sure to face starvation and therefore will ultimately be forced to sell their labour. The land available to them is not only small but also unproductive because of lack of expertise. etc

It is this imbalance that must be redressed if freedom is to have any real meaning to all members of the society. Failure to tackle this crucial problem can only lead to the same problems facing independent African countries today e.g. Kenya is characterised by ownership of vast tracts of land by a few black capitalits, whilst the majority of people continue to starve like they used to do during the colonial period. For such people freedom has not yet been translated into reality. We have to look for models in other progressive African countries and draw also from practices of our forefathers aluded to above in order to come out with a model that will be suitable for our own society.

The situation in Tanzania presents a very interesting model to examine and modify to suit our particular needs. It is based on the same communalistic principles that characterised all African community but modified to a great extent, to suit the needs of a model economy.

In this system the state replaces the chief as the holder of land in trust for all citizens which is essential in reducing tribalistic allegiances to a minimum in the interests of national unity. It is no longer the tribe that is important, but the whole nation, hence the need for the state to be the ultimate custodian of all land.

People are allocated land according to their needs not only as individuals but as communities as well. The formation of co-operatives for communal production is encouraged at all costs by the state through incentive schemes and greater financial assistance to those communities practising communalism as opposed to those operating individually. This economic policy has worked well with hitches arising out of the resistance of people who had benefited to a certain extent from the capitalistic practices of the colonial period and also the limited resources Tanzania has at its disposal, make it difficult for positive results to be immediately discernible.

We are in a fortunate position because we have a country that is not only big enough, but also well endowed with ^{resources} resources, mineral and others which can be employed in the general economic upliftment of all citizens of our country.

We must have the state as the organ having all the rights to land vested in it which will in turn distribute this equitably. What will then be the criteria for assessing needs? My own view is that the following points must be borne in mind in deciding the extent of needs:-

all citizens have a right to have land available to them for residential purposes which must be proportional to the size of their families and their responsibilities in the community. *More people to work after*
groups organised for recreational purposes have a right to have land available to them to carry out their activities.

religious groups serving the spiritual needs of the community have a right to land to carry out their programmes.

- all other people interested in agriculture must be organised into co-operatives that must have enough land available to them according to the contribution they give to the general welfare of their group and the economy of the country as a whole.

- all mining operations must be under the ownership of the state because of their crucial role in the economy of the country. This implies that no mineral rights should be given to the private groups foreign or local. All land which has minerals must be the property of the state for the benefit of the citizens.

- absentee ^{land} lordship should never be allowed because land is a gift of nature and should not be used to exploit others needing it. What then is the machinery that can be set up to effect this broad approach? The following are in my mind, the crucial links in the operational chains:-

(a) A Department of land and agriculture must be set up which will in turn have :- public relations wing mainly for educating people on its policy.

- land allocation wing to deal with redistribution of land.

- co-operative wing to help in the formation of co-operatives all over the country and assist in training of people in the effective and running of the co-operatives.
- financial wing to help with the funding of joint ventures according to needs.

All these wings must have representative in each region to ensure the formation of regional committees that can relate to various departmental wings on behalf of the regions they represent.

Agricultural training will have to be undertaken on a large scale to improve people's farming methods and introduce new ideas necessary for effective and efficient production for the benefit of the whole economy.

Like any other new idea there are bound to be problems encountered in implementing the above approach viz.

- resistance from people who are now in a privileged position: who will therefore resist all attempts to share for the common good. This problem has to be dealt with firmly at the highest level, coupled with an intensification of the public relations function.
- corruption in the ranks of officials running the co-operatives which can lead to discontent among those members doing their fair share of hard work. This requires a good administrative control system which will make detection of discrepancies easy and lead to prompt corrective steps being taken. This paper has only attempted to lay down broad outlines for effective and efficient utilisation of land which can later be worked out in detail to suit prevailing conditions.

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of man by man. No man will be lord and another a slave. Azania will be a place where all workers are put on the same footing and man will be the most precious capital. Labour as a primary factor of production will have to be utilised to the full for the benefit of the economy of the state and for the satisfaction and security of the worker.

Labour legislation will be overhauled and directed towards fulfilling the tasks of economic rehabilitation and the transformation of commerce and industry. It will be of prime importance to outline a labour policy that encourages collectiveness and co-operativeness. Trade Unionism will be encouraged but this will have to be controlled by the state. The compelling motive behind the effort to control trade unions is to consolidate and stabilise political authority. Usually newly formed regimes face problems of organisational weakness, limited penetration by society of political structures and influence as well as the fragility of formal institutions. Foreign attitudes and artificial norms and styles will need to be transformed to the need of the majority of the people.

The envisaged Trade Union will be based on the workers who support the People's Party that will be ruling Azania. The need to have an umbrella Trade Union will have to be emphasised. The principle object of this Trade Union shall be the regulation of the relations between workmen and employers and between workmen and workmen and the provision of benefits for members. On the other hand, the Trade Union will have to be affiliated to the People's Party; so as to promote the policies of the People's Party.

The Trade Union will be a body corporate with the annual Congress as the highest policy making body of the Union. The Congress will consist of:

(a) Two members representing each branch, together with regional and branch secretaries.

(b) Members of the General Council

The General Council will consist of

(a) Members of the Executive Council

(b) Regional Secretaries

The Executive Council will consist of

(a) The Secretary-General

(b) The Deputy Secretary-General

(c) One Assistant Secretary-General for each Industrial section of the Union

(d) The National Organiser

(e) Director of Economics and Research

The two important officials of the Executive Council will be appointed by the President of the State-in-Council (i.e. President and Cabinet). These are the positions of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Union will not be organised on a trade basis but on branch basis, where workers from different industrial section come together to form a branch. A few branches will then form a region. No binding decisions on the Union will be taken by the branches or region but the Annual Congress will. It may become very necessary that the Secretary-General or his Deputy attend meetings of the State-President-in-Council.

Despite representing workers and the State interest the trade union can be effective in bridging cultural gaps between the elites and the masses. The elites are usually orientated to foreign values, attitudes and norms whilst the majority of the people remain rooted in traditional setting, geographically and emotionally. As a matter of fact, the elites become politically alienated from the masses. A Trade Union can function as a middle group between the elite and the masses. Unionists are socio-economically closer to the masses and can capitalise in the championing of the aspirations of the entire people.

As the state will be in control of the large-scale industrial and commercial enterprises and hence the largest employer, for harmonious relationship, it may be necessary to encourage the formation of an Employer Association. This can make it easier for the state to exercise superintendents over small private enterprises, who will be required to run their concern according to the principle that civil rights are protected by the law and as long as they are exercised according to the people's interests.

In concluding this paper I emphasize the fact that labour must be regarded