

Fellow-Country,

After holding a consultative conference some weeks ago at Bloemfontein with my Provincial Presidents, circumstances compel me to call the attention of the Country to the state of the Union. To say the African, since Union, has been the object of restrictive and repressive legislation by the Union Parliament is to state a truism. With the coming into power of the present Government, however, the situation of the African people has deteriorated. Problems, policies and restrictions which existed before have been intensified to the detriment of the African. Practically every month has brought in a new deprivation of some privilege or threat of one kind or another. Within the last fifteen months Africans have suffered the following losses:-

1. Threat of the abolition or reduction of Trust Medical Scholarship,
2. Implied threat to Native education contained in the terms of reference of the Native Education Commission appointed by the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. Jansen.
3. The threat to introduce compulsory academic segregation in the University on the basis of Colour,
4. The abolition or reduction of feeding scheme for African children while doubling it for Europeans,
5. The reduction of funds for rehabilitation schemes in the reserves,
6. The repulsion of thousands of Africans from urban areas to rural areas or mining centres because of temporary loss of employment in towns,
7. The retrenchment of Africans in semi-skilled or skilled civil service posts in accordance with the so-called civilized Labour Policy,
8. The refusal to register even employed Africans in the City on the ground that they happen to reside outside the jurisdiction of a Municipality and even forcing African Youth born and living with parents to "travel to any rural area or place of domicile for purposes of seeking work",
9. The bringing about of undue pressure upon Africans temporarily out of employment to take up farm labour or mining.
10. The Persuasion of African accused, by Government Officials, to take farm work instead of accepting a term of imprisonment, a system of forced or semi-slave labour,
11. The reduction of old age pensions, invalidity grants and other social security benefits for Africans while they are being increased for Europeans,
12. The reduction of funds for housing African workers and denying African workers from participating in state contracts as builders,
13. The threat to deprive Africans of all vestiges of political rights and consequently of all economic, social and educational opportunities.

In short/...

In short, the policy of apartheid has turned out to be as barren, negative and retrogressive as the African people predicted it would be. The African people have, at no time, been taken in by the promise of "something better" or "something positive" to come. On the other hand, among the Europeans even outside Government circles we find persons who use specious and plausible argument suggesting possible opportunities and benefits under apartheid, in order to dupe the innocent and unsuspecting African to swallow the bitter pill of apartheid. While we like all other races have a few opportunists, self-seekers and traitors who will sell out for a mess of pottage, it must be made clear that real Africans are uncompromisingly opposed to the policy of apartheid and all that it implies.

EFFECT OF APARTHEID:

The policy of apartheid has had different effects on different sections of our people. A few have been so cowed by the naked brutality of measures taken or threatened by the Government that they have decided to withdraw from the struggle for liberation. Others, who formerly were vociferous in their denunciation of the Government Native policy in the country have either gone under ground or have found a new means of escape by turning their criticisms towards their leaders and organisations and making them scape-goats instead of playing their parts in the struggle. Others are deluded by the vain hope of foreign intervention and seem prepared micaber-like to wait for something, not done by themselves, to turn up. These are perhaps, natural first reactions on the part of a voteless and defenceless people when faced by critical conditions such as those confronting the Africans in South Africa to-day. But, thank heavens, these first reactions must, in time, be followed by sullenness, determination and the spirit to dare or to die. Even now, this policy has put iron in the hearts of most Africans and a clear vision of the course to be followed in the minds of those who realise that Africans must live or die here - those who believe that the cause of the African in South Africa must triumph because it is right and just.

It is our duty to remind all sections of our people that there can be no escape from the struggle. The mere fact that our people

are/...

are deprived by a superior force of their legitimate and birth-rights does not mean that they are not entitled to those rights. There must be no surrender or yielding in the determination of the people to achieve National freedom in South Africa, their father land.

The African National Congress has, since its inception, stood for the building of a free African Nation and nothing that has happened will divert its attention from this objective. The attainment of this objective demands great sacrifices of time, energy, means and life itself. It calls for loyalty and devotion to the cause of full freedom for all men in South Africa. It calls upon all Africans to be united and loyal to a well-organised National Association, the African National Congress for the defence of their rights and for promotion of self-help, in all aspects of our life, instead of a fruitless dependence upon external guidance and leadership. Friends can help but no freedom is possible unless the people themselves men, women and children, make their own contribution to the struggle, however, small. Every true African must make some personal contribution to the struggle.

Uninformed criticisms of one another and competitions for leadership instead of co-operation, help those who would keep us down and hold back the advancement of our people. Destructive Criticisms are no signs of either dignity or intelligence. They are the pastime of the irresponsible with nothing practical to offer.

I charge you to stop telling the World what your leaders have not done. Stop criticising others. Do something yourself. I mean you whoever you are. There is plenty to be done where you are. Become a local leader as a stepping-stone to better things. And, above all as your practical contribution in the National struggle, build a strong Branch of the African National Congress in your area to attend to local problems. There is plenty of scope for you there. The time and the situation demands of all us including you, to show a spirit of courage and determination, to talk less and work harder, to the end that the name of South Africa through right and justice for all might attain a high place of honour, dignity and respect in the Councils of Nations.

May I/...

May I, in conclusion, emphasize that in our struggle let us be quite clear that we are not fighting Europeans as such. We are not fighting any particular party or Government. What we are fighting is the wicked policy of racial discrimination and colour domination. We reject the theory of white supremacy since, in practice, it is synonymous with oppression of non-whites by the whites.

I urge you therefore, in the words of a great American:

"With malice Towards None,
With Charity For All,
And With Firmness In The Right,
Let Us Fight On And Finish The Work We Are On".

Remember that people who do not want to make sacrifices for freedom do not deserve it. Freedom is dear but purchable if we are willing to pay the fee. Talking alone will never win us freedom but deeds of loyalty, valour and dedication to the cause will win the struggle.

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