

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

BY

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The slogan: United we stand, divided we fall, has been used for generations. Africa is using that slogan now. The question is: why are they not uniting? It sounds so simple. Let all the African States come together and they'll be able to face Europe and the U.S. as a block. But when we get beyond the words and examine the living phenomenon, we begin to understand that it isn't so simple as it sounds.

First, to unite the African States would mean to cripple the power of imperialism. For it is imperialism that keeps them divided and it does so through its economic grip on each one of them. For imperialism this is essential because unity can serve only one purpose - unity against imperialism. The States of Africa have no other way of achieving that unity.

I believe that a continental government is possible only on the basis of the United Socialist States of Africa, and this is, ipso facto, against imperialism. It means a declaration of war against imperialism. In the process of uniting they have to fight imperialism. This applies equally to the African States and to the liberation movements.

When it is said that the movements must come together, the first question to ask is: on what basis must they come together? Even on the question of the States giving assistance to the movements, in my opinion it is wrong to say they will give assistance to the various movements in a country without knowing what these movements really stand for. Imperialism itself makes no such mistake. It thrives on dividing the movements, not only within each country but also in the various countries. Besides this, it thrives on supporting ~~by~~ just those movements which lead the ^{country} towards themselves; in other words, those movements that espouse their own policies.

This is something that the African States themselves have to learn. When they decide to support a movement they have to ask themselves to what end are they doing so? And when you ask for unity you have to ask: Unity for what? For the agents of imperialism support specific movements that they consider will avert what they call a catastrophe. Imperialism doesn't ask how big

this movement is. It is concerned with one question only: What is the programme of this movement? Whether it is big or small, if ~~that~~ ^{the} movement has ~~xxx~~ such a policy as will save the interests of capitalism in that particular country, the agents of imperialism will support it, and build it up from nothing if necessary.

Now, to imagine it is possible to unite all movements to fight imperialism is to presuppose that you have already crippled it, since its strength lies in being able to divide the movements. In a word, let us think more deeply on this whole question of unity. Let us ask who should unite? And for what? We must understand, too, that different forces operate in different countries. Let me explain it this way. In my own country, South Africa, we created a Unity Movement in the early forties in order to unite all sections of the oppressed for a protracted struggle. We felt that our road would not be that of India or of Ghana, or the road of all the African States which negotiated their so-called independence. We felt that our road would be that of Algeria, and for the same reason that Algeria had to take the road of armed struggle. It would be impossible to negotiate freedom in South Africa. Then, having made this assessment of the relation of forces, the next step was to decide how we were to gather the population together in order to put it in a position to carry out ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{a protracted struggle}. For it did concern the whole population. Now in a complex society like South Africa, no one party, no matter how strong it is, can carry the whole of that society. I used to hear people say: Why can't you people unite like Malawi, for example? Now the emergence of a Messiah is a sure sign that a country is less developed industrially and its society therefore less complex. In a complex society like South Africa there are very many organisations representing different strata of the society and the ^{first} problem is to bring these organisations together under one leadership. The struggle cannot be carried in any other way.

But there are those who ~~xxxxxx~~ think our problem is that of removing Verwoerd, of fighting against Apartheid. There is no doubt that in that struggle people find quite a number of allies ready to assist and encourage them. Why? British imperialism realises that Verwoerd is jeopardising not only their own interests in South Africa but also the whole imperialist plan of neo-colonialism ~~xxxxxx~~ vis-a-vis the continent of Africa. Thus if you are fighting simply to get rid of Verwoerd, you will ~~get~~ ^{receive} plenty of support.

However, there are others, who, like ourselves, do not see ~~the~~^{our} struggle as a struggle against Verwoerd. We consider him to be the boss-boy of imperialism and what is the point of fighting a boss-boy? You have to fight a ~~the~~ boss-boy together with his boss and get rid of the whole lot of them. In other words, our struggle is against imperialism. The boss-boy simply guards the property of British and U.S. imperialism.

Once more, then, when we talk of unity, we have to ask: unity on what basis? We have to be agreed on the aims of unity. Then only is unity possible. Now when we want to pull a wagon we don't inspan horses, goats, and donkeys and even ~~together~~ all facing in different directions. No matter how strongly they all pull, the wagon will remain in the same place. They must all be facing in the same direction before their unity becomes effective.